

WORLD LITERATURE I

Beginnings to 1650

PART TWO

The Middle Ages

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Introduction

Reading about any culture foreign to one's own tends to create a form of culture shock in the reader. In a world literature class, students frequently face texts that are completely unfamiliar to them, and the typical culture shock reactions set in. We tend not to like things that we do not understand, in part because we do not like the feeling of not knowing something. I have had students complain that they did not "like" a story before we discussed it in class, and then the same students decide after the class discussion that they now like it. Again, understanding and liking go hand in hand. Give the literature a chance; something that might not make sense at first may end up being one of your favorite stories after finding a way to approach it.

That being said, whether students like a story is not the point of reading that text in a literature class. We read literature in these classes to learn something. It is a nice addition to the experience if students like the works, but we can read and analyze texts that we do not enjoy just as effectively as the ones we do: In some cases, it is actually easier. Critical thinking comes from taking something that is unfamiliar, breaking it down into manageable chunks of information, fitting it back together, and using the experience to replicate the process in other situations in the future.

A literature class is, of course, a perfect place to learn critical thinking skills. When interpreting a text, pretend that you are a lawyer in a courtroom arguing a case. Not all cases have smoking guns; most are won or lost on circumstantial evidence alone. The interpretation needs to be based primarily on evidence from the text; therefore, there can be more than one possible approach, but some interpretations can be wrong if there is no support in the text for the generalizations that the student uses. Evidence is the key; based on what the text tells us, what do we actually know? Expert opinions (secondary sources) may help, but remember that both sides in a court case usually can call some expert who will agree with them. Authorial intention is not entirely out of bounds in such an argument, but it operates on the same principles: What can we actually argue, based on the evidence? For instance, any knowledge of Hemingway's personal history makes it unlikely that the story "Soldier's Home" could be interpreted as unsupportive of soldiers. Alternately, there are cases when the author's life is of little or no help. Faulkner refused to tell an interviewer what the meaning of "A Rose for Emily" was, preferring perhaps that the reader not be limited by a simple (or simplistic) explanation of meaning.

In every interpretation, remember to distinguish between the views of the original audience and the views of the modern reader. While a text may remind students about their grandfathers, that association does not often help when interpreting a story written by someone years ago who did not know their grandfather. (It may, of course, help students interpret their interpretations, but, except for the very best reader response theorists out there, that approach is more commonly found in a different field of study.) If the story is about a grandfather in ancient Greece, the comparison with their grandfather would be most useful if it helped focus them on what the characters in that time period in Greek society thought about grandfathers (or treated them, or talked to them, etc.) back then that is similar to or different from modern expectations. In other words, what does the work tell us about the expectations of the original audience? Without at least a solid guess about what the original audience thought about the work, it is impossible to discuss whether the author is writing something that conforms to society's expectations or argues against them, let alone what the original audience was expected to learn from the story, or how it expected to be entertained.

The expectations of the audience bring us full circle to the issue of culture shock once again. Students in U.S. universities often feel more comfortable with American or British literature, since the K-12 school system in the U.S. usually emphasizes those works. Even if some students have not lived through the 1960s in the U.S., there is still a sense of familiarity to students raised in the U.S., although they might not understand as much of the deeper social context as they think they do. A world literature class may be the first place that some students have encountered European works, let alone non-Western texts. The emphasis in this anthology, therefore, is on non-Western and European works, with only the British authors who were the most influential to European and non-Western authors (such as Shakespeare, whose works have influenced authors around the world to the present day). In a world literature class, there is no way that a student can be equally familiar with all of the societies, contexts, time periods, cultures, religions, and languages that they will encounter; even though the works presented here are translated,

students will face issues such as unfamiliar names and parts of the story (such as puns) that may not translate well or at all. Since these stories are rooted in their cultures and time periods, it is necessary to know the basic context of each work to understand the expectations of the original audience. The introductions in this anthology are meant to be just that: a basic overview of what students need to know before they begin reading, with topics that students can research further. An open access literature textbook cannot be a history book at the same time, but history is the great companion of literature: The more history students know, the easier it is for them to interpret literature.

These works can help students understand the present, as well. In an electronic age, with this text available to anyone with computer access around the world, it has never been more necessary to recognize and understand differences among nationalities and cultures. The literature in this anthology is foundational, in the sense that these works influenced the authors who followed them. For Western literature, it is necessary to know something about the Trojan War (and the Trojan Horse) to understand everything from literary references to them (for almost three thousand or so years) to why a computer virus would be named a “Trojan Horse” because of what it does. In India, the characters in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* still show up in regular conversations, and it would be impossible to read modern Indian literature without a basic knowledge of these texts, which are referenced frequently. Chinese literature is infused with Confucian concepts, which influenced Chinese culture for thousands of years. These are just a few of the examples of why these texts are important to this day, and the introductions will explain the influence of each work.

A word to the instructor: The texts have been chosen with the idea that they can be compared and contrasted, using common themes. Rather than numerous (and therefore often random) choices of texts from various periods, these selected works are meant to make both teaching and learning easier. Students often learn better when there is a theme or a set of themes that they can use to make sense of the stories. For example, the differences among cultures and time periods in the definition of a hero are found throughout the anthology. As the time periods progress, the type of hero changes as well: warriors in the ancient world, knights and samurai in the medieval period, and soldiers in works set in the Renaissance. Many of the works examine the role of women in society, and each time period contains numerous works of social commentary. There are epics across world literature to compare, belief systems from the Greek pantheon of gods to Native American origin stories, and philosophical questions about ethical and moral behavior.

It is by comparing similar topics and themes that students are most easily able to see the significant differences in the cultures. If I ask students to discuss a work such as the *Analects* of Confucius, they often do not know where to begin or what to say. If I ask students to suggest what would happen if Gilgamesh were dropped into the environment of the *Analects*, they immediately see the problems: Gilgamesh is not a “gentleman” by Confucian standards, nor does he have the temperament to attract gentlemen retainers, who would expect courteous and proper behavior from him.

While cultural expectations are not universal, many of the themes found in these works are. Human beings have always cared about friendship, love, and finding their place in the world; we still read and watch stories of heroic journeys, bravery in its many forms, family relationships (good and bad), and the triumphs and tragedies of people who are not so different from ourselves.

As an example, the following assignment is one possible way to compare the texts in the Ancient World section.

Culture Shock Essay: take a character such as Achilles and place him in a story with a culture that would be completely foreign to him (such as the *Mahabharata*). How would he react to the people around him, and what would they think about him/his behavior? This topic could be mixed and matched: Hector in *Gilgamesh*, Arjuna in the *Aeneid*, Aeneas in the *Art of War*, etc.

Again, by asking the students to compare cultures, it is easier for them to identify differences. Obviously, a similar type of essay would work in the medieval period and the Renaissance, and Ancient World texts could be compared to medieval or Renaissance texts as the term progresses.

A note about calendar systems: The anthology uses B.C.E. (Before Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era). As a world literature text, it seeks to be as inclusive as possible of belief systems around the world. Of course, the numbering system used comes from the Christian calendar’s B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini—in the year of our Lord); basically, Christianity is the determiner of what is Common Era and before. Since there needs to be a way of comparing time periods across these cultures, and today’s world uses the numbering system that stems from the Christian calendar, it is the system used throughout. It would be too unwieldy to use all of the relevant calendar systems, although it is worth noting to students that they exist. For instance, 2015 C.E. is the year 5776 in the Hebrew calendar, the year 4713 in the Chinese calendar, and 1436 in the Islamic calendar. For Hinduism, the current Epoch of this cycle of the universe (which is destroyed and remade numerous times) started in 3012 B.C.E., and the current Era in that Epoch started in 78 C.E. Obviously, it would be both difficult and confusing to employ more than one system.

The term “Middle Ages” is primarily a Western construct: It is the middle because it comes between the European Ancient World and the European Renaissance (also a Western construct, since it means the *re-naissance*, or rebirth, of ancient Greek and Roman ideals and literature). The European Renaissance was self-named by writers of that time (a fact that will be discussed in greater depth in the Renaissance section of this anthology), and they labeled everything that came between them and the Ancient Greeks and Romans as “the Middle Ages.” Renaissance writers in Europe had a vested interest in portraying that time period as somehow lesser than their own; as the readings in this section will demonstrate, there is nothing lesser about the works in this time period.

Some parts of the world have middle periods in their literature, but not with the same connotations as the European term. In China, for example, the Middle Period is considered the Golden Age of poetry, although the “middle” in this case means the middle of the dynastic period, which starts in 221 B.C.E. and ends in 1911 C.E. To the extent that the term itself means anything on a worldwide stage, it is used here to compare time periods in a chronological manner. Readers can see what is happening in literature in roughly the same times around the world.

In Japan, the Heian period (794-1185 C.E.) saw the flowering of Japanese literature. In the Japanese Imperial Court, men were expected to learn Chinese; aristocratic women, who were expected to write poetry and take part in the culture of the court, began writing in Japanese. The first novel in world literature dates to about 1000 C.E. and was written by Lady Murasaki Shikibu.

In China, Li Bo wrote some of the best poems of the Golden Age of poetry, while in the Middle East Jalal al-din Rumi wrote Persian poetry that is admired on a worldwide stage to this day. In Korea, *sijo* poetry flourished and continued to be a vibrant poetic form to the present.

Epics remained important in the medieval period, although in altered form. Dante wrote his *Divine Comedy* as Christian epic, playing on previous epic conventions. Ferdowsi’s *Shahname* includes an epic section, as well as mythological, heroic, and historical material. In many cases, epic literature was evolving into heroic literature. Previously, although scholars now believe that the Trojan War did happen, the events in the *Iliad* were the stuff of speculation, rather than history. In medieval times, both the Chinese *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and the Spanish *Song of the Cid* were based on historical events in recorded history. The characters in the *Romance* and the *Cid* are based on historical figures; they are the strongest, the smartest, and the best that humans can be, but they are nonetheless humans, without the supernatural characteristics of ancient world epic heroes.

In Europe, social commentaries and the role of women took on particular prominence in this time period. Both Dante’s and Chaucer’s works showcase those themes dramatically and insightfully. Marie de France and Boccaccio examine the workings of courtly love, often to comic effect, as does Chrétien de Troyes in a more serious tone.

FOR STUDENTS:

The works in this section are meant to be compared and contrasted. Consider the following questions while reading:

- What is the definition of a hero for each society, and why? How do the heroes in *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* compare to the heroes in the *Shahname* and the *Song of the Cid*? How are they similar to or different from earlier epic heroes?
- What is the definition of a leader for each society, and why? How is it/isn’t it different from the definition of a hero? How is leadership in the *Golestan* different from leadership in *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*?
- What role does romantic love play in the medieval period? How are the romantic relationships in the works of Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Marie de France different from the romantic relationships in the *Shahname* and the *Tale of Genji*?

The texts also can be compared and contrasted with earlier time periods:

- In what ways have the depictions of women changed from the ancient world to the medieval period?
- How is an ancient world warrior different from and similar to a medieval knight?
- How has the role of religion in these societies changed, especially where pantheons of gods have been replaced by monotheism in its various forms?
- How do Li Bo’s poems continue and develop themes in earlier Chinese poetry? How are they similar to and different from the Korean *sijo* in this section?

Written by Laura J. Getty

Europe

As mentioned in the introduction to Part Two, both the terms “the Middle Ages” and “the Renaissance” are specifically European constructs. The European Renaissance was self-named, with writers in that time period identifying themselves as the “re-birth” (or re-naissance) of classical Greek and Roman ideals and literature. Everything between the classical world and their time period was referred to as the “middle”—or Middle Ages. The term, therefore, should be taken with a grain of salt; obviously, to promote themselves, Renaissance writers were often harsh in their criticism of their immediate predecessors, as most new literary periods are to the previous literary period. To this day, popular culture in the West still has traces of the negative Renaissance attitude towards anything “medieval.” European authors such as Dante would have been quite surprised (and indignant) to hear that he was part of a time period that supposedly was lesser than what followed. Since Dante’s *Divine Comedy* ranks among the best of world literature to this day, he would be justified in feeling that way.

In chronological terms, the Middle Ages in Europe traditionally are dated from the fall of Rome in 476 C.E. to the arrival of Columbus in North America in 1492 C.E. These dates are not exact, but they at least give us the general magnitude of the time period: roughly a thousand years. Within that stretch of time, scholars usually break the time into early, middle, and late periods of literature.

The selections in this chapter focus on the transformation of a hero and the role of courtly love in aristocratic culture. There are still epic heroes, but now they are often knights (with different sets of concerns from ancient world warriors); in Dante, he takes the previous epic form even further by creating a Christian epic, with a hero who does not need to be a knight (or even all that brave, as long as he has divine help). There is a debate about whether courtly love ever existed outside of literature (or whether it actually inspired knights and ladies to act the way that they did in the stories), but the concept of courtly love drives many medieval stories. Historically, in aristocratic circles, marriage was almost exclusively a business transaction between families; your average knight might not have much chance of marrying the woman he loved, but (courtly love suggests) he might try to get her attention by performing brave deeds. In the most proper scenarios, he would serve her from afar, never expecting a reward for his attentions. It is that kind of courtly love that Cervantes would satirize during the Renaissance in *Don Quixote*. In more risqué scenarios, the knight might try to convince the (often married) lady to return his affections. Stories in the works of Chrétien de Troyes and Boccaccio play with that theme to both comic and dramatic effect. In the selections found here from Chaucer’s works, Chaucer makes it clear that he finds the whole concept of courtly love questionable (especially from the woman’s point of view) and sometimes outright objectionable. Dante distances himself from his own background as a love poet, turning from earthly love to spiritual love in his writings; the lady he loves from afar (and with whom he never had a relationship) leads him to a love of God.

AS YOU READ, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How are medieval epic heroes (such as the Cid and Dante) different from and similar to the warriors of the ancient world?
- What kind of relationship do the heroes have to their societies, their leaders (rulers), their families, and their religion?
- How does the text approach courtly love, especially in terms of the behavior expected from knights and ladies? Does it support it or question it?
- What themes from the ancient world appear in the Middle Ages? In what ways are the stories a continuation of issues and concerns found in works from Part One?
- How has the role of religion changed in the stories, now that there are no pantheons of gods?

Written by Laura J. Getty

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (FROM MATTHEW 5-7)

First century C.E.

The Roman Province of Israel

The Gospel according to Matthew was written sometime between 85 and 90 C.E. and is one of the four canonical gospels of the Christian Bible, also known as the New Testament. The other three gospels are Mark, Luke, and John. All four gospels were anonymously authored, and with the exception of a smattering of Aramaic, they were all written in Greek, the dominant scholarly language of that period in that region of the world. Matthew (along with Mark and Luke) is one of the three synoptic (or “seen together”) gospels, which are the main sources for the historical narrative of Jesus’ life.

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the Five Discourses of Matthew (the sermons of Jesus in the book of Matthew). It is the first and longest sermon by Jesus in the Gospels, taking place shortly after the Temptation of Christ, the gathering of his first four disciples, and his initial healing ministries. The Sermon on the Mount includes the Beatitudes (or blessings), the Lord’s Prayer (also known as the Our Father), and numerous parables and analogies. The Sermon covers laws concerning murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, and revenge and includes Jesus’ famous admonition to “love thy neighbor.” Jesus also warns his disciples against ostentation in prayer and almsgiving, materialism, judging others, and hypocrisy.

There is no other part of the Christian Bible that has been analyzed, interpreted, and written about more than the Sermon on the Mount. Ranging from a strictly literal interpretation of the Sermon to a view that argues that Jesus was establishing general principles for behavior but not hard and fast rules, Christians have debated the meaning of the Sermon for centuries. Philosophers and writers as diverse as St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, Geoffrey Chaucer, and Leo Tolstoy have all weighed in.

Written by Rhonda Kelley

Questions to consider while reading this selection:

1. According to the Sermon, to what degree is a Christian meant to follow the rules, and how does one go about it?
2. What are the main virtues of Christian religion as taught in the Sermon?
3. If a Christian were to follow the Sermon literally, what extreme behaviors would that require? Do you think that following the teachings of Christ is possible?
4. Compare Jesus’ demands for moral human conduct with the ethics and values of the other cultures we have studied.
5. Teaching in parables, as Jesus explains to his disciples, puts a burden on the audience that straightforward instruction does not. Why does this method of communication particularly suit a religious or spiritual subject?

MATTHEW 5-7

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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Chapter 5

¹ And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

² And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

³ Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

- ¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.
- ¹³ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.
- ¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.
- ¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.
- ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
- ¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
- ¹⁸ For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
- ¹⁹ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
- ²⁰ For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.
- ²¹ Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:
- ²² But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.
- ²³ Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
- ²⁴ Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.
- ²⁵ Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.
- ²⁶ Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.
- ²⁷ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:
- ²⁸ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.
- ²⁹ And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.
- ³⁰ And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.
- ³¹ It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
- ³² But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.
- ³³ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:
- ³⁴ But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:
- ³⁵ Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.
- ³⁶ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.
- ³⁷ But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.
- ³⁸ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:
- ³⁹ But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.
- ⁴⁰ And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.
- ⁴¹ And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.
- ⁴² Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.
- ⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.
- ⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
- ⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.
- ⁴⁶ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?
- ⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?
- ⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Chapter 6

- ¹ Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.
- ² Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- ³ But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:
- ⁴ That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.
- ⁵ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- ⁶ But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
- ⁷ But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
- ⁸ Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
- ⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
- ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.
- ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
- ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
- ¹⁴ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
- ¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- ¹⁶ Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- ¹⁷ But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;
- ¹⁸ That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.
- ¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:
- ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
- ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
- ²² The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.
- ²³ But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!
- ²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.
- ²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
- ²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?
- ²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?
- ²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:
- ²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- ³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?
- ³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
- ³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.
- ³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
- ³⁴ Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Chapter 7

¹ Judge not, that ye be not judged.

² For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

³ And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

⁴ Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

⁵ Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

⁶ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

⁷ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

⁸ For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

⁹ Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

¹⁰ Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

¹¹ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

¹² Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

²⁸ And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

²⁹ For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

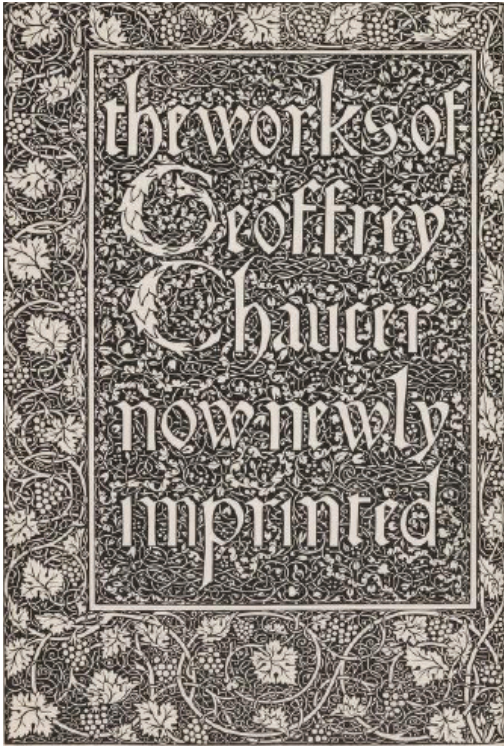


IMAGE 5.1: THE WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER FRONTISPIECE | An intricately designed black and white frontispiece featuring ivy vines featuring the text “The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer now newly imprinted”

Author: Edward Burne-Jones
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scenario, while *The Miller’s Tale* is a mocking revision of the genre by the Miller, who is responding to the story of courtly love that had just been told by the Knight.

Written by Laura J. Getty

THE PARLIAMENT OF BIRDS

Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1342- 1400 C.E.)

(ca. 1381-1382 C.E.)

England

THE CANTERBURY TALES

Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1342-1400 C.E.)

(ca. 1387- 1400 C.E.)

England

Geoffrey Chaucer’s influence on later British literature is difficult to overstate. The most important English writer before Shakespeare (who re-wrote Chaucer’s version of the *Troilus and Criseyde* story), Chaucer introduced new words into English (such as “cosmos”), and his stories draw on a wealth of previous authors, especially Ovid and Boccaccio. Unlike Shakespeare, Chaucer’s writing is often translated, since Middle English is substantially different from even the Early Modern English of Shakespeare. The selections in this anthology are focused on a single theme: Chaucer’s revisionist, revolutionary approach to courtly love. Courtly love poetry often focuses on the male perspective exclusively; the female is the object to be obtained, and she usually is not given a voice (or, ultimately, a choice) in the matter. *The Parliament of Birds* (also called *The Parliament of Fowles*) gives the female a voice, if not necessarily a choice, while the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* offers, among many other things, a satirical look at how courtly love can be misused: *The Prioress and the Monk* are only two examples. *The Wife of Bath’s Tale* and *The Franklin’s Tale* both offer fascinating alternatives to the regular courtly love

THE PARLEMENT OF FOWLES

[THE PARLIAMENT OF BIRDS]

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Geoffrey Chaucer, translated and edited by Gerard NeCastro

The life so brief, the art so long in the learning, the attempt so hard, the conquest so sharp, the fearful joy that ever slips away so quickly—by all this I mean love, which so sorely astounds my feeling with its wondrous operation, that when I think upon it I scarce know whether I wake or sleep. For albeit I know not love myself; nor how he pays people their wage, yet I have very often chanced to read in books of his miracles and his cruel anger there, surely, I read he will ever be lord and sovereign, and his strokes will be so heavy I dare say nothing but, “God save such a lord!” I can say no more.

Somewhat for pleasure and somewhat for learning I am in the habit of reading books, as I have told you. But why speak I of all this? Not long ago I chanced to look at a book, written in antique letters, and there I read very diligently and eagerly through the long day, to learn a certain thing. For, as men say, out of old fields comes all this new corn from year to year; and, in good faith, out of old books comes all this new knowledge that men learn. But now to my theme in this matter: it so delighted me to read on, that the whole day seemed to me rather short. This book of which I speak was entitled *Tully on the Dream of Scipio*. It had seven chapters, on heaven and hell and

earth, and the souls that live in those places; about which I will tell you the substance of Tully's opinion, as briefly as I can.

First the book tells how, when Scipio had come to Africa, he met Masinissa, who clasped him in his arms for joy. Then it tells their conversation and all the joy that was between them until the day began to end; and then how Scipio's beloved ancestor Africanus appeared to him that night in his sleep. Then it tells how Africanus showed him Carthage from a starry place, and disclosed to him all his good fortune to come, and said to him that any man, learned or unlettered, who loves the common profit and is virtuous shall go to a blessed place where is joy without end. Then Scipio asked whether people that die here have life and dwelling elsewhere; and Africanus said, "Yes, without doubt," and added that our space of life in the present world, whatever way we follow, is just a kind of death, and righteous people, after they die, shall go to heaven.

And he showed him the Milky Way, and the earth here, so little in comparison with the hugeness of the heavens; and after that he showed him the nine spheres. And then he heard the melody that proceeds from those nine spheres, which is the fount of music and melody in this world, and the cause of harmony. Then Africanus instructed him not to take delight in this world, since earth is so little and so full of torment and ill favor. Then he told him how in a certain term of years every star should come into its own place, where it first was; and all that has been done by all mankind in this world shall pass out of memory.

Then he asked Africanus to tell him fully the way to come into that heavenly happiness; and he said, "First know yourself to be immortal; and always see that you labor diligently and teach for the common profit, and you shall not fail to come speedily to that dear place that is full of joy and of bright souls. But breakers of the law, in truth, and lecherous folk, after they die, shall ever be whirled about the earth in torment, until many an age be passed; and then, all their wicked deeds forgiven, they shall come to that blessed region, to which may God send you His grace to come."

The day began to end, and dark night, which withdraws beasts from their activity, bereft me of my book for the lack of light; and I set forth to my bed, full of brooding and anxious heaviness. For I both had that which I wished not and what I wished that I had not. But at last, wearied with all the day's labor, my spirit took rest and heavily slept; and as I lay in my sleep, I dreamed how Africanus, in the very same guise in which Scipio saw him that time before, had come and stood at the very side of my bed. When the weary hunter sleeps, quickly his mind returns to the wood; the judge dreams how his cases fare, and the carter how his carts go; the rich dream of gold, the knight fights his foes; the sick man dreams he drinks of the wine cask, the lover that he has his lady. I cannot say whether my reading of Africanus was the cause that I dreamed that he stood there; but thus he spoke, "You have done so well to look upon my old tattered book, of which Macrobius thought not a little, that I would requite you somewhat for your labor."

Cytherea, you sweet, blessed lady, who with your fire-brand subdues whomsoever you wish, and sends me this dream, be my helper in this, for you are best able! As surely as I saw you in the north-northwest when I began to write my dream, so surely do you give me power to rhyme it and compose it!

This aforesaid Africanus took me from there and brought me out with him to a gate of a park walled with mossy stone; and over the gate on either side, carved in large letters, were verses of very diverse senses, of which I

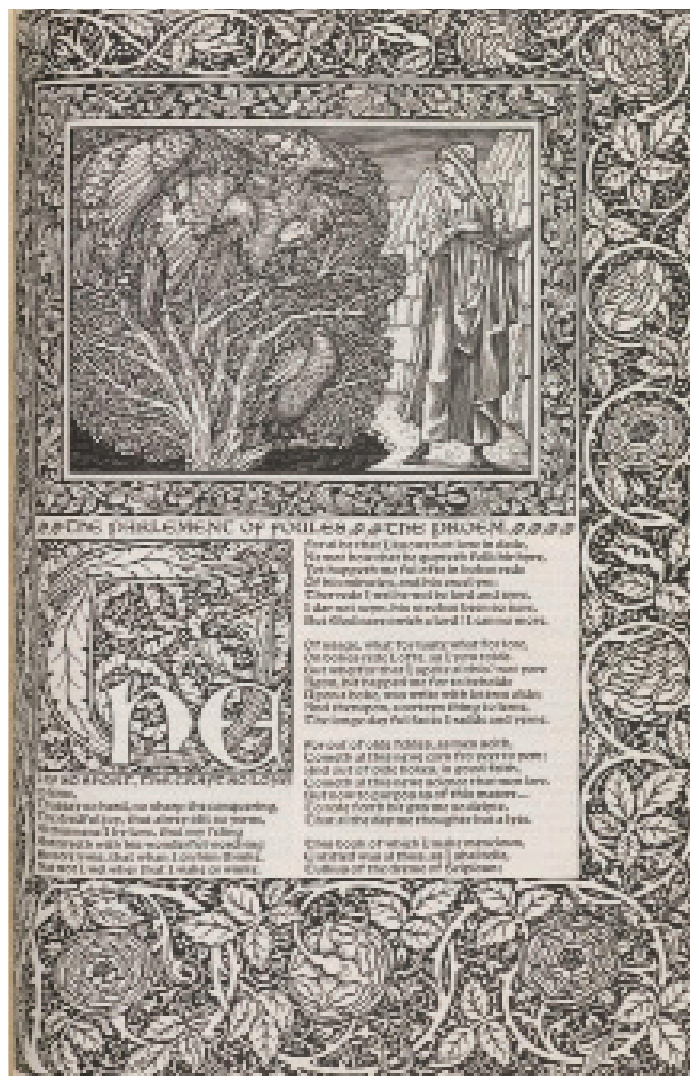


IMAGE 5.2: PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS | A black and white illustration of a man in robes looking at the parliament of fowls as they nest in a tree.

Author: Edward Burne-Jones

Source: Archive.org

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shall tell you the full meaning:

“Through me men go into that blessed place
 Where hearts find health and deadly wounds find cure,
 Through me men go unto the fount of Grace,
 Where green and lusty May shall ever endure.
 I lead men to blithe peace and joy secure.
 Reader, be glad; throw off your sorrows past.
 Open am I; press in and make haste fast.”

On the other side it said:

“Through me men go where all mischance betides,
 Where is the mortal striking of the spear,
 To which Disdain and Coldness are the guides,
 Where trees no fruit or leaf shall ever bear.
 This stream shall lead you to the sorrowful weir
 Where fish in baleful prison lie all dry.
 To shun it is the only remedy.”

These inscriptions were written, the one in gold, the other in black, and I beheld them for a long while, for at the one my heart grew hardy, and the other ever increased my fear; the first warmed me, the other chilled me. For fear of error my wit could not make its choice, to enter or to flee, to lose myself or save myself. Just as a piece of iron set between two load-stones of equal force has no power to move one way or the other—for as much as one draws the other hinders.

So it fared with me, who knew not which would be better, to enter or not, until Africanus my guide caught and pushed me in at the wide gates, saying, “Your doubt stands written on your face, though you tell it not to me. But fear not to come in, for this writing is not meant for you or for any, unless he would be Love’s servant. For in love, I believe, you have lost your sense of taste, even as a sick man loses his taste of sweet and bitter. Nevertheless, dull though you may be, you can still look upon that which you cannot do; for many a man who cannot complete a bout is nevertheless pleased to be at a wrestling match, and judges whether one or another does better. And if you have skill to set it down, I will show you something to write about.”

With that he took my hand in his, from which I took comfort and quickly went in. But Lord, how glad and at ease I was! For everywhere I cast my eyes were trees clad, each according to its kind, with everlasting leaves in fresh color and green as emerald, a joy to behold: the builder oak, eke the hardy ash, the elm the pillar and the coffin for corpses, the boxwood for horns, the holly for whip-handles, the fir to bear sails, the cypress to mourn death, the yew the bowman, the aspen for smooth shafts, the olive of peace, the drunken vine, the victor palm, and the laurel for divination.

By a river in a green meadow, where there is at all points so much sweetness, I saw a garden, full of blossomy boughs, with white, blue, yellow and red flowers; and cold fountain-streams, not at all dead, full of small shining fish with red fins and silver-bright scales. On every bough I heard the birds sing with the voice of angels in their melody. Some busied themselves to lead forth their young. The little bunnies hastened to play. Further on I noticed all about the timid roe, the buck, harts and hinds and squirrels and small beasts of gentle nature. I heard stringed instruments playing harmonies of such ravishing sweetness that God, Maker and Lord of all, never heard better, I believe. At the same time a wind, scarce could it have been gentler, made in the green leaves a soft noise which accorded with the song of the birds above. The air of that place was so mild that never was there discomfort for heat or cold. Every wholesome spice and herb grew there, and no person could age or sicken. There was a thousand times more joy than man can tell. And it would never be night there, but ever bright day in every man’s eye.

I saw Cupid our lord forging and filing his arrows under a tree beside a spring, and his bow lay ready at his feet. And meanwhile his daughter well tempered the arrow-heads in the spring, and by her cunning she piled them after as they should serve, some to slay, some to wound and pierce. Just then I was aware of Pleasure and of Fair Array and Courtesy and Joy and of Deception who has wit and power to cause a being to do folly—she was disguised, I deny it not. And under an oak, I believe, I saw Delight, standing apart with Gentle Breeding. I saw Beauty without any raiment; and Youth, full of sportiveness and jollity, Foolhardiness, Flattery, Desire, Message-sending and Bribery; and three others—their names shall not be told by me.

And upon great high pillars of jasper I saw a temple of brass strongly stand. About the temple many women were dancing ceaselessly, of whom some were beautiful themselves and some gay in dress; only in their kirtles they

went, with hair unbound—that was forever their business, year by year. And on the temple I saw many hundred pairs of doves sitting, white and beautiful. Before the temple-door sat Lady Peace full gravely, holding back the curtain, and beside her Lady Patience, with pale face and wondrous discretion, sitting upon a mound of sand. Next to her were Promise and Cunning and a crowd of their followers within the temple and without.

Inside I heard a gust of sighs blowing about, hot as fire, engendered of longing, which caused every altar to blaze ever anew. And well I saw then that all the cause of sorrows that lovers endure is through the bitter goddess Jealousy. As I walked about within the temple I saw the god Priapus standing in sovereign station, his scepter in hand, and in such attire as when the ass confounded him to confusion with its outcry by night. People were busily setting upon his head garlands full of fresh, new flowers of various colors.

In a private corner I found Venus, who was noble and stately in her bearing, sporting with her porter Riches. The place was dark, but in time I saw a little light—it could scarcely have been less. Venus reposed upon a golden bed until the hot sun should seek the west. Her golden hair was bound with a golden thread, but all untressed as she lay. And one could see her naked from the breast to the head; the remnant, in truth, was well covered to my pleasure with a filmy kerchief of Valence; there was no thicker cloth that could also be transparent. The place gave forth a thousand sweet odors. Bacchus, god of wine, sat beside her, and next was Ceres, who saves all from hunger, and, as I said, the Cyprian woman lay in the midst; on their knees two young people were crying to her to be their helper.

But thus I left her lying, and further in the temple I saw how, in scorn of Diana the chaste, there hung on the wall many a broken bow of such maidens as had first wasted their time in her service. And everywhere was painted many stories, of which I shall touch on a few, such as Callisto and Atalanta and many maidens whose name I do not know. There was also Semiramis, Candace, Hercules, Byblis, Dido, Thisbe and Pyramus, Tristram and Isolt, Paris, Achilles, Helen, Cleopatra, Troilus, and Scylla, and the mother of Romulus as well—all were portrayed on the other wall, and their love and by what plight they died.

When I had returned to the sweet and green garden that I spoke of, I walked forth to comfort myself. Then I noticed how there sat a queen who was exceeding in fairness over every other creature, as the brilliant summer sun passes the stars in brightness. This noble goddess Nature was set upon a flowery hill in a verdant glade. All her halls and bowers were wrought of branches according to the art and measure of Nature.

And there was not any bird that is created through procreation that was not ready in her presence to hear her and receive her judgment. For this was Saint Valentine's day, when every bird of every kind that men can imagine comes to this place to choose his mate. And they made an exceedingly great noise; and earth and sea and the trees and all the lakes were so full that there was scarcely room for me to stand, so full was the entire place. And just as Alan, in *The Complaint of Nature*, describes Nature in her features and attire, so might men find her in reality.

This noble empress, full of grace, bade every bird take his station, as they were accustomed to stand always on Saint Valentine's day from year to year. That is to say, the birds of prey were set highest, and then the little birds who eat, as nature inclines them, worms or other things of which I speak not; but water-fowls sat the lowest in the dale; and birds that live on seed sat upon the grass, so many that it was a marvel to see.

There one could find the royal eagle, that pierces the sun with his sharp glance; and other eagles of lower race, of which clerks can tell. There was that tyrant with dun gray feathers, I mean the goshawk, that harasses other birds with his fierce ravening. There was the noble falcon, that with his feet grasps the king's hand; also the bold sparrow-hawk, foe of quails; the merlin, that often greedily pursues the lark. The dove was there, with her meek eyes; the jealous swan, that sings at his death; and the owl also, that forebodes death; the giant crane, with his trumpet voice; thieving chough; the prating magpie; the scornful jay; the heron, foe to eels; the false lapwing, full of trickery; the starling, that can betray secrets; the tame redbreast; the coward kite; the cock, timekeeper of little thorps; the sparrow, son of Venus; the nightingale, which calls forth the fresh new leaves; the swallow, murderer of the little bees which make honey from the fresh-hued flowers; the wedded turtle-dove, with her faithful heart; the peacock, with his shining angel-feathers; the pheasant, that scorns the cock by night; the vigilant goose; the cuckoo, ever unnatural; the popinjay, full of wantonness; the drake, destroyer of his own kind; the stork, that avenges adultery; the greedy, gluttonous cormorant; the wise raven and the crow, with voice of ill-boding; the ancient thrush and the wintry fieldfare.

What more shall I say? One might find assembled in that place before the noble goddess Nature birds of every sort in this world that have feathers and stature. And each by her consent worked diligently to choose or take graciously his lady or his mate.

But to the point: Nature held on her hand a formel eagle, the noblest in shape that she ever found among her works, the gentlest and goodliest; in her every noble trait so had its seat that Nature herself rejoiced to look upon her and to kiss her beak many times. Nature, vicar of the Almighty Lord, who has knit in harmony hot, cold, heavy, light, moist, and dry in exact proportions, began to speak in a gentle voice: "Birds, take heed of what I say; and for your welfare and to further your needs I will hasten as fast as I can speak. You well know how on Saint Valentine's day, by my statute and through my ordinance, you come to choose your mates, as I prick you with sweet pain, and

then fly on your way. But I may not, to win this entire world, depart from my just order, that he who is most worthy shall begin.

“The tercel eagle, the royal bird above you in degree, as you well know, the wise and worthy one, trusty, true as steel, which you may see I have formed in every part as pleased me best—there is no need to describe his shape to you—he shall choose first and speak as he will. And after him you shall choose in order, according to your nature, each as pleases you; and, as your chance is, you shall lose or win. But whichever of you love ensnares most, to him may God send her who sighs for him most sorely.”

And at this she called the tercel and said, “My son, the choice is fallen to you. Nevertheless under this condition must be the choice of each one here, that his chosen mate will agree to his choice, whatsoever he be who would have her. From year to year this is always our custom. And whoever at this time can win grace has come here in blissful time!”

The royal tercel, with bowed head and humble appearance, delayed not and spoke: “As my sovereign lady, not as my spouse, I choose—and choose with will and heart and mind—the formel of so noble shape upon your hand. I am hers wholly and will serve her always. Let her do as she wishes, to let me live or die; I beseech her for mercy and grace, as my sovereign lady, or else let me die here presently. For surely I cannot live long in torment, for in my heart every vein is cut. Having regard only to my faithfulness, dear heart, have some pity upon my woe. And if I am found untrue to her, disobedient or willfully negligent, a boaster, or in time love elsewhere, I pray you this will be my doom: that I will be torn to pieces by these birds, upon that day when she should ever know me untrue to her or in my guilt unkind. And since no other loves her as well as I, though she never promised me love, she ought to be mine by her mercy; for I can fasten no other bond on her. Never for any woe shall I cease to serve her, however far she may roam. Say what you will, my words are done.”

Even as the fresh red rose newly blown blushes in the summer sun, so grew the color of this woman when she heard all this; she answered no word good or bad, so sorely was she abashed; until Nature said, “Daughter, fear not, be of good courage.”

Then spoke another tercel of a lower order: “That shall not be. I love her better than you, by Saint John, or at least I love her as well, and have served her longer, according to my station. If she should love for long being to me alone should be the reward; and I also dare to say, if she should find me false, unkind, a prater, or a rebel in any way, or jealous, let me be hanged by the neck. And unless I bear myself in her service as well as my wit allows me, to protect her honor in every point, let her take my life and all the wealth I have.”

Then a third tercel eagle said, “Now, sirs, you see how little time we have here, for every bird clamors to be off with his mate or lady dear, and Nature herself as well, because of the delay, will not hear half of what I would speak. Yet unless I speak I must die of sorrow. I boast not at all of long service; but it is as likely that I shall die of woe today as he who has been languishing these twenty winters. And it may well happen that a man may serve better in half a year, even if it were no longer, than another man who has served many years. I do not say this about myself, for I can do no service to my lady’s pleasure; but I dare say that I am her truest man, I believe, and would be most glad to please her. In short, until death may seize me I will be hers, whether I wake or sleep, and true in all that heart can think.”

In all my life since the day I was born never have I heard any man so noble make a plea in love or any other thing—even if a man had time and wit to rehearse their expression and their words. And this discourse lasted from the morning until the sun drew downward so rapidly. The clamor released by the birds rung so loud—“Make an end of this and let us go!”—that I well thought the forest would be splintered. They cried, “Make haste! Alas, you will ruin us! When shall your cursed pleading come to an end? How should a judge believe either side for yea or nay, without any proof?”

The goose, cuckoo and duck so loudly cried, “Kek, kek!”; “Cuckoo!”; “Quack, quack!” that the noise reverberated in my ears. The goose said, “All this is not worth a fly! But from this I can devise a remedy, and I will speak my verdict fair and soon, on behalf of the waterfowl. Let who will smile or frown.”

“And I for the worm-eating fowl,” said the foolish cuckoo; “of my own authority, for the common welfare, I will take the responsibility now, for it would be great charity to release us.” “By God, you may wait a while yet,” said the turtle-dove. “If you are he to choose who shall speak, it would be as well for him to be silent. I am among the birds that eat seed, one of the most unworthy, and of little wit—that I know well. But a creature’s tongue would be better quiet than meddling with such doings about which he knows neither rhyme nor reason. And whosoever does so, overburdens himself in foul fashion, for often one not entrusted to a duty commits offence.”

Nature, who had always an ear to the murmuring of folly at the back, said with ready tongue, “Hold your peace there! And straightway, I hope, I shall find a counsel to let you go and release you from this noise. My judgment is that you shall choose one from each bird-folk to give the verdict for you all.”

The birds all assented to this conclusion. And first the birds of prey by full election chose the tercel-falcon to define all their judgment, and decide as he wished. And they presented him to Nature and she accepted him gladly.

The falcon then spoke in this fashion: "It would be hard to determine by reason which best loves this gentle woman; for each has such ready answers that none may be defeated by reasons. I cannot see of what avail are arguments; so it seems there must be battle."

"All ready!" then cried these tercel-eagles.

"Nay, sirs," said he, "if I dare say it, you do me wrong, my tale is not done. For, sirs, take it not amiss, I pray, it cannot go thus as you desire. Ours is the voice that has the charge over this, and you must stand by the judges' decision. Peace, therefore! I say that it would seem in my mind that the worthiest in knighthood, who has longest followed it, the highest in degree and of gentlest blood, would be most fitting for her, if she wish it. And of these three she knows which he is, I believe, for that is easily seen."

The waterfowl put their heads together, and after short considering, when each had spoken his tedious gabble, they said truly, by one assent, how "the goose, with her gentle eloquence, who so desires to speak for us, shall say our say," and prayed God would help her. Then the goose began to speak for these waterfowl, and said in her cackling, "Peace! Now every man take heed and hearken what argument I shall put forth. My wits are sharp, I love no delay; I counsel him, I say, even if he were my brother, leave him if she will not love him."

"Lo here," said the sparrow-hawk, "a perfect argument for a goose—bad luck to her! Lo, thus it is to have a wagging tongue! Now, fool, it would be better for you to have held your peace than have shown your folly, by God! But to do thus rests not in her wit or will; for it is truly said, 'a fool cannot be silent.'"

Laughter arose from all the birds of noble kind; and straightway the seed-eating fowl chose the faithful turtle-dove, and called her to them, and prayed her to speak the sober truth about this matter, and asked her counsel. And she answered that she would fully show her mind. "Nay, God forbid a lover should change!" said the turtle-dove, and grew all red with shame. "Though his lady may be cold for evermore, let him serve her ever until he die. In truth I praise not the goose's counsel, for even if my lady died I would have no other mate, I would be hers until death take me."

"By my hat, well jested!" said the duck. "That men should love forever, without cause! Who can find reason or wit there? Does one who is mirthless dance merrily? Who should care for him who is carefree? Yea, quack!" said the duck loud and long, "God knows there are more stars than a pair."

"Now fie, churl!" said the noble falcon. "That thought came straight from the dunghill. You can not see when a thing is proper. You fare with love as owls with light; the day blinds them, but they see very well in darkness. Your nature is so low and wretched that you can not see or guess what love is."

Then the cuckoo thrust himself forward in behalf of the worm-eating birds, and said quickly, "So that I may have my mate in peace, I care not how long you contend. Let each be single all his life; that is my counsel, since they cannot agree. This is my instruction, and there an end!"

"Yea," said the merlin, "as this glutton has well filled his paunch, this should suffice for us all! You murderer of the hedge-sparrow on the branch, the one who brought you up, you ruthless glutton! May you live unmated, you mangler of worms! It matters nothing to you, though your tribe may perish. Go, be a stupid fool, as long as the world lasts!"

"Peace now, I command here," said Nature, "For I have heard the opinions of all, and yet we are no nearer to our goal. But this is my final decision, that she herself shall have the choice of whom she wishes. Whosoever may be pleased or not, he whom she chooses shall have her straightway. For since it cannot here be debated who loves her best, as the falcon said, then will I grant her this favor, that she shall have him alone on whom her heart is set, and he her that has fixed his heart on her. This judgment I, Nature, make; and I cannot speak falsely, nor look with partial eye on any rank. But if it is reasonable to counsel you in choosing a mate, then surely I would counsel you to take the royal tercel, as the falcon said right wisely; for he is noblest and most worthy whom I created so well for my own pleasure; that ought to suffice you."

The formel answered with timid voice, "Goddess of nature, my righteous lady, true it is that I am ever under your rod, just as every other creature is, and I must be yours as long as my life may last. Therefore, grant me my first request, and straightway I will speak to you my mind."

"I grant it to you," said Nature; and this female eagle spoke immediately in this way: "Almighty queen, until this year comes to an end I ask respite, to take counsel with myself; and after that to have my choice free. This is all that I would say. I can say no more, even if you were to slay me. In truth, as yet I will in no manner serve Venus or Cupid"

"Now since it can happen no other way," Nature said then, "there is no more to be said here. Then I wish these birds to go their way each with his mate, so that they tarry here no longer." And she spoke to them thus as you shall hear. "To you I speak, you terrels," said Nature. "Be of good heart, and continue in service, all three; a year is not so long to wait. And let each of you strive according to his degree to do well. For, God knows, she is departed from you this year; and whatsoever may happen afterwards, this interval is appointed to you all."

And when this work was all brought to an end, Nature gave every bird his mate by just accord, and they went their way. Ah, Lord! The bliss and joy that they made! For each of them took the other in his wings, and wound

their necks about each other, ever thanking the noble goddess of nature. But first were chosen birds to sing, as was always their custom year by year to sing a roundel at their departure, to honor Nature and give her pleasure. The tune, I believe, was made in France. The words were such as you may here find in these verses, as I remember them.

Qui bien aime a tard oublie.

“Welcome, summer, with sunshine soft,
The winter’s tempest you will break,
And drive away the long nights black!

Saint Valentine, throned aloft,
Thus little birds sing for your sake:
Welcome, summer, with sunshine soft,
The winter’s tempest you will shake!

Good cause have they to glad them oft,
His own true-love each bird will take;
Blithe may they sing when they awake,
Welcome, summer, with sunshine soft,
The winter’s tempest you will break,
And drive away the long nights black!”

And with the shouting that the birds raised, as they flew away when their song was done, I awoke; and I took up other books to read, and still I read always. In truth I hope so to read that some day I shall meet with something of which I shall fare the better. And so I will not cease to read: *Explicit tractatus de Congregacione Volucrum die sancti Valentini tentum, secundum Galfridum Chaucers. Deo gracias.*

THE CANTERBURY TALES

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Geoffrey Chaucer, translated and edited by Gerard NeCastro

Here begins the Book of the Tales of Canterbury.

The General Prologue

When the sweet showers of April have pierced to the root the dryness of March and bathed every vein in moisture by which strength are the flowers brought forth; when Zephyr also with his sweet breath has given spirit to the tender new shoots in the grove and field, and the young sun has run half his course through Aries the Ram, and little birds make melody and sleep all night with an open eye, so nature pricks them in their hearts; then people long to go on pilgrimages to renowned shrines in various distant lands, and palmers to seek foreign shores. And especially from every shire’s end in England they make their way to Canterbury, to seek the holy blessed martyr who helped them when they were sick.

One day in that season, as I was waiting at the Tabard Inn at Southwark, about to make my pilgrimage with devout heart to Canterbury, it happened that there came at night to that inn a company of twenty-nine various people, who by chance had joined together in fellowship. All were pilgrims, riding to Canterbury. The chambers and the stables were spacious, and we were lodged well. But in brief, when the sun had gone to rest, I had spoken with every one of them and was soon a part of their company, and agreed to rise early to take our way to where I have told you.

Nevertheless, while I have time and space, before this tale goes further, I think it is reasonable to tell you all the qualities of each of them, as they appeared to me, what sort of people they were, of what station and how they were fashioned. I will begin with a knight.

There was a Knight and a worthy man, who, from the time when he first rode abroad, loved chivalry, faithfulness and honor, liberality and courtesy. He was valiant in his lord’s war and had campaigned, no man farther, in both Christian and heathen lands, and ever was honored for his worth. He was at Alexandria when it was won; many times in Prussia he sat in the place of honor above knights from all nations; he had fought in Lithuania and in Russia, and no Christian man of his did so more often; he had been in Granada at the siege of Algeciras and in Belmaria; he was at Lyeys and in Attalia when they were won, and had landed with many noble armies in the Levant. He had been in fifteen mortal battles, and had thrice fought for our faith in the lists at Tremessen and always slain

his foe; he had been also, long before, with the lord of Palathia against another heathen host in Turkey; and ever he had great renown. And though he was valorous, he was prudent, and he was as meek as a maiden in his bearing. In all his life he never yet spoke any discourtesy to any living creature, but was truly a perfect gentle knight. To tell you of his equipment, his horses were good but he was not gaily clad. He wore a jerkin of coarse cloth all stained with rust by his coat of mail, for he had just returned from his travels and went to do his pilgrimage.

His son was with him, a young Squire, a lover and a lusty young soldier. His locks were curled as if laid in a press. He may have been twenty years of age, of average height, amazingly nimble and great of strength. He had been, at one time, in a campaign in Flanders, Artois, and Picardy, and had borne himself well, in so little time, in hope to stand in his lady's grace. His clothes were embroidered, red and white, like a meadow full of fresh flowers. All the day long he was singing or playing upon the flute; he was as fresh as the month of May. His coat was short, with long, wide sleeves. Well could he sit a horse and ride, make songs, joust and dance, draw and write. He loved so ardently that at night-time he slept no more than a nightingale. He was courteous, modest and helpful, and carved before his father at table.

They had a Yeoman with them; on that journey they would have no other servants. He was clad in a coat and hood of green, and in his hand he bore a mighty bow and under his belt a neat sheaf of arrows, bright and sharp, with peacock feathers. He knew how to handle his gear like a good yeoman; his arrows did not fall short on account of any poorly adjusted feathers. His head was cropped and his face brown. He understood well all the practice of woodcraft. He wore a gay arm-guard of leather and at one side a sword and buckler; at the other a fine dagger, well fashioned and as sharp as a spear-point; on his breast an image of St. Christopher in bright silver, and over his shoulder a horn on a green baldric. He was a woodsman indeed, I believe.

There was also a nun, a Prioress, quiet and simple in her smiling; her greatest oath was "by Saint Loy." She was named Madame Eglantine. Well she sang the divine service, intoned in a seemly manner in her nose, and spoke French elegantly, after the manner of Stratford-atte-Bow, for of Parisian French she knew nothing. She had been well taught the art of eating, and let no morsel fall from her lips, and wet but her finger-tips in the sauce. She knew how to lift and how to hold a bit so that not a drop fell upon her breast. Her pleasure was all in courtesy. She wiped her upper lip so well that no spot of grease was to be seen in her cup after she had drunk; and very dainty she was in reaching for her food. And surely she was of fine behavior, pleasant and amiable of bearing. She took pains to imitate court manners, to be stately in her demeanor and to be held worthy of reverence. But to tell you of her character, she was so charitable and so tender-hearted she would weep if she saw a mouse caught in a trap if it were dead or bleeding. She had certain small dogs, which she fed upon roasted meat or milk and finest wheaten bread. She would weep sorely if one of them died or was struck at sharply with a stick. She was all warm feeling and tender heart. Her wimple was pleated neatly. Her nose was slender, her eyes gray as glass, her mouth small and soft and red. Certainly she had a fine forehead, almost a span high; truly she was not undersized. Her cloak was neatly made, I could tell. About her arm was a coral rosary, the larger beads of green, upon which hung a brooch of shining gold; on it was engraved first an A with a crown, and after that Amor vincit omnia.

Another Nun, her chaplain, was with her, and three Priests.

There was a Monk, a very fine and handsome one, a great rider about the country-side and a lover of hunting, a manly man in all things, fit to be an abbot. He had many fine horses in his stable, and when he rode, men could hear his bridle jingling in a whistling wind as clear and loud as the chapel-bell where this lord was



IMAGE 5.3: THE CANTERBURY TALES TITLE PAGE | The title page for *The Canterbury Tales* featuring an artist rendering of Geoffrey Chaucer gazing into a well, a paper chalice in his hand.

Author: Edward Burne-Jones
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prior. Because the rule of St. Maurus or of St. Benedict was old and something austere, this same monk let such old things pass and followed the ways of the newer world. He gave not a plucked hen for the text that hunters are not holy, or that a careless monk (that is to say, one out of his cloister) is like a fish out of water; for that text he would not give a herring. And I said his opinion was right; why should he study and lose his wits ever poring over a book in the cloister, or toil with his hands and labor as St. Augustine bids? How shall the world be served? Let St. Augustine have his work to himself. Therefore he rode hard, followed greyhounds as swift as birds on the wing. All his pleasure was in riding and hunting the hare, and he spared no cost on those. I saw his sleeves edged at the wrist with fine dark fur, the finest in the country, and to fasten his hood under his chin he had a finely-wrought brooch of gold; in the larger end was a love-knot. His bald head shone like glass; so did his face, as if it had been anointed. He was a sleek, fat lord. His bright eyes rolled in his head, glowing like the fire under a cauldron. His boots were of rich soft leather, his horse in excellent condition. Now certainly he was a fine prelate. He was not pale, like a wasted spirit; best of any roast he loved a fat swan. His palfrey was as brown as a berry.

There was a begging Friar, lively and jolly, a very dignified fellow. In all the four orders there is not one so skilled in gay and flattering talk. He had, at his own expense, married off many young women; he was a noble pillar of his order! He was well beloved and familiar among franklins everywhere in his countryside, and also with worthy town women, for he had, as he said himself, more virtue as confessor than a parson, for he held a papal license. Very sweetly he heard confession, and his absolution was pleasant; he was an easy man to give penance, when he looked to have a good dinner. Gifts to a poor order are a sign that a man has been well confessed, he maintained; if a man gave, he knew he was contrite. For many people are so stern of heart that they cannot weep, though they suffer sorely; therefore, instead of weeping and praying, men may give silver to the poor friars. The tip of his hood was stuffed full of knives and pins as presents to fine women. And certainly he had a pleasant voice in singing, and well could play the fiddle; in singing ballads he bore off the prize. His neck was as white as the fleur-de-lis, and he was as strong as a champion. He knew all the town taverns, and every inn-keeper and bar-maid, better than the lepers and beggar-women. For it accorded not with a man of his importance to have acquaintance with sick lepers; it was not seemly, it profited not, to deal with any such poor trash, but all with rich folk and sellers of victual. But everywhere that advantage might follow he was courteous, lowly and serviceable. Nowhere was any so capable; he was the best beggar in his house, and gave a certain yearly payment so that none of his brethren might trespass on his routes. Though a widow might not have an old shoe to give, so pleasant was his "In principio," he would have his farthing before he went. He gained more from his begging than he ever needed, I believe! He would romp about like a puppy-dog. On days of reconciliation, or love-days, he was very helpful, for he was not like a cloister-monk or a poor scholar with a threadbare cope, but like a Master of Arts or a cardinal. His half-cope was of double worsted and came from the clothes-press rounding out like a bell. He pleased his whim by lisping a little, to make his English sound sweet upon his tongue, and in his harping and singing his eyes twinkled in his head like the stars on a frosty night. This worthy friar was named Hubert.

There was a Merchant with a forked beard, in parti-colored garb. High he sat upon his horse, a Flanders beaver-hat on his head, and boots fastened neatly with rich clasps. He uttered his opinions pompously, ever tending to the increase of his own profit; at any cost he wished the sea were safeguarded between Middleburg and Orwell. In selling crown-pieces he knew how to profit by the exchange. This worthy man employed his wit cunningly; no creature knew that he was in debt, so stately he was of demeanor in bargaining and borrowing. He was a worthy man indeed, but, to tell the truth, I know not his name.

There was also a Clerk from Oxford who had long gone to lectures on logic. His horse was as lean as a rake, and he was not at all fat, I think, but looked hollow-cheeked, and grave likewise. His little outer cloak was threadbare, for he had no worldly skill to beg for his needs, and as yet had gained himself no benefice. He would rather have had at his bed's head twenty volumes of Aristotle and his philosophy, bound in red or black, than rich robes or a fiddle or gay psaltery. Even though he was a philosopher, he had little gold in his money-box! But all that he could get from his friends he spent on books and learning, and would pray diligently for the souls of who gave it to him to stay at the schools. Of study he took most heed and care. Not a word did he speak more than was needed, and the little he spoke was formal and modest, short and quick, and full of high matter. All that he said tended toward moral virtue. Gladly would he learn and gladly teach.

There was also a Sergeant of the Law, an excellent man, wary and wise, a frequenter of the porch of Paul's Church. He was discreet and of great distinction; or seemed such, his words were so sage. He had been judge at court, by patent and full commission; with his learning and great reputation he had earned many fees and robes. Such a man as he for acquiring goods there never was; anything that he desired could be shown to be held in unrestricted possession, and none could find a flaw in his deeds. Nowhere was there so busy a man, and yet he seemed busier than he was. He knew in precise terms every case and judgment since King William the Conqueror, and every statute fully, word for word, and none could chide at his writing. He rode in simple style in a parti-colored coat and a belt of silk with small cross-bars. Of his appearance I will not make a longer story.

Traveling with him was a Franklin, with a beard as white as a daisy, a ruddy face and a sanguine temper. Well he loved a sop of wine of a morning. He was accustomed to live in pleasure, for he was a very son of Epicurus, who held the opinion that perfect felicity stands in pleasure alone. He ever kept an open house, like a true St. Julian in his own country-side. His bread and his wine both were always of the best; never were a man's wine-vaults better stored. His house was never without a huge supply of fish or meat; in his house it snowed meat and drink, and every fine pleasure that a man could dream of. According to the season of the year he varied his meats and his suppers. Many fat partridges were in his cage and many bream and pike in his fishpond. Woe to his cook unless his sauces were pungent and sharp, and his gear ever in order! All the long day stood a great table in his hall fully prepared. When the justices met at sessions of court, there he lorded it full grandly, and many times he sat as knight of the shire in parliament. A dagger hung at his girdle, and a pouch of taffeta, white as morning's milk. He had been sheriff and auditor; nowhere was so worthy a vassal.

A Haberdasher, a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyer, and an Upholsterer were with us also, all in the same dress of a great and splendid guild. All fresh and new was their gear. Their knives were not tipped with brass but all with fine-wrought silver, like their girdles and their pouches. Each of them seemed a fair burges to sit in a guildhall on a dais. Each for his discretion was fit to be alderman of his guild, and had goods and income sufficient for that. Their wives would have consented, I should think; otherwise, they would be at fault. It is a fair thing to be called madame, and to walk ahead of other folks to vigils, and to have a mantle carried royally before them.

They had a Cook with them for that journey, to boil chickens with the marrow-bones and tart powder-merchant and cyprus-root. Well he knew a draught of London ale! He could roast and fry and broil and stew, make dainty pottage and bake pies well. It was a great pity, it seemed to me, that he had a great ulcer on his shin, for he made capon-in-cream with the best of them.

There was a Shipman, from far in the West; for anything I know, he was from Dartmouth. He rode a nag, as well as he knew how, in a gown of coarse wool to the knee. He had a dagger hanging on a lace around his neck and under his arm. The hot summer had made his hue brown. In truth he was a good fellow: many draughts of wine had he drawn at Bordeaux while the merchant slept. He paid no heed to nice conscience; on the high seas, if he fought and had the upper hand, he made his victims walk the plank. But in skill to reckon his moon, his tides, his currents and dangers at hand, his harbors and navigation, there was none like him from Hull to Carthage. In his undertakings he was bold and shrewd. His beard had been shaken by many tempests. He knew the harbors well from Gothland to Cape Finisterre, and every creek in Spain and in Brittany. His ship was called the Maudelayne.

With us was a Doctor, a Physician; for skill in medicine and in surgery there was no peer in this entire world. He watched sharply for favorable hours and an auspicious ascendant for his patients' treatment, for he was well grounded in astrology. He knew the cause of each malady, if it was hot, cold, dry or moist, from where it had sprung and of what humor. He was a thorough and a perfect practitioner. Having found the cause and source of his trouble, quickly he had ready the sick man's cure. He had his apothecaries all prepared to send him electuaries and drugs, for each helped the other's gain; their friendship was not formed of late! He knew well the old Aesculapius, Dioscorides and Rufus, Hippocrates, Haly and Galen, Serapion, Rhasis and Avicenna, Averroes, Damascene and Constantine, Bernard, Gatisden and Gilbertine. His own diet was moderate, with no excess, but nourishing and simple to digest. His study was only a little on Scripture. He was clad in red and blue-gray cloth, lined with taffeta and sendal silk. Yet he was but moderate in spending, and kept what he gained during the pestilence. Gold is a medicine from the heart in physicians' terms; doubtless that was why he loved gold above all else.

There was a Good Wife from near Bath, but she was somewhat deaf, and that was pity. She was so skilled in making cloth that she surpassed those of Ypres and Ghent. In all the parish there was no wife who should march up to make an offering before her, and if any did, so angered she was that truly she was out of all charity. Her kerchiefs were very fine in texture; and I dare swear those that were on her head for Sunday weighed ten pounds. Her hose were of a fine scarlet and tightly fastened, and her shoes were soft and new. Her face was bold and fair and red. All her life she was a worthy woman; she had had five husbands at the church-door, besides other company in her youth, but of that there is no need to speak now. She had thrice been at Jerusalem; many distant streams had she crossed; she had been on pilgrimages to Boulogne and to Rome, to Santiago in Galicia and to Cologne. This wandering by the way had taught her various things. To tell the truth, she was gap-toothed; she sat easily on an ambling horse, wearing a fair wimple and on her head a hat as broad as a buckler or target. About her broad hips was a short riding skirt and on her feet a pair of sharp spurs. Well could she laugh and prattle in company. Love and its remedies she knew all about, I dare give my word, for she had been through the old dance.

There was a good man of religion, a poor Parson, but rich in holy thought and deed. He was also a learned man, a clerk, and would faithfully preach Christ's gospel and devoutly instruct his parishioners. He was benign, wonderfully diligent, and patient in adversity, as he was often tested. He was loath to excommunicate for unpaid tithes, but rather would give to his poor parishioners out of the church alms and also of his own substance; in little he found sufficiency. His parish was wide and the houses far apart, but not even for thunder or rain did he neglect to visit the

farthest, great or small, in sickness or misfortune, going on foot, a staff in his hand. To his sheep did he give this noble example, which he first set into action and afterward taught; these words he took out of the gospel, and this similitude he added also, that if gold will rust, what shall iron do? For if a priest upon whom we trust were to be foul, it is no wonder that an ignorant layman would be corrupt; and it is a shame (if a priest will but pay attention to it) that a shepherd should be defiled and the sheep clean. A priest should give good example by his cleanness how his sheep should live. He would not farm out his benefice, nor leave his sheep stuck fast in the mire, while he ran to London to St. Paul's, to get an easy appointment as a chantry-priest, or to be retained by some guild, but dwelled at home and guarded his fold well, so that the wolf would not make it miscarry. He was no hireling, but a shepherd. And though he was holy and virtuous, he was not pitiless to sinful men, nor cold or haughty of speech, but both discreet and benign in his teaching; to draw folk up to heaven by his fair life and good example, this was his care. But when a man was stubborn, whether of high or low estate, he would scold him sharply. There was nowhere a better priest than he. He looked for no pomp and reverence, nor yet was his conscience too particular; but the teaching of Christ and his apostles he taught, and first he followed it himself.

With him was his brother, a Ploughman, who had drawn many cartloads of dung. He was a faithful and good toiler, living in peace and perfect charity. He loved God best at all times with all his whole heart, in good and ill fortune, and then his neighbor even as himself. He would thresh and ditch and delve for every poor person without pay, but for Christ's sake, if he were able. He paid his tithes fairly and well on both his produce and his goods. He wore a ploughman's frock and rode upon a mare.

There was a Reeve also and a Miller, a Summoner and a Pardoner, a Manciple and myself. There were no more.

The Miller was a stout fellow, big of bones and brawn; and well he showed them, for everywhere he went to a wrestling match he would always carry off the prize ram. He was short-shouldered and broad, a thick, knotty fellow. There was no door that he could not heave off its hinges, or break with his head at a running. His beard was as red as any sow or fox, and broad like a spade as well. Upon the very tip of his nose he had a wart, and on it stood a tuft of red hair like the bristles on a sow's ears, and his nostrils were black and wide. At his thigh hung a sword and buckler. His mouth was as great as a great furnace. He was a teller of dirty stories and a buffoon, and it was mostly of sin and obscenity. He knew well how to steal corn and take his toll of meal three times over; and yet he had a golden thumb, by God! He wore a white coat and a blue hood. He could blow and play the bagpipe well, and with its noise he led us out of town.

There was a gentle Manciple of an Inn of Court, of whom other stewards might take example for craftiness in buying victuals. Whether he paid in cash or took on credit, he was so watchful in his buying that he was always ahead and in good standing. Now is it not a full fair gift of God that the wit of such an unlettered man shall surpass the wisdom of a great body of learned men? He had more than a score of masters, expert and diligent in law, of whom in that house there were a dozen worthy to be stewards of lands and revenues of any lord in England, to let him live upon his income, honorably, free from debt, unless he were mad, or live as plainly as he would; or able to help a whole shire in any case that might occur. And yet this Manciple hoodwinked all of them.

The Reeve was a slender, bilious man. His beard was shaven as close as could be, and his hair was cut short around his ears and docked in front like a priest's. His legs were full and lean like a stick; I could see no calf. He could well keep a bin and a garner and no inspector could get the best of him. In the drought or in the wet he could foretell the yield of his grain and seed. His lord's sheep, poultry and cattle, his dairy and swine and horses and all his stock, this Reeve had wholly under his governance, and submitted his accounts thereon ever since his lord was twenty years of age; and none



IMAGE 5.4: HENGWRT MANUSCRIPT | The top of the page containing the General Prologue for the Canterbury Tales from the Hengwrt manuscript.

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could ever find him out in arrears. There was no bailiff nor herdsman nor other churl whose tricks and craftiness he didn't know. They were as afraid of him as of the plague. His dwelling-place was a pleasant one on a heath, all shaded with green trees. Better than his lord he knew how to pick up wealth, and had a rich private hoard; he knew how to please his master cunningly by giving and lending him out of what was his master's by right, and to win thanks for that, and a coat and hood as a reward too. In his youth he had learned a good trade and was a fine carpenter and workman. This Reeve sat upon a fine dapple gray cob named Scot. He wore a long surcoat of blue and at his side a rusty blade. He was from Norfolk, near a town they call Baldeswell. His coat was tucked up around him like a friar's, and he always rode last of us all.

A Summoner was with us there, a fire-red cherubim-faced fellow, salt-phlegmed and pimply, with slits for eyes, scabby black eyebrows and thin ragged beard, and as hot and lecherous as a sparrow. Children were terrified at his visage. No quicksilver, white-lead, brimstone, borax nor ceruse, no cream of tartar nor any ointment that would clean and burn, could help his white blotches or the knobs on his chaps. He loved garlic, onions and leeks too well, and to drink strong wine as red as blood, and then he would talk and cry out like mad. And after drinking deep of wine he would speak no word but Latin, in which he had a few terms, two or three, learned out of some canon. No wonder was that, for he heard it all day long, and you know well how a jay can call "Walter" after hearing it a long time, as well as the pope could. But if he were tested in any other point, his learning was found to be all spent. *Questio quid juris*, he was always crying. He was a kind and gentle rogue; a better fellow I never knew; for a quart of wine he would allow a good fellow to have his concubine for a year and completely excuse him. Secretly he knew how to swindle anyone. And if anywhere he found a good fellow, he would teach him in such case to have no fear of the archdeacon's excommunication, unless a man's soul is in his purse, for it was in his purse he should be punished. "The Archdeacon's hell is your purse," he said. (But well I know he lied in his teeth; every guilty man should fear the church's curse, for it will slay, just as absolution saves, and also let him beware of a *significavit*.) Within his jurisdiction on his own terms he held all the young people of the diocese, knew their guilty secrets, and was their chief adviser. He had a garland on his head large enough for an ale-house sign, and carried a round loaf of bread as big as a buckler.

With him rode a gentle Pardoner, of Roncesvalles, his friend and companion, who had come straight from the court of Rome. He sang loudly, "Come here, love, to me," while the Summoner joined him with a stiff bass; never was there a trumpet of half such a sound. This Pardoner had waxy-yellow hair, hanging smooth, like a hank of flax, spread over his shoulders in thin strands. For sport he wore no hood, which was trussed up in his wallet; riding with his hair disheveled, bareheaded except for his cap, he thought he was all in the latest fashion. His eyes were glaring like a hare's. He had a veronica sewed on his cap, and his wallet, brimful of pardons hot from Rome, lay before him on his saddle. His voice was as small as a goat's. He had no beard nor ever would have, his face was as smooth as if lately shaven; I believe he was a mare or a gelding. But as for his trade, from Berwick to Dover there was not such another pardoner. In his bag he had a pillow-case which he said was our Lady's kerchief, and a small piece of the sail which he said St. Peter had when he walked upon the sea and Jesus Christ caught him. He had a cross of latoun, set full of false gems, and pigs' bones in a glass. But with these relics, when he found a poor parson dwelling in the country, in one day he gained himself more money than the parson gained in two months. And thus, with flattering deceit and tricks, he made the parson and the people his dupes. But to give him his due, after all he was a noble ecclesiastic in church; he could read well a lesson or legend and best of all sing an offertory. For he knew well that when that was done he must preach and file his tongue smooth, to win silver as he well knew how. Therefore he sang merrily and loud.

Now I have told you in few words the station, the array, the number of this company and why they were assembled in Southwark as well, at this noble inn, the Tabard, close to the Bell tavern. But now it is time to say how we behaved that same evening, when we had arrived at that inn; and afterward I will tell you of our journey and the rest of our pilgrimage.

But first I pray that by your courtesy you ascribe it not to my ill manners if I speak plainly in this matter, telling you their words and cheer, and if I speak their very words as they were. For this you know as well as I, that whoever tells a tale that another has told, he must repeat every word, as nearly as he can, although he may speak ever so rudely and freely. Otherwise, he must tell his tale falsely, or pretend, or find new words. He may not spare any, even if it were his own brother; he is bound to say one word as well as the next. Christ himself spoke plainly in Holy Scriptures and you know well there is no baseness in that. And Plato, whoever can read him, says that the word must be cousin to the deed.

I also pray you to forgive me though I have not set folk here in this tale according to their station, as they should be. My wit is short, you can well understand.

Our host put us all in good spirits, and soon brought us to supper and served us with the best of provisions. The wine was strong and very glad we were to drink. Our Host was a seemly man, fit to be marshal in a banquet-hall, a large man with bright eyes, bold in speech, wise and discreet, lacking nothing of manhood: there is not a fairer bur-

gess in Cheapside. He was in all things a very merry fellow, and after supper, when we had paid our bills, he began to jest and speak of mirth among other things.

“Now gentle people,” he said, “truly you are heartily welcome to me, for, by my word, if I shall tell the truth, I have not seen this year so merry a company at this inn at once. I would gladly make mirth if I only knew how. And I have just now thought of a mirthful thing to give you pleasure, which shall cost nothing. You go to Canterbury, God speed you, and may the blessed martyr duly reward you! I know full well, along the way you mean to tell tales and amuse yourselves, for in truth it is no comfort or mirth to ride along dumb as a stone.

“And therefore, as I said, I will make you a game. If it please you all by common consent to stand by my words and to do as I shall tell you, now, by my father’s soul (and he is in heaven), tomorrow as you ride along, if you are not merry, I will give you my head. Hold up your hands, without more words!”

Our mind was not long to decide. We thought it not worth debating, and agreed with him without more thought, and told him to say his verdict as he wished.

“Gentle people,” said he, “please listen now, but take it not, I pray you, disdainfully. To speak briefly and plainly, this is the point, that each of you for pastime shall tell two tales in this journey to Canterbury, and two others on the way home, of things that have happened in the past. And whichever of you bears himself best, that is to say, that tells now tales most instructive and delighting, shall have a supper at the expense of us all, sitting here in this place, beside this post, when we come back from Canterbury. And to add to your sport I will gladly go with you at my own cost, and be your guide. And whoever opposes my judgment shall pay all that we spend on the way. If you agree that this will be so, tell me now, without more words, and without delay I will plan for that.”

We agreed to this thing and pledged our word with glad hearts, and prayed him to do so, and to be our ruler and to remember and judge our tales, and to appoint a supper at a certain price. We would be ruled at his will in great and small, and thus with one voice we agreed to his judgment. At this the wine was fetched, and we drank and then each went to rest without a longer stay.

In the morning, when the day began to spring, our host arose and played rooster to us all, and gathered us in a flock. Forth we rode, a little faster than a walk, to St. Thomas-a-Watering. There our Host drew up his horse and said, “Listen, gentle people, if you will. You know your agreement; I remind you of it. If what you said at the hour of evensong last night is still what you agree to this morning at the time of matins, let us see who shall tell the first tale. So may I ever drink beer or wine, whoever rebels against my judgment shall pay all that is spent on the journey. Now draw cuts, before we depart further; he who has the shortest shall begin the tales. Sir Knight, my master and my lord,” said he, “now draw your lot, for this is my will, Come nearer, my lady Prioress, and you, sir Clerk, be not shy, study not; set your hands to them, every one of you.”

Without delay every one began to draw, and in short, whether it were by chance or not, the truth is, the lot fell to the Knight, at which every one was merry and glad. He was to tell his tale, as was reasonable, according to the agreement that you have heard. What need is there for more words?

When this good man saw it was so, as one discreet and obedient to his free promise he said, “Since I begin the game, what, in God’s name, welcome be the cut! Now let us ride on, and listen to what I say.” And at that word we rode forth on our journey. And he soon began his tale with a cheerful spirit, and spoke in this way.

Here ends the Prologue of this book.

The Miller’s Tale

Here follow the words between the Host and the Miller.

The Prologue of the Miller’s Tale

When the Knight had ended his tale, in the entire crowd was there nobody, young or old, who did not say it was a noble history and worthy to be called to mind; and especially each of the gentle people. Our Host laughed and swore, “So may I thrive, this goes well! The bag is unbuckled, let see now who shall tell another tale, for truly the sport has begun well. Now you, Sir Monk, if you can, tell something to repay the Knight’s story with.”

The Miller, who had drunk himself so completely pale that he could scarcely sit on his horse, would not take off his hood or hat, or wait and mind his manners for no one, but began to cry aloud in Pilate’s voice, and swore by arms and blood and head, “I know a noble tale for the occasion, to repay the Knight’s story with.”

Our Host saw that he was all drunk with ale and said, “Wait, Robin, dear brother, some better man shall speak first; wait, and let us work thriftily.”

“By God’s soul!” he said, “I will not do that! I will speak, or else go my way!”

“Tell on, in the Devil’s name!” answered our Host. “You are a fool; your wits have been overcome.”

“Now listen, one and all! But first,” said the Miller, “I make a protestation that I am drunk; I know it by my voice. And therefore if I speak as I should not, blame it on the ale of Southwark, I pray you; for I will tell a legend and

a life of a carpenter and his wife, and how a clerk made a fool of the carpenter.”

“Shut your trap!” the Reeve answered and said, “Set aside your rude drunken ribaldry. It is a great folly and sin to injure or defame any man, and to bring woman into such bad reputation. You can say plenty about other matters.

This drunken Miller answered back immediately and said, “Oswald, dear brother, he is no cuckold who has no wife. But I do not say, therefore, that you are one. There are many good wives, and always a thousand good to one bad. That you know well yourself, if you have not gone mad. Why are you angry now with my tale? I have a wife as well as you, by God, yet for all the oxen in my plough I would not presume to be able to judge myself if I may be a cuckold; I will believe well I am not one. A husband should not be too inquisitive about God’s private matters, nor of his wife’s. He can find God’s plenty there; he need not inquire about the remainder.”

What more can I say, but this Miller would withhold his word for nobody, and told his churl’s tale in his own fashion. I think that I shall retell it here. And therefore I beg every gentle creature, for the love of God, not to judge that I tell it thus out of evil intent, but only because I must truly repeat all their tales, whether they are better or worse, or else tell some of my matter falsely. And therefore whoever wishes not to hear it, let them turn the leaf over and choose another tale; for they shall find plenty of historical matters, great and small, concerning noble deeds, and morality and holiness as well. Do not blame me if you choose incorrectly. The Miller is a churl, you know well, and so was the Reeve (and many others), and the two of them spoke of ribaldry. Think well, and do not blame me, and people should not take a game seriously as well.

Here ends the Prologue.

Here begins the Miller’s Tale.

A while ago there dwelt at Oxford a rich churl fellow, who took guests as boarders. He was a carpenter by trade. With him dwelt a poor scholar who had studied the liberal arts, but all his delight was turned to learning astrology. He knew how to work out certain problems; for instance, if men asked him at certain celestial hours when there should be drought or rain, or what should happen in any matter; I cannot count every one.

This clerk was named gentle Nicholas. He was well skilled in secret love and consolation; and he was also sly and secretive about it; and as meek as a maiden to look upon. He had a chamber to himself in that lodging-house, without any company, and handsomely decked with sweet herbs; and he himself was as sweet as the root of licorice or any setwall. His Almagest, and other books great and small, his astrolabe, which he used in his art, and his counting-stones for calculating, all lay neatly by themselves on shelves at the head of his bed.

His clothes-press was covered with a red woolen cloth, and above it was set a pleasant psaltery, on which he made melody at night so sweetly that the entire chamber was full of it. He would sing the hymn Angelus ad Virginem, and after that the King’s Note. Often was his merry throat blessed. And so this sweet clerk passed his time by help of what income he had and his friends provided.

This carpenter had newly wedded a wife, eighteen years of age, whom he loved more than his own soul. He was jealous, and held her closely caged, for she was young, and he was much older and judged himself likely to be made a cuckold.

His wit was rude, and he didn’t know Cato’s teaching that instructed that men should wed their equal. Men should wed according to their own station in life, for youth and age are often at odds. But since he had fallen into the snare, he must endure his pain, like other people.

This young wife was fair, and her body moreover was as graceful and slim as any weasel. She wore a striped silken belt, and over her loins an apron white as morning’s milk, all flounced out. Her smock was white and embroidered on the collar, inside and outside, in front and in back, with coal-black silk; and of the same black silk were the strings of her white hood, and she wore a broad band of silk, wrapped high about her hair.

And surely she had a lecherous eye; her eyebrows were arched and black as a sloe berry, and partly plucked out to make them narrow. She was more delicious to look on than the young pear-tree in bloom, and softer than a lamb’s wool. From her belt hung a leather purse, tasseled with silk and with beads of brass.

In all this world there is no man so wise who could imagine such a wench, or so lively a little doll. Her hue shone more brightly than the noble newly forged in the Tower. And as for her singing, it was as loud and lively as a swallow’s sitting on a barn. And she could skip and make merry as any kid or calf following its mother. Her mouth was sweet as honeyed ale or mead, or a hoard of apples laid in the hay or heather. She was skittish as a jolly colt, tall as a mast, and upright as a bolt. She wore a brooch on her low collar as broad as the embossed center of a shield, and her shoes were laced high on her legs. She was a primrose, a pig’s-eye, for a lord to lie in his bed or even a yeoman to wed.

Now sir, and again sir, it so chanced that this gentle Nicholas fell to play and romp with this young wife, as clerks are very artful and sly, on a day when her husband was at Osney. And secretly he caught hold of her genitalia and said: “Surely, unless you will love me, sweetheart, I shall die for my secret love of you. And he held her hard by

the thighs and said, "Sweetheart, love me now, or I will die, may God save me!"

She sprang back like a colt in the halter, and wriggled away with her head. "I will not kiss you, in faith," she said. Why, let me be, let me be, Nicholas, or I will cry out, 'Alas! Help!' Take away your hands, by your courtesy!"

But this Nicholas began to beg for her grace, and spoke so fairly and made such offers that at last she granted him her love and swore by Saint Thomas of Kent that she would do his will when she should see her chance.

"My husband is so jealous that unless you are secretive and watch your time, I know very well I am no better than dead. You must be very sly in this thing."

"No, have no fear about that," said Nicholas. "A clerk has spent his time poorly if he can not beguile a carpenter!"

And thus they were agreed and pledged to watch for a time, as I have told. When Nicholas had done so, petted her well on her limbs, and kissed her sweetly, he took his psalter and made melody and played fervently.

Then it happened on a holy day that this wife went to the parish church to work Christ's own works. Her forehead shone as bright as day, since she had scrubbed it when she had finished her tasks.

Now at that church there was a parish clerk named Absalom. His hair was curly and shone like gold, and spread out like a large broad fan; its neat part ran straight and even. His complexion was rosy, and his eyes as gray as goose-quills. His leather shoes were carved in such a way that they resembled a window in Paul's Church. He went clad precisely and neatly all in red hose and a kirtle of a light watchet-blue; the laces were set in it fair and thick, and over it he had a lively surplice, as white as a blossom on a twig. God bless me, but he was a sweet lad!

He knew well how to clip and shave and let blood, and make a quittance or a charter for land. He could trip and dance in twenty ways in the manner of Oxford in that day, and cast with his legs back and forth, and play songs on a small fiddle. He could play on his cittern as well, and sometimes sang in a loud treble. In the whole town there was no brew-house or tavern where any tapster might be that he did not visit in his merrymaking. But to tell the truth he was some-what squeamish about farting and rough speech.

This Absalom, so pretty and fine, went on this holy day with a censer, diligently incensing the wives of the parish, and he cast many longing looks on them, and especially on this carpenter's wife. To look at her seemed to him a sweet employment, as she was so sweet and proper and lusty; I dare say, if she had been a mouse and he a cat, he would have pounced on her immediately. And this sweet parish-clerk had such a love-longing in his heart that at the offertory he would take nothing from any wife; for courtesy, he said, he would take none.

When at night the moon shone very beautifully and Absalom intended to remain awake all night for love's sake, he took his cittern and went forth, amorous and jolly, until he came to the carpenter's house a little after the cocks had crowed, and pulled himself up by a casement-window.

Dear lady, if your will so be,
I pray you that you pity me

He sang in his sweet small voice, in nice harmony with his cittern.

This carpenter woke, heard his song and said without hesitation to his wife, "What, Alison! Don't you hear Absalom chanting this way under our own bedroom-wall?"

"Yes, God knows, John," she answered him, "I hear every bit of it."

Thus it went on; what would you have better than well-enough? From day to day this jolly Absalom wooed her until he was all woe-begone. He remained awake all night and all day, he combed his spreading locks and preened himself, he wooed her by go-betweens and agents, and swore he would be her own page; he sang quavering like a nightingale; he sent her mead, and wines sweetened and spiced, and wafers piping hot from the coals, and because she was from the town he proffered her money. For some people will be won by rich gifts and some by blows and some by courtesy. Sometimes, to show his cheerfulness and skill, he would play Herod on a high scaffold.

But in such a case what could help him? She so loved gentle Nicholas that Absalom may as well go blow the buck's-horn. For all his labor he had nothing but scorn, and thus she made Absalom her ape and turned all his earnest to a joke. This proverb is true—it is no lie. Men say it is just so: "The sly nearby one makes the far dear one loathed." For though Absalom may go mad for it, because he was far from her eye, this nearby Nicholas stood in his light. Now bear yourself well, gentle Nicholas, for Absalom may wail and sing "Alack!"

And so it happened one Saturday that the carpenter had gone to Oseney, and gentle Nicholas and Alison had agreed upon this, that Nicholas would create a ruse to beguile this poor jealous husband; and if the game went as planned, she should be his, for this was his desire and hers also. And immediately, without more words, Nicholas would delay no longer, but had food and drink for a day or two carried softly into his chamber, and instructed her say to her husband, if he asked about him, that she did not know where he was; that she had not set eyes upon him all that day and she believed he was in some malady, for not by any crying out could her maid rouse him; he would not answer at all, for nothing.

Thus passed forth all that Saturday; Nicholas lay still in his chamber, and ate and slept or did what he wished,

until Sunday toward sundown. This simple carpenter had great wonder about Nicholas, what could ail him. "By Saint Thomas," he said, "I am afraid all is not well with Nicholas. God forbid that he has died suddenly! This world nowadays is so ticklish, surely; to-day I saw carried to church a corpse that I saw at work last Monday. Go up, call at his door," he said to his boy, "or knock with a stone; see how it is, and tell me straight."

This boy went up sturdily, stood at the chamber-door, and cried and knocked like mad: "What! How! What are you doing, master Nicholas? How can you sleep all day long?"

But all was for nothing; he heard not a word. Then he found a hole, low down in the wall, where the cat would usually creep in; and through that he looked far into it and at last caught sight of him.

Nicholas sat ever gaping upward as if he were peering at the new moon. Down went the boy, and told his master in what plight he saw this man.

The carpenter began to cross himself and said, "Help us, Saint Frideswide! People know little what shall happen to them. This man with his astronomy is fallen into some madness or some fit; I always thought how it would end this way. Men were not intended to know God's secrets. Yes, happy is an unlearned man that never had schooling and knows nothing but his beliefs!

"So fared another clerk with his astronomy; he walked in the fields to look upon the stars, to see what was to happen, until he fell into a clay-pit that he did not see! But yet, by Saint Thomas, I am very sorry about gentle Nicholas. By Jesus, King of Heaven, he shall be scolded for his studying if I may. Get me a staff, Robin, so that I can pry under the door while you heave it up. I believe we shall rouse him from his studying!"

And so he went to the chamber door. His boy was a strong lad, and quickly heaved the door up by the hinges, and it immediately fell flat upon the floor. Nicholas sat ever as still as a stone, ever gaping into the air. This carpenter believed he had fallen into despair, and seized him mightily by the shoulders and shook him hard and cried wildly, "What, Nicholas! What, ho! What, look down! Awake, think on Christ's passion; I cross thee from elves and un-earthly creatures!" And at that point he said the night-spell, toward the four corners of the house and on the outside of the threshold of the door:

Jesus Christ and sweet Saint Benedict
 Bless this house from every wicked sprit.
 For the night-hag, the white pater noster;
 Where did you go, Saint Peter's sister?

At last this gentle Nicholas began to sigh sorely, and said, "Alack! Shall the entire world be destroyed again now?" "What are you saying?" said the carpenter. "What now! Think on God, as we do, we men that work."

"Fetch me a drink," said Nicholas, "and after I will speak privately of a certain thing that concerns you and me both. I will tell it to no other man, you can be sure."

The carpenter went down and came again bringing a large quart of mighty ale; and when each of them had drunk his share, Nicholas shut his door fast and set the carpenter down beside him.

"John, my dear host," he said, "you shall swear to me here on your honor that you will reveal this secret to no creature; for it is Christ's own secret that I show you, and if you tell it to any you are a lost man. For this vengeance you will receive, therefore: if you betray me, you shall run mad!"

"No, may Christ and His holy blood forbid!" said this simple man. "I am no blabber, and though I say it myself, I am not wont to prate. Say what you will, I shall never utter it to man, woman or child, by Him That harrowed hell!"

"Now, John, I will not deceive you," said Nicholas; "I have found by my astrology, as I have been looking in the shining moon, that now a Monday next, about a quarter through the night, there shall fall a rain so wild and mad that never was Noah's flood half so great. This world shall all be drowned in less than an hour, so hideous shall be the downpour. Thus shall all mankind perish in the flood."

"Alas, my wife! And shall she drown?" this carpenter answered, and nearly fell over for sorrow. "Alas, my Alison! Is there no remedy?"

"Why yes, before God, if you will work according to wise advising," said gentle Nicholas; "but you may not work out of your own head. For thus says Solomon, and he was right trustworthy, "Work all by counsel, and you shall never repent." And if you will work after good advice, I undertake without mast or sail to save both her and you and me. Have you not heard how Noah was saved, when our Lord had warned him that the entire world should be destroyed with water?"

"Yes," said the carpenter, "I heard it long, long ago."

"Have you not heard also," said Nicholas, "the woe that Noah and his sons had before he could get his wife aboard? He had rather than all his black rams then, I dare be bound, that she had had a ship all to herself! Do you know then what is best to do? This thing calls for haste, and on an urgent matter one may not preach or delay. Go immediately and get us directly into this house a kneading-trough or else a brewing-tub for each of us (but make

sure that they are large), in which we may swim as if in a barge and have in enough provisions for a day - we will need no more. The water shall slacken and run off about nine o'clock on the next day. But Robin your boy must not know of this, and I cannot save your maid Jill either. Do not ask why, for even if you ask me I will not tell God's secret. It ought to suffice you, if your wits are not turning, to have as great a grace as Noah had. I shall save your wife, I promise you. Go your way now, and make haste.

"But when you have obtained these three kneading-tubs for us three, then you shall hang them from the rafters high in the roof, so that no man notice our device. And when you have done this, and laid our provisions in them nicely, and an axe as well to strike the cord in two when the water comes, and when you have broken a hole on high in the gable toward the garden over the barn, so that we may freely go on our way when the great shower is past - then you will float as merrily, I will be bound, as the white duck after her drake. Then will I call out, 'How, Alison! How, John! Be merry; the flood will soon pass.' And you will answer, 'Hail, Master Nicholas! Good morning, I see you well, it is daylight now!' And then we shall be lords over the entire world until we die, just as Noah and his wife!

"But one thing I warn you of strictly. Be well advised on that night when we have entered aboard ship that none of us speaks a word, neither calls nor cries, but we must be in our prayers. For that is God's own precious command. And your wife and you must hang far apart, so that there will be no folly between you, any more in looking than in action. Now that all this plan is explained to you; go, and may God help you! Tomorrow at night, when people are all in bed, we will creep into our kneading-tubs and sit there, awaiting God's grace. Go your way now; I have no time to make a longer sermon of this. Men say thus: "Send the wise and say nothing." You are so wise that there is no need to teach you. Go, save our lives, I entreat you."

This simple carpenter went his way often crying "alack!" and "alas!"; and told the secret to his wife. And she was wary, and knew better than he what this quaint plan was about. But nevertheless she acted as if she would die, and said, "Alas! Go your way at once and help us to escape, or else we are all lost; I am your true, faithful wedded wife. Go, dear spouse, and help to save us!

Lo, how great a thing is feeling! Men may die of imagination, so deep may the impression be. This simple fellow began to quake; he thought he could truly hear Noah's flood come wallowing like the sea to drown his honey sweet Alison; he wept, wailed and made sorrowful expression, and he sighed with many a sorry gust. He went and got himself a kneading-trough, and after that a tub and a cask, sent them secretly to his house and hung them in the roof. With his own hand he made three ladders, to climb by the rungs and uprights into the tubs hanging among the beams; and supplied tub and trough and cask with bread and cheese as well as good ale in a large jug, sufficient for a day. But before he had made all this gear, he sent his serving boy and girl to London about his business. And as it drew toward night on the Monday, he lit no candle, but shut the door and ordered all things as they should be; and, in brief, up they all three climbed, and sat still while a man could walk a furlong.

"Now mum, and say a pater noster!" said Nicholas; and "Mum!" said John, and "Mum!" Alison. This carpenter sat still and said his prayers, ever listening for the rain, if he could hear it.

The dead sleep, for very weariness and apprehension, fell on this carpenter even about curfew-time or a little later, as I suppose; he groaned sorely in the travail of his spirit, and eke snored, for his head lay uneasily. Down the ladder stalked Nicholas, and Alison sped down very softly; and they were in mirth and glee, until the bells began to sound for lauds, and friars in the chancel began to sing.

This parish-clerk, amorous Absalom, always so woe-begone for love, was at Oseney on that Monday to amuse himself and make merry, with a party; and by chance he secretly asked a cloister-monk after John the carpenter. The monk drew him aside out of the church. "I know not," he said; "I have not seen him work here since Saturday. I believe he has gone where our abbot has sent him for timber, for he is accustomed to go for timber and remain at the grange a day or two. Or else he is at home, certainly. In truth I cannot say where he is."

This Absalom grew very merry of heart, and thought, "Now is the time to wake all night, for certainly since daybreak I have not seen him stirring about his door. On my soul, at cockcrow I shall knock secretly at his window which stands low upon his chamber-wall. To Alison now will I tell the whole of my love-longing, and now I shall not fail at the least to have a kiss from her. I shall have some sort of comfort, in faith. My mouth has itched all day long; that is a sign of kissing at least.

All night eke I dreamed I was at a festival. Therefore I will go sleep an hour or two, and then I will wake all night in mirth."

When the first cock had crowed, up rose this frisky lover, and arrayed him in his gayest with all nicety. But first he chewed cardamoms and licorice to smell sweetly, before he had combed his hair, and put a true-love charm under his tongue, for by this he hoped to find favor. He rambled to the carpenter's house, and stood still under the casement, which was so low it reached to his breast. He gave a soft half-cough,—"What do you, sweet Alison, honey-comb? My fair bird, my darling! Awake, sweet cinnamon, and speak to me. You think right little upon my sorrow, who sweat for your love wherever I go!

No wonder though I languish and sweat! I mourn like a lamb after the dug. In faith, darling, I have such

love-longing that I mourn like the true turtle-dove. I cannot eat, no more than a maiden.”

“Go from the window, Jack-fool,” she said. “On my soul, there will be no singing “Come kiss me now.” I love another better than you, by heaven, Absalom, and else I were at fault. Go your ways, or I will cast a stone at you, and let me sleep, in the Devil’s name!”

“Alas!” he said. “Alackaday that true love was ever so ill bestowed! Then kiss me, since it may be no better, for Jesus’ love, and for the love of me.”

“Will you then go your way with that?” she said.

“Yes, surely, sweetheart,” said this Absalom.

“Then make yourself ready,” she said, “I am coming now.”

And to Nicholas she said silently, “Now hush, and you shall laugh your fill.”

This Absalom set himself down on his knees and said, “I am a lord of the highest degree; for after this I hope there will come more. Sweetheart, your grace, and sweet bird, your favor!”

She unlatches the window, and does so in haste. “Take this,” she said, “come now, and move quickly, lest our neighbors see you.”

This Absalom wiped his mouth dry. Dark as pitch, or as coal, was the night, and at the window she put out her hole, and Absalom, who knew no better or worse but with his mouth he kissed her naked ass so sweetly, before he was aware of this.

He started aback, and thought something was amiss, for well he knew a woman has no beard. He felt something all rough and long-haired, and said, “Fy! alas! What have I done?”

“Tee hee!” she said, and shut the window, and Absalom went forth with troubled steps.

“A beard! A beard!” said handy Nicholas, “By God’s body, this goes fair and well.”

This foolish Absalom heard every bit, and on his lips he began to bite angrily, and said to himself, “I shall pay you back.”

Who rubs now, and who chafes now, his lips with dust, with sand, with straw, with cloth, with chips, but Absalom, who says over and over, “Alas! I commend my soul unto Satan”? But I would rather be revenged for this insult” he said, “than own this entire town. Alas,” he said, “alas, that I did not turn aside!”

His hot love was now cold and entirely quenched; for from that moment that he had kissed her ass, he cared not a straw for things of love, for he was healed of his sickness. Often the things of love he defied, and wept as does a child that is beaten.

This Absalom walked slowly across the street to a smith called Master Gervase, who forged plough-instruments at his forge. He was busily sharpening coulter and share when Absalom knocked very gently and said, “Unlock the door, Gervase, and do it quickly.”

“What! Who are you?”

“It is me, Absalom.”

“What, Absalom! By the cross, why are you up so early? Eh, God bless! What ails you? Some pretty girl, God knows, has brought you to stir so early. By Saint Neot, you know well what I mean!”

This Absalom cared not a peascod for all his mocking, and returned not a word in kind. He had more wool on his distaff than Gervase knew, and said, “Dear friend, that hot coulter in the chimney—lend it to me. I have something to do with it; and I will bring it you again right away.”

“Surely,” answered Gervase, “even if it were gold or nobles in a bag all uncounted, you should have it, as I am a faithful smith! Eh, the Devil, what do you want to do with it?”

“That is as it may be,” said Absalom. “I shall tell you tomorrow;” and he took up the coulter by the cool handle. Softly he went out the door and went to the wall of the carpenter’s house. He coughed first, and knocked withal upon the window, as he did before.

“Who is there that knocks so?” Alison answered. “I warrant it a thief!”

“Why nay,” he said, “God knows, my sweet, I am your Absalom, my sweetheart. I have brought you a ring of gold; my mother gave it me, on my life! It is very fine and nicely engraved. I will give you this, if you kiss me!”

This Nicholas had risen to take a piss, and he thought he would contribute to the joke; he should kiss him before he ran off! And he threw up the window in haste and quietly put his ass out—past the buttocks, all the way to the thigh-bone. Thereupon spoke this clerk Absalom, Speak, sweet bird, I know not where thou art. This Nicholas then let fly a fart as great as a thunder-clap, so much so that with the stroke Absalom was almost blinded; and he was ready with his hot iron and smote Nicholas on the ass.

Off went the skin, about a hands-breadth around, the hot coulter burned his rump so, and for the pain he thought he would die. “Help! Water, water! Help, help, for God’s sake!” he cried like a madman.

The carpenter started out of his slumber; he heard one cry wildly “Water!”, and thought, “Alas! Noah’s flood is coming now!” He sat up without a word, and with his axe struck the cord in two, and down went tub and all; they stopped for nothing until they came to the floor, and there he lay in a swoon.

Up started Alison and Nicholas, and cried “Help!” and “Alack!” in the street. The neighbors young and old ran to stare upon him as he lay yet in a swoon, for with the fall he had broken his arm.

But he must even digest his own trouble, for when he spoke he was talked down by Alison and gentle Nicholas. They told every man he was mad, he was aghast so of “Noah’s flood” in his fantasy, that of his folly he had bought him three kneading-tubs and had hung them above in the roof; and had prayed them for God’s sake to sit with him in the roof, to keep him company.

People laughed at his odd quirk; into the roof they peered and gawked, and turned all his trouble into mirth. For whatever the carpenter answered, it was all for naught; no man heard his speeches, he was so sworn down by the great oaths of the others that in the entire city he was held as mad. Every clerk then agreed with every other clerk: “the man is mad, my dear brother!” And every creature laughed over this contention.

Thus the carpenter lost his wife, for all his watching and jealousy; and Nicholas was sore burned. This tale is done, and God save the entire company.

Here ends the Miller’s Tale.

The Wife of Bath’s Tale

The Prologue of the Wife of Bath’s Tale

“Experience, though it would be no authority in this world, would be quite sufficient for me, to speak of the woe that is in marriage; for, gentle people, since I was twelve years old—thank God, Who lives forever—I have had five husbands at the church-door (for I have been wedded so often); and all were worthy men in their ranks. But in truth I was told not long ago that since Christ went only once to a wedding, in Cana of Galilee, by that same example he taught me that I should be wedded only once. Lo! Hear what a sharp word Jesus, man and God, spoke on a certain occasion beside a well, in reproof of the Samaritan woman. He said, ‘You have had five husbands; and that man who has you now is not your husband.’ Thus he said, certainly. What he meant by it I cannot say; but I ask, why the fifth man was no husband to the Samaritan woman.

“How many could she have in marriage? At this point I have never in my life heard a designation of the number. Men may divine and interpret up and down, but well I know, surely, God expressly instructed us to increase and multiply. I can well understand that noble text. Likewise, I know well he said also that my husband should leave father and mother and take me. But he did not mention any number, not bigamy or of octogamy. Why should men speak villainously of them?

“Lo, Sir Solomon the wise king! I believe he had more than one wife, and I wish to God it were lawful for me to be refreshed half so often! What a gift of God he had in all his wives! No man who lives in this world now has so many. God knows this noble king, to my thinking, had a merry life with each of them, so joyous was his lot! Blessed be God that I wedded five! And they were the best that I could pick out, both in their bodies and of their coffers. A variety of schools make perfect scholars, and much practice in a variety of employments truly makes the perfect workman. I have the schooling of five husbands. I would welcome the sixth, whenever he shall come! In truth, I will not keep myself wholly chaste; when my husband has departed from the world, then some other Christian man shall wed me. For then, the apostle says, I am free, in God’s name, to wed where I wish.

“He says that it is no sin to be wedded; it is better to be wedded than to burn. What do I care if people speak badly of cursed Lamech and his bigamy? Well I know Abraham was a holy man, and Jacob as well, as far as I know, and each of them had more than two wives. And many other holy men did as well.

“When have you seen that in any time great God forbade marriage explicitly? Tell me, I pray you. Or where did he command virginity? You know as well as I, without a doubt, that the apostle, when he speaks of maidenhood, says that he had no instructions on it. Men may counsel a woman to be single, but counseling is not commanding; he left it to our own judgment. For if God had commanded maidenhood, then with that same word had he condemned marrying. And certainly, if no seed were sown, from where then should virgins spring? Paul dared not command a thing for which his master gave no order. The prize is set for virginity—win it who can. Let us see who runs best.

“But this command is not to be taken by every creature, but only where Almighty God wishes to give it through his might. The apostle was a virgin, I know well, but nevertheless, though he wrote that he wished every creature to be like him, all that is only advice to be a virgin; and he gave me leave and indulgence to be a wife. So likewise, if my spouse should die, there is no shame or charge of bigamy to marry me. It would be good, he said, to touch no woman, for it is a peril to bring together fire and hay. You know what this example may mean.

“This is the sum of it all: the apostle held virginity to be more perfect than marriage because of weakness. I call them weak unless man and wife would lead all their life in chastity. I grant it well, I have no malice even if maidenhood were set above remarriage. It pleases them to be clean, body and soul; of my own estate I will make no boast. For you well know that not every vessel in a lord’s house is made of gold; some are of wood, and do their lord

service. God calls people to him in various manners, and each one has his own gift from—one this, one that, as it pleases God to provide. Virginity is a great perfection, and devoted chastity as well.

But Christ, the fountain of perfection, did not instruct every person to go sell all that he had and give to the poor, and in such a fashion follow him and his footsteps. “He spoke this to those people who wished to be perfect; and by your leave, gentle people, I am not one of those. I will use the flower of my life in the acts and fruits of marriage.

Tell me also, for what purpose were members of procreation made, and made in such a perfect manner? Trust well, they were not made for nothing. Whosoever wishes to interpret may do so, and interpret things up and down that and say that they were made for purging urine and that both our small things were also to know a female from a male and for no other cause—did someone say no? Those with experience know well it is not so. So that scholars will not be angry with me, I say this: that they are made for both; that is to say, for duty and for ease of procreation, providing we do not displeas God. Why should men otherwise set down in their books that man shall yield to his wife her debt? Now with what should he make his payment, if he did not use his blessed instrument? They were made then upon a creature to purge urine, and for procreation as well.

But I do not say that every person who has such equipment is bound to go and use it for procreation. For that reason people should men take no heed of chastity. Christ was a virgin and created as a man, as were many saints since the beginning of the world; yet they always lived in perfect chastity. I will not envy any virginity. Let virgins be called bread of purified wheat-seed, and let us wives be called barley-bread; and yet, as Mark can tell, our Lord Jesus refreshed many people with barley-bread. I will persevere in such a state as God has called us to; I am not particular. In wifehood I will use my instrument as freely as my Maker has sent it. If I am unaccommo-



IMAGE 5.5: THE WIFE OF BATH PROLOGUE | “The Wife of Bath” prologue, a tale from *The Canterbury Tales*, from the Ellesmere manuscript.

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dating to my husband, may God give me sorrow. My husband shall have it both evening and morning, whenever it pleases him to come forth and pay his debt. I will not stop. I will have a husband who will be both my debtor and servant, and have his tribulation upon his flesh, while I am his wife. As long as I live I, and not he, have the power over his body. The apostle told it to me in this very way, and instructed our husbands to love us well. This entire subject pleases me well, every bit.

Up started the Pardoner, and without delay. “Now lady,” he said, “by God and St. John, you are a noble preacher in this matter! I was about to wed a wife; alas! Why should I pay for it so dearly upon my flesh? I would rather not wed any wife this year.”

“Wait! My tale is not yet begun,” she said. “No, before I go you shall drink out of another barrel that will taste worse than ale. And when I have told my story to you about the tribulation in marriage, in which I have been expert all my life (that is to say, I myself have been the scourge), then you may choose whether you will sip of that same barrel that I shall broach. Be mindful, before you come too close; for I shall tell half a score of examples. ‘Whosoev-

er will not be warned by other men, by him shall other men be corrected': these same words writes Ptolemy; read his *Almagest*."

"Lady," said this Pardoner, "I would pray you, if it were your pleasure, tell your tale as you began, hold back for no man, and teach us young men from your experience."

"Gladly," she said, "if it may please you. But I beg all of you in this company, if I speak according to my fancy, do not take it amiss. For my intent is but to make sport. Now, sirs, I will continue.

"May I never see another drop of ale or wine, if I did not tell the truth about my husbands, as three of them were good, and two of them were bad. The three men were good, rich and old, and they hardly could keep their obligation to me, by which they were bound to me. By God, you know well what I mean by this. May God help me, I laugh when I think how pitifully I made them work at night! And, by my faith, I found it useless. I did not need to make an effort or pay them any respect to win their love. They loved me so well, by God above, that I set no value on their love. A wise woman will always attempt to win love where she has none; but since I had them wholly in my hand and had all their land, why should I bother to please them, unless it were for my profit and pleasure? I ruled them so, by my faith, that many nights they sang 'alas!'

"Not for them, I believe, was fetched the bacon that some men win at Dunmow in Essex. I governed them so well by my rules that each of them was blissful and glad to bring me beautiful things from the fair. They were glad when I spoke friendly to them, for God knows, I chided them without mercy. Now listen, you wise wives who can understand, hear how craftily I behaved myself.

"Thus shall you speak, and thus you shall put them in the wrong, for there is no man who can swear and lie half so boldly as a woman. I say this for the benefit of wise wives when they have made a little misstep. A wise wife, if she knows what is good for her, shall make a man believe that the jackdaw is mad, and shall use her own maid as a witness to confirm it.

"But now hear how I spoke: -'Old sir fogley, is this how you would have things? Why is my neighbor's wife so fine? She is honored everywhere she goes, while I have no decent clothes and must sit at home. Are you in love? What are you doing at my neighbor's house? Is she so fair? What do you whisper with our maid? God bless! Leave behind your tricks, old sir lecher! And if I have a friend or a gossip, completely innocent, and I walk to his house or amuse myself there, you chide me like a fiend. You come home as drunk as a mouse and sit on your bench preaching, with no good reason. You say to me, it is a great evil to wed a poor woman, for the cost; and if she were rich, of noble birth, then you say that it is a torment to suffer her pride and her melancholy. And if she were fair, you say that every lecher will have her, you very knave! She who is assailed on every side cannot remain in chastity for long.

"You say that some folk desire us for our wealth, some for our figure, some for our beauty, some because we can sing or dance, some for our manners and mirth, and some for our hands and slim arms. Thus all goes to the Devil, by your account.

"You say that a castle wall can not be defended when it is assailed so long from every side. And if a woman be foul, then you say that she covets every man she sees, and will leap on him like a spaniel, until she find some man to do business with her. You say no goose in the lake that is too grey to look for a mate. And you say that it is a hard matter to control a thing that no man would be willing to keep.

"Thus you say, old fool, when you are going to bed; that no wise man need marry, nor any man who hopes for heaven. With a wild thunder-clap and fiery lightning-bolt may your withered neck be snapped in two! You say that leaky houses, smoke, and chiding wives, make men flee from their own homes.

"Ah, God bless! What ails such an old man to scold like this? You say that we wives will cover our vices until we are safely married, and then we show them. That is a villain's proverb! You say that oxen, asses, horses, and hounds are tested for some time before men buy them, and so are basins, wash-bowl, spoons, stools, pots, clothes, attire, and all such household stuff; but people make no test of wives until they are wedded. And then, you old rascally dotard, you say, we will show our vices.

"You say also it displeases me unless you praise my beauty and gaze ever upon my face and call me "fair lady" everywhere; and unless you make a feast on my birthday, and dress me gay and freshly; and unless you do honor to my nurse, and to my maid in my bower, and to my father's family—all this you say, old barrel-full of lies.

"And yet you have gathered a false suspicion of our apprentice Jankin, for his crisp hair shining like fine gold, and because he escorts me back and forth. I would not have him, even if you should die tomorrow! But tell me this—and bad luck to you!—why do you hide the keys of your chest from me? By God, they are my goods as well as yours! Why do you intend to make a fool of the mistress of your house? Now by the lord who is called St. James, however you may rage, you shall not be master both of my body and of my goods; you must give up one of them, in spite of your eyes.

"What good does it do if you inquire after me or spy upon me? You want to lock me in your chest, I believe! You should say, "Wife, go where you wish, take your pleasure, I will believe no tales; I know you for a true wife, Lady Alice." We love no man who takes note or care where we go; we wish to have our freedom. May he be blessed

of all men, that wise astrologer, Sir Ptolemy, who says this proverb in his book *Almagest*, “Of all men, he who never cares who has the world in hand has the greatest wisdom.” You are to understand by this proverb that you have enough: why do you need to care how well-off other people are? For in truth, old fogey, you shall have plenty of pleasing thing in the evening. He who will forbid a man to light a candle at his lantern is too great a miser; by God, he should have light, nevertheless. So you have enough; you need not complain.

“You say also that if we make ourselves amorous with clothing and with costly dress, it would be a peril to our chastity; and yet—may the plague take you!—you must confirm it with these words of the apostle: “Ye women shall apparel yourselves in garments made with chastity and shame,” he said, “and not with tressed hair and splendid gems and pearls, nor with gold, nor rich clothes.” I would not give a fly for your text or your rubric.

“You said also I was like a cat; for a cat, if someone were to singe the cat’s skin, will always dwell at home; but if she were sleek and elegant in her fur, she will not remain in the house an hour, but before any day would dawn, will go forth to show her skin and go a-caterwauling. This is to say, sir rogue, if I am finely dressed, I will run out to show my clothes.

“Sir old fool, what ails you to spy after me? Even if you were to ask Argus to be my sentry with his hundred eyes as best he can, in faith, he shall not keep watch over me unless it suits me. Still I could deceive him, as I hope to prosper!

“You say also that there are three things that trouble this entire world, and that no creature can endure the fourth. Oh, dear sir rascal, may Jesus shorten your life! Still you preach and say a hateful woman is considered one of these adversities. Are there no other things you can use for comparison without an innocent wife being one of them?

“You compare woman’s love to hell, or to barren land where no water can lie. You compare it also to wildfire; the more it burns, the more it desires to consume everything that can be burned. You say that just as worms destroy a tree, so too a wife destroys her husband; those who are tied to women know this.

“Gentle people, in this very way, as you can see, I would firmly swear to my old husbands, that they said this in their drunkenness; and all was false, except I got Jankin and my niece to be my witnesses. O Lord! The pain and woe I did them, though they were innocent, by God’s sweet suffering! For I could bite and whinny like a horse. I knew how to complain, even if I was guilty; or else I would have often been undone. He who first comes to the mill, grinds first; I complained first, and thus our war was ended. They were very glad to excuse themselves hurriedly of things that they never had done in all their lives. I would accuse my old husband of visiting prostitutes, even when they were so sick that they could scarcely stand.

“Yet I tickled his heart because he thought that I had such great fondness for him. I swore that all my walking about at night was to spot wenches whom he slept with. Under that pretext I had many privy jests at him; for all such wit is given to us when we are born. God has given deceit, weeping, and spinning to women by nature, so long as they live.

“And thus I boast of one thing for myself: in the end I had the better in every way, by cunning, or by force, or by some type of device, such as continual murmuring or grumbling. And most chiefly at night they had ill fortune; then I would scold and grant him no pleasure. I would not stay in bed any longer if I felt his arm over my side, until he had paid his ransom to me. And therefore I tell this to every man: let he who can, prosper, for everything has its price. Men may lure no hawks with an empty hand. For the sake of gain I would give them their way, and pretend to have an appetite; and yet I never had pleasure in bacon, from Dunmow or elsewhere. And so I would be chiding them all the time; even if the pope had sat beside them, by my word, I would not spare them at their own table. I repaid them word for word; so may the Almighty Lord help me, if I ere to make my testament right now, I would not owe them a word that has not been repaid. By my wits I made it so that they were glad to surrender, as their best option, or we would have never been at peace. For though my husband looked like a mad lion, he was nonetheless bound to fail in his purpose.

“Then would I say, ‘Good dear, take note how meekly Wilkin our sheep looks; come near, my spouse, let me kiss your cheek. You should be all patient and mild, and have a sweet tender conscience, since you thus preach of the patience of Job. Always endure, since you can preach so well; and unless you do, we must teach you for sure that it is pleasant to have a wife in peace. Truly, one of us two must bend to the other and since a man is more reasonable than a woman, you must be patient. What ails you to grumble and groan in this way? Is it because you want to have my body all to yourself? Why, take it all! Have every bit! By Peter, I curse you, but you love it well! If I would sell my beautiful thing, I could walk as fresh as a rose, but I will keep it for your own taste. You are to blame, by God! I tell you the truth.’ We had this sort of words between us; but now I will speak about my fourth husband.

“My fourth husband was a reveller, that is to say, he had a paramour—and I was young and full of frolic, stubborn and strong, and jolly as a magpie. I could dance well to a little harp, and sing like any nightingale, when I had taken a draught of sweet wine. Metellius, the filthy churl, the swine, who with a staff bereft his spouse of her life, because she drank wine, would not have frightened me from drink, if I had been his wife! And when I think of wine

I must think of Venus; for just as surely as cold engenders hail, a lecherous mouth leads to a lecherous body. There is no defense in a woman who is full of wine, as lechers know by experience.

“Lord Christ! But when I think about my youth and mirth, it tickles me at the root of my heart! To this very day it does my heart good that I have had my fling in my time. But alas! Age, which evenenoms all things, has bereft me of my beauty and energy. Let them go. Farewell! May the Devil go with them! The flour is gone, and there is no more to say; now I sell the bran as best as I can. But even now I will strive to be very merry.

“Now I will tell of my fourth husband. I say I had great resentment in my heart that he had pleasure in any other. But by the Lord and Saint Joce, he was paid back! I made a cross from the same wood for his back; not with my body, in any foul manner, but truly I offered people such generous hospitality that for anger and absolute jealousy I made him fry in his own grease. By God, I was his purgatory on earth, wherefore I hope that his soul is in glory now.

“For God knows, he sat often and sang, when his shoe pinched him bitterly: No creature knew, except God and he, how sorely I twisted him in so many ways. He died when I returned home from Jerusalem, and lies buried under the cross-beam, albeit his tomb is not quite as elaborately crafted as the sepulcher of Darius that Apelles so skilfully made. It would have been a waste to bury him at such an expense! Farewell to him; he is now in his grave and in his coffin—God rest his soul!

“Now will I speak of my fifth husband—may God never allow his soul to enter hell! And yet he was the most villainous to me, as I can still feel on my ribs all in a row, and ever shall to my ending day. But he was so fresh and merry, and could sweet-talk so well that, even if he had beaten me on every bone, he could soon win my beautiful thing again. I believe I loved him best, because he was sparing in his love.

“We women have, to tell the truth, an odd fantasy on this matter; whatever thing we can not easily win we will cry after continually and crave. “Forbid us something, and we desire that thing. Press on us hard, and then we will flee. With much reserve we offer our merchandise; a large crowd at the market makes our wares expensive; wares offered at too low a price will be thought to have little value. Every wise woman knows this.

“My fifth husband—may God bless his soul—which I took for love and not for riches, was sometime an Oxford scholar; and he had left school, and went to board with my good friend, who dwelt in our town. May God keep her soul! Her name was Alisoun. She knew my heart and my private thoughts better than our parish priest, by my soul! To her I revealed all my secrets.

“For had my husband peed on a wall, or done something that would have cost him his life, I would have told his every bit of his secret to her, and to another worthy wife, and to my niece, whom I loved well. And I did so often, God knows, which often made his face red and hot for true shame, and he would blame himself for telling me so great a secret.

“And so it happened that once, in Lent, (as I so often did, I visited my friend, for I still always loved to be merry, and to walk from house to house in March, April, and May, to hear various tales) that Jankin the clerk, my friend dame Alice, and I walked into the fields. All that spring my husband was in London; I had a better opportunity to play, and to see and to be seen by lusty folk. What did I know about how my fortune was to be shaped or in what place? Therefore, I made my visits to holy day vigils, to processions, to sermons, to these pilgrimages, to miracle-plays, and to weddings, and wore my gay scarlet gowns. These worms and moths and mites never ate a bit of them, upon my peril! And do you know why? Because they were well used.

“Now I will tell what happened to me. I say that we walked in the fields, until in truth we had such flirtation together, this clerk and I, that in my foresight I spoke to him, and told him how he should wed me, if I were widowed. For, I am not speaking in boast; I was certainly never to this point without provision for marriage—nor for other things as well. I think that a mouse’s heart is not worth a leek if the mouse has but one hole to run to; and if that one fails, then all is over.

“I persuaded him to think that he had enchanted me; my mother taught me that trick. And I said also I dreamed of him all night; he would have slain me as I lay on my back, and my whole bed was full of real blood; but yet I hoped that he should bring good fortune to me, for blood signifies gold, as I was taught. And all of it was false; I dreamed not a bit of it, but I followed my mother’s teaching all along, as well as in other things besides.

“But now, sir, let me see; what shall I say now? Aha! By God, I have it again. When my fourth husband lay on his bier, I wept ever and made a sorrowful expression, as wives must, for it is the custom; and I covered my face with my kerchief. But since I had been provided with a new mate, I wept rather little, I vow.

“In the morning my husband was borne to church by the neighbors, who mourned for him, and our scholar Jankin was one of them. So may God help me, when I saw him go after the bier, I thought he had so clean and fair a pair of legs and feet that I gave him all my heart to keep. He was twenty winters old, I believe, and if I am to tell the truth, I was forty. But I always had a colt’s tooth. I was gap-toothed; I bore the print of Saint Venus’ birthmark, and that became me well. I was a lusty one, and fair, and rich, and youthful, and merry of heart, may God help me.

“For certainly, I am dominated by the planet Venus in my senses, and my heart is dominated by the planet

Mars. Venus gave me my love for pleasure and my wantonness, and Mars my sturdy hardihood. My ascendant was Mars in Taurus. Alas, alas! That ever love was thought a sin! I followed ever my inclination by virtue of my constellation. That made it that I could not withhold my chamber from any good fellow. Yet I have the mark of Mars upon my face and in another private place as well. May God be my salvation indeed, I never loved discreetly, but always followed my appetite, whether he was short or tall, black or white it did not matter to me, as long as he pleased me, how poor he was, nor of what station.

“What should I say but at the end of a month this jolly clerk Jankin, who was so debonair, wedded me with great splendor? And I gave him all the land and wealth that I had ever been given; but afterwards I repented myself sorely, for he would allow nothing that I desired. By God, he struck me once on the ear! That was because I tore a leaf out of his book and my ear grew entirely deaf because of the blow. I was as stubborn as a lioness, and a very chatterbox with my tongue, and I would walk as I had done before from house to house, though he had sworn I should not. For this reason he would often make homilies and teach me old Roman histories how Symplicius Gallus left his wife and forsook her for all his days, just because he saw her one day looking out of his door with her head uncovered.

“He told me the name of another Roman who forsook his wife also because without his knowledge she was to a summer game. And then he would seek in his Bible that proverb of the Ecclesiast where he commands and firmly forbids that a man should allow his wife to go wander about. Then indeed he would say just this,

“He who builds his house out of fallows,
And spurs his blind horse over fallows,
And allows his wife to seek hallows,
Then should be hanged upon the gallows.”

But all for nothing; I did not care one acorn for his proverbs or his old saying, and I would not be scolded by him. I hate anyone who tells me my faults; and, God knows, so too do more of us than I. This made him insanelly furious with me, but I would not tolerate him in any case.

“Now, by Saint Thomas, I will tell you the truly, why I tore a leaf out of his book, for which he struck me so that I became deaf. He had a book which he would be still reading, night and day, for his amusement. He called it Valerius and Theophrastus; he always laughed uproariously at this book. And there was also once a scholar at Rome, a cardinal, named Saint Jerome, who composed a book against Jovinian; and besides this in my husband’s book there were Tertullian, Chrysippus, Trotula, and Heloise, who was abbess not far from Paris, and also the Proverbs of Solomon, Ovid’s Art of Love and many other books; and all these were bound in one volume.

“And every night and day, when he had leisure and freedom from other outside occupation, it was his habit to read in this book about wicked women; of them he knew more lives and legends than there are of good women in the Bible. For, trust well, it is an impossibility that any scholar will speak well of women, unless it would be of the lives of holy saints; but never of any other woman. Who painted the Lion, tell me? By God, if women had written histories, as scholars have in their chapels, they would have written about men more evil than all the sons of Adam could redress.

“The children of Mercury and the children of Venus are contrary in their actions; Mercury loves wisdom and knowledge, and Venus revelry and extravagance. And, because of their contrary natures, each of these planets descends in sign of the zodiac in which the other is most powerful; thus Mercury is depressed in Pisces, where Venus is exalted, and Venus is depressed where Mercury is exalted. Therefore no woman is praised by any scholar. When the scholar is old and entirely unable to give Venus service that is even worth his old shoe, then he sits down and in his dotage writes that women cannot keep their marriage vow!

“But now to my tale—why I was beaten for a book, by God, as I told you. One night Jankin, our husband, sat by the fire and read in his book, first about Eve, for whose wickedness all mankind was brought to misery, for which Jesus Christ Himself was slain, Who redeemed us with His heart’s blood. Lo! Here you may read explicitly about woman, that she was the ruin of all mankind.

“Then he read to me how Samson lost his hair in his sleep; his sweetheart cut it with her shears, through which treason he lost both his eyes. Then I tell you he read me about Hercules and his Dejanira, who caused him to set fire to himself. Nor did he in any way forget the penance and woe which Socrates had with his two wives, how his wife Xantippe cast piss on his head; this blameless man sat still as a stone, wiped his head, and dared say no more than, “before thunder ceases, the rain comes.”

“Of his cursedness my husband found a relish in the tale of Pasiphae, queen of Crete. Fie! Speak no more of her horrible lust and desire—it is a grisly thing. He read with good devotion about Clytemnestra, who for her wantonness treacherously caused her husband’s death. He told me also for what cause Amphiarus perished at Thebes; my husband had a legend about his wife Eriphyle, who for a brooch of gold secretly informed the Greeks where her

husband had hidden himself; for this reason he met a sorry fate at Thebes. He told me of Livia and Lucilia, who both caused their husbands to die, the one for hate, the other for love. Livia, late one evening, poisoned her husband, because she had become his foe; the wanton Lucilia so loved her husband that she gave him a love-drink, that she might always be in his mind, but of such power that he was dead before morning.

“And thus in one way or the other husbands came to sorrow. And then he told me how one Latumius lamented to Arrius, his fellow, how there grew in his garden such a tree on which, he said, his three wives had hanged themselves with desperate heart. ‘Oh dear brother, give me a slip from this same blessed tree,’ said this Arrius, ‘and it shall be planted in my garden!’

“He read about wives of later times, some of whom have murdered their husbands in their sleep, and had sex with their lovers while the corpse lay all night flat on the floor. And some have driven nails into their husband’s brains while they slept. And some have given them poison in their drink. He spoke more evil than a heart can devise.

“And in all this he knew more proverbs than blades of grass grow in this world. He said, ‘It is better to have your dwelling with a lion or a foul dragon, than with a woman accustomed to scorning.’ ‘It is better,’ he said, ‘to dwell high in the roof, than down in the house with an angry woman; they are so wicked and contrary that they forever hate what their husbands love.’

“He said, ‘A woman casts her shame away when she casts off her undergarments.’ And furthermore, ‘A beautiful woman, unless she is also chaste, is like a gold ring in a sow’s nose.’ Who would think or imagine the woe and pain in my heart.

“And when I saw that he would never leave reading all night in this cursed book, all of the sudden I plucked three leaves out of his book, even as he was reading, and I also struck him on the cheek with my fist so that he fell down backward into our fire. And he started up like a mad lion, and struck me on the head with his fist so that I lay as dead on the floor.

“And he was aghast when he saw how still I was, and would have fled on his way, until at last I came out of my swoon. ‘Oh, have you slain me, false thief,’ I said, ‘and have you murdered me thus for my land? Before I die, I will still kiss you.’ And he came nearer and kneeled down gently and said, ‘Dear sister Alisoun, so God help me, I shall never strike you again! You yourself are to blame for what I have done. Forgive me for it; and I beg you for that.’ - And yet again I hit him on the cheek, and said, ‘Thief, I am revenged this much. Now I will die; I can speak no more.’

“But at last with great pain and grief, we fell into agreement between ourselves. He put the full bridle into my hand, to have the governance of house and estate, and over his tongue and hands as well. And I made him burn his book then and there.

“And when I had got for myself all the sovereignty, through a master-stroke, and when he said, ‘My own faithful wife, do as you will the rest of your days; be the guard of your honor, and of my dignity also,’ we had never a dispute after that day. God help me so, I was as loving to him as any wife between Denmark and India, and as true also; and so was he to me. And I pray to God, Who sits in glory, so bless his soul for His sweet compassion! Now I will relate my story, if you will listen.”

The Friar, when he had heard all this, laughed and said, “Now, Madame, so may I have joy, this is a long preamble of a tale!”

When the Summoner heard the Friar make an outcry, he said, “Lo! By God’s two arms! A friar will evermore be meddling. Lo, good men! A fly and a friar will fall into every dish and every affair. Why do you speak of preambling? What! Amble or trot, or hold your peace and go sit down! You hinder our sport in this way.”

“Yes, is that what you want, sir Summoner? Now by my faith,” said the Friar, “I shall tell, before I go, such a tale or two of a summoner that all the people here shall laugh.”

“Now, Friar, I curse your face,” said this Summoner, “and I curse myself, unless I tell stories, two or three, of friars, before I get to Sittingborne, that shall make your heart grieve, for I know well your patience has already left you.”

“Peace, and now!” cried our Host; and said, “Let the woman tell her tale. You act like people who are drunk with ale. Please, Madame, tell your tale; and that is best.”

“All ready, sir, just as you wish,” she said, “if I have the permission of this worthy Friar.”

“Yes, Madame,” he said, “tell your tale now, and I will listen.”

Here ends the Prologue of the Wife of Bath.

Here begins the Tale of the Wife of Bath.

In the old days of King Arthur, of whom Britons speak great glory, this land was entirely filled with fairy power. The elf-queen danced often with her merry company in many green meadows. This long ago was the belief, as I find in books. I speak of many hundred years ago; but in our times no man can see elves any more.

For now the great charity and the prayers of begging friars and other holy friars, who, as thick as motes in a sunbeam, reach every land and every stream, blessing halls, chambers, kitchens, bowers, cities, towns, castles,

villages, barns, stables, dairies—all this causes there to be no elves. For where a fairy was accustomed to walk, there the begging friar himself walks now, in the mornings or the afternoons, and says his matins and his holy things as he goes along in his begging. Women may go up and down safely; in every bush or under every tree, there is no incubus, except him, and he will do nothing but dishonor them.

And so it happened that this King Arthur had in his court a lusty young knight, who one day came riding from the river; and it happened that he saw walking ahead of him a maiden, whom he ravished, in spite of all her resistance. For this violation there was such clamor and such appeal to King Arthur, that the knight was condemned by course of law to die; and perhaps the statute in place then was so severe that he would have lost his head, if the queen and other ladies had not so long begged the king for mercy, until he granted him his life at that point, and placed him entirely at the queen's will, to choose whether she would save him or let him die.

The queen thanked the king very heartily; and after this, upon a day when she saw the opportunity, she spoke in this way to the knight: "You stand now," she said, "in such a plight that you have even now no assurance of your life. I grant you life, if you can tell me what thing it is that women desire most. Beware, and guard your neck-bone from iron! And if you cannot tell it right now, I will still give you leave to go for twelve months and a day, to search out and learn an answer sufficient for this point. And before you depart, I will have security that you will yield up your body in this place."

This knight was woeful, and he sighed sorrowfully. But what! He could not do just as he pleased. And, with such a reply that God would provide for him, at last he chose to depart and come at the very end of the year; and he took his leave and went forth along his way.

He sought every house and place where he hoped to find such luck as to learn what women love most. But he could arrive at no coast where he could find two creatures agreeing together on this matter. Some said that women best love riches; some said honor; some said mirth; some, fancy clothes; some, pleasure in bed, and to be widowed often and re-wed. Some said that our hearts are most eased when we be flattered and gratified.

They came very near the truth; a man shall best win us by flattery, I will not deny it, and we are caught by attentiveness and diligence, both great and small. And some said how we love best to be free and to do just as we wish, and that no man should reprove us for our faults, but say that we are wise and never foolish at all. For in truth there is nobody among us who will not kick if someone would claw us on a sore place, just because he tells us the truth. Try this, and he shall find it out that it is true. For though we may be full of vice within, we wish to be considered wise and clean of sin.

And some said that we have great delight to be accounted stable and trustworthy and steadfast in one purpose, and never reveal what men tell us. But that sort of talk is not worth a rake-handle, by God! We women can conceal nothing. Take witness of Midas. Would you like to hear the tale?

Ovid, among other little things, says that Midas had two ass's ears growing upon his head under his long hair, which deformity he hid artfully from every man's sight, as best he could, so that nobody knew of it, except his wife. He loved her most and trusted her; and he asked her to tell of his disfigurement to no creature. She swore to him, "No," not even to gain all the world would she do that villainy and sin, to bring her husband so foul a name; for her own honor she would not do it.

But nevertheless she felt she should die, to hide a secret so long; it swelled so sorely about her heart, it seemed to her, that some word needed to burst from her. And since she dared tell it to no human creature, she ran down to a nearby marsh; her heart was ablaze until she arrived there.

And as a bittern bumbles in the mire, she laid her mouth down unto the water: "Betray me not, you water, with your sound," she said; "I tell it to you, and to nobody else. My husband has two long ass's ears. Now my heart is whole and well again; now it is out. In very truth I could keep it in no longer."

By this you may see that though we wait a time, we can conceal no secret forever; it must come out. If you wish to hear the remainder of the tale, read Ovid; you can find it out there.

This knight, about whom my tale chiefly is, when he saw he could not come by it, that is to say, what women love most—the spirit in his breast was so sorrowful. But home he went, as he could not remain. The day had come when he had to turn homeward. And as he went, deep in care, it happened that he rode under the edge of a forest, where he saw twenty-four ladies and more in a dance. Eagerly he drew toward this dance, in hope of learning some piece of wisdom. But in truth, before he arrived there entirely, the dance vanished—he did not know where it went. He saw no living creature there, except a woman sitting on the grass—no one could imagine a fouler creature.

At the approach of the knight this old woman arose and said, "Sir knight, there is no path that lies this way. Tell me, by your faith, what do you seek? Peradventure it may be better for you; these old people know many things."

"My dear mother," said this knight, "in truth I am just a dead man, unless I can say what thing it is that women desire most. If you could instruct me, I would repay you well for your work."

"Pledge me your word here on my hand," she said, "that you will do the first thing that I require of you, if it should lie in your power; and before it is night I will tell it you."

“Take my pledge here,” said the knight, “I agree.”

“Then,” she said, “I dare to boast that your life is safe; for upon my soul I will guarantee that the queen will say as I do. Show me the proudest of the whole court, who wears a kerchief or other head-dress and who dares say no to what I shall teach you. Let us go on, without further words.” Then she whispered a word in his ear, and told him to be glad and have no fear.

When they had arrived at the court, this knight said he had kept his day, as he had promised, and his answer was ready. At that time many noble wives were assembled to hear his answer, and many maidens, and many widows (because they be wise); and the queen herself sat as judge. And then this knight was summoned.

Silence was commanded to every creature, and the knight was ordered to tell in public what thing mortal women most love. This knight stood not like a dumb beast, but without delay answered the question with manly voice, so that all the court heard it.

“My liege lady, over all this world” he said, “women wish to have sovereignty as well over her husband as her love, and to have mastery over him. This is your greatest desire, though you may slay me for this. Do as you wish; I am here at your will.”

In all the court there was neither wife nor maiden nor widow to contradict what he replied, but all declared he was worthy to have his freedom. And at that word, the old woman, whom the knight had seen sitting on the grass, started up.

“Mercy, my sovereign lady!” she said. “Do me justice, before your court departs. I taught the knight this answer, for which he pledged me his word that he would do the first thing I should require of him, if it lay in his power. Before the court, then, I pray you, sir knight,” she said, “that you take me as your wife; for you well know that I have saved your life. If I speak falsely, say no to me, upon your faith!”

This knight answered, “Alas and alack! I know full well that this was my promise. But for the love of God, please choose another request! Take all my goods, and let my body go.”

“No, then,” she answered, “I curse us both. For though I may be ugly, poor, and old, I would like none of all the metal or ore that is buried under the earth or lies upon it, only that I would be your wife, and your love also.”

“My love!” he said, “No, my damnation! Alas that any of my kindred should be so foully disgraced by such a match!”

But all this was for nothing. This is the conclusion, that he was constrained, and had to wed her. And he took his old wife and went to bed.

Now perhaps some men would say that through my negligence I take no care to tell you all the joy and all the preparations that there were at the celebration that day. To this point I shall briefly answer, and say there was no joy nor celebration at all; but only heaviness and much sorrow. For he wedded her secretly the next morning. And he was so miserable that he hid himself the rest of the day like an owl, as his wife looked so ugly.

Great was his misery when he was alone with his wife; he tossed about and turned back and forth. His old wife lay always smiling, and said, “Ah, God bless, dear husband! Does every knight act this way with his wife? Is this the way of King Arthur’s household? Is every knight of his so hard to please? I am your own love and your wife also, and I have saved your life, and surely, I have never yet done you any wrong. Why do act this way on this first night? You act like a man who has lost his wit. What is my guilt? Tell me, for the love of God, and if I have the power, it shall be amended.”

“Amended!” said this knight. “Alas! No, no! It can not be amended forevermore! You are so loathly and so old, and come of so low a lineage as well, that it is small wonder that I toss and turn. I wish to God my heart would burst!”

‘Is this,’ she said, ‘the cause of your unrest?’

‘Yes, certainly, and no wonder,’ he said.

“Now, sir,” she replied, “I could amend all this before three days had passed, if I wish, so that you might bear yourself toward me well.

“But when you speak of such gentility as is descended from ancient wealth—so that you knights should therefore would be gentlemen of breeding—such arrogance is not worth a hen. Look who is always most virtuous, openly and secretly, and most inclines to do what gentle deeds he can; take him for the gentlest man. Christ wishes that we claim our gentility from Him, not from our ancestors’ ancient wealth. For though all their heritage of our ancestors, by reason of which we claim high rank, may descend to us, yet they cannot at all bequeath to any of us their virtuous living, which made them to be called gentle men and to bid us follow to them and do in like manner.

The wise poet of Florence, who is named Dante, speaks well on this matter. Lo, this is what Dante’s says in his poetry: “Seldom does a man climb to excellence on his own slim branches, for God, from his goodness, wills that we claim or gentility from Him.” For we may claim nothing from our ancestors, except for temporal things that can be injured and impaired.

“Every creature also knows this as well as I, that if gentility were planted by nature in a certain family all down the line, openly and privately, then they would never cease to do the fair duties of gentility; they could never do any

base or vicious deed. Take fire and bear it into the darkest house between here and the mount of Caucasus, and let the doors be shut and leave that place. Nevertheless the fire will burn and blaze as fairly as though twenty thousand men witnessed it; on peril of my life, it will keep to its natural duty until it dies.

“Here you may well see how nobility hangs not from ancient possessions, since people do not always perform its works, as does the fire, according to its nature. For, God knows, one may often see a lord’s son do vicious and shameful deeds; and he who wishes to be esteemed for his gentility because he was born of a noble house and had virtuous and noble ancestors, and yet himself will not perform the deeds of gentility nor follow after his gentle ancestor who is dead, he is not gentle, even if he is a duke or an earl; for base and sinful deeds make a commoner. For gentility then would be nothing but renown of your ancestors for their high worthiness, which is something that has nothing to do with you. Your gentility comes only from God. Then our true gentility comes from divine grace, and was in no fashion bequeathed to us with our earthly station.

“Think how noble was that Tullius Hostilius, as Valerius tells, who rose out of poverty to high nobility. Read Seneca, and Boethius as well; there you shall see expressly that he who does noble deeds is noble. And therefore, dear husband, I conclude in this way: albeit my ancestors were untutored, yet may the high God—and so I hope—grant me grace to live virtuously. Then I am noble, when I begin to live virtuously and to abandon evil.

“And you reproach me for poverty; but the high God on whom we believe chose freely to live in poverty. And surely every man, maiden, or wife, may well know that Jesus, King of Heaven, would not choose a wicked manner of living. Truly cheerful poverty is an honorable thing, so will Seneca say, and other clerks. Whoever keeps himself content with his poverty, I count as rich, even if he does not have not a shirt! He who covets is a poor creature, for he wishes to have that which is not within his power. But he who has nothing, nor covets things, is rich, albeit you count him as only a serving-lad.

“True poverty sings a song of its own. Concerning poverty, Juvenal says merrily:

“The poor man, when he goes along the way,
Before the thieves, he can still sing and play.”

Poverty is a hateful good, I suppose, a great remover from the busyness of the world, and a great teacher of wisdom to one who takes it in patience. All this is poverty, though it may seem wretched; and a possession that no creature will challenge. When a man is humbled, often poverty allows him to know his God and himself as well. It seems to me that poverty is a magnifying glass through which he may see who his true friends are. And therefore, sir, I pray, so that I will not grieve you, scorn me no more for my poverty.

“Now, sir, you reproach me for my old age. And surely, sir, though there may be no authority in any book to tell you so, yet you honorable gentlefolk say that men should do courtesy to an old creature, and for your gentle manners call him Father. And I could find authorities to show this, I believe.

“Now you say I am old and foul: then have no fear that you will be a cuckold. For ugliness and age, upon my life, are great wardens over chastity. But nevertheless, since I know your delight, I shall fulfill your appetite.

“Choose,” she said, “one of these two things: to have me foul and old until I die, and to you a true, humble wife, never in all my days displeasing you; or else to have me young and beautiful, and take your chance on how many visits there will be to your house—or perhaps to some other place—which will be for my sake. Now choose yourself which one you will have.”

This knight thought hard about it and sighed deeply; but at last he spoke in this manner: “My lady and love, and my dear wife, I put myself into your wise governance. Please choose which may be the greatest pleasure and greatest honor to you and me also; I care not which of the two, for it is sufficient to me to please you.”

“Then I have the mastery over you,” she said, “since I may choose and govern as I wish”

“Yes, surely, wife,” he said; “I believe that is for the best.”

“Kiss me,” she said, “we will be angered no longer. For by my faith I will be both unto you—that is to say, both beautiful, yes, and good. I pray to God that I may die mad, but I would be as good and faithful as ever a wife was since the world was new. And if I am not as beautiful to see in the morning as any lady, queen or empress, between the east and the west, do with my life and death as you will. Lift up the curtain, and look how it is.”

And when the knight saw truly that she was so fair and so young, he clasped her in his two arms for joy, his heart bathed in a bath of bliss. A thousand times in a row he kissed her. And she obeyed him in all that might cause him delight or pleasure.

And thus they lived in perfect joy to the end of their lives. And may Jesus Christ send us husbands meek, young, and lusty, and grace to outlive them that we wed.

And I pray Jesus also to shorten their days that will not be ruled by their wives. And old, angry misers—may God send them a true pestilence soon!

Here ends the Wife of Bath’s Tale.

The Franklin's Tale

Here follow the Words of the Franklin to the Squire, and the Words of the Host to the Franklin.

“In faith, Squire, you have conducted yourself well and nobly. I praise your wit highly,” said the Franklin, with such delicate understanding. In my judgment there is nobody in this company who shall be your peer in eloquence as long as you live. May God give you good fortune, and send you perseverance in virtue, for I have great delight in your speaking. I have a son, and by the Trinity I had rather he would be a man of such discretion as you, than have twenty pounds worth of land, even if it were put in my hand right now.

“Fie on possessions, unless a man is virtuous as well! I have scolded my son, and shall still scold him, because he will not wish to pursue virtue; but his habit is to play at dice and to spend and to lose all that he has. And he had rather talk with a page than converse with any noble person from whom he might properly learn nobility.

“A straw for your gentle manners!” said our Host. “What, Franklin, well you know, by God, that each of you must tell at least a tale or two, or break your word.”

“That I well know, sir,” said the Franklin. “I pray you not to hold me in scorn if I speak a word or two to this man.

“Tell your tale now, without more words.

“Gladly, sir Host,” he said, “I will obey your will; now listen to what I say. I will not contradict you in any way as far, to the extent that my wits will suffice. I pray to God that it may please you; then I will know well that it is good enough.”

The Prologue of the Franklin's Tale

“These old gentle Bretons in their time made lays about various adventures, rhymed in their early British tongue; which lays they sang to their instruments of music, or else read them, for their pleasure. And one of them I have in mind, which I will relate with good will as best I can. But, sirs, because I am an unlearned man, at my beginning I pray you to excuse me for my homely speech. In truth, I never learned rhetoric; anything I speak must be bare and plain. I never slept on the Mount of Parnassus, nor learned Marcus Tullius Cicero. I know no colors of speech, surely; only such colors as grow in the meadow, or else such as people dye or paint. Colors of rhetoric are too strange for me; my spirit has no feeling in such matters. But if you wish, you shall hear my tale.”

Here begins the Franklin's Tale.

In Armorica, which is called Brittany, there was a knight who loved and served a lady in the best manner he could. And he underwent many labors and many great enterprises, before he gained her. For she was one of the fairest women under the sun, and had come from such a noble family that this knight scarcely dared for fear to tell her his woe and his pain and distress. But at last she took such pity upon his pains, because of his worthiness and primarily for his humble attentiveness, so that secretly she agreed to take him as husband and lord, in such lordship as men may have over their wives. And in order that they might live more in bliss, he swore to her as a knight, by his own free will, that never at any time in all his life would he take any authority upon himself against her will, nor show jealousy toward her, but obey her and follow her will in all things, as any lover shall do toward his lady; except that he wanted only the sovereignty in name, lest he should shame his rank as husband.

She thanked him, and said with great humility, “Sir, since through your noble mind you offer me so free a rein, God forbid that through my guilt there would ever be war or contention between us two. Sir, I will be your true humble wife until my heart break; take here my pledge.” Thus they were both in quiet and peace.

For one thing, sirs, I dare safely say, friends must comply with one another, if they wish to keep company long. Love will not be constrained by mastery; when mastery comes, the god of love soon beats his wings, and, farewell, he is gone! Love is as free as any spirit. Women by their nature desire liberty and not to be under constraint like a servant; and so do men, if I shall tell the truth. Look who is most patient in love, he has the advantage over all. Patience is a high virtue, certainly; for, as these scholars say, it conquers things that force could never reach.

Men should not scold or complain at every word. Learn to endure, or else, on my life, you shall learn this, whether you wish to or not. For certainly there is nobody in this world who sometimes does not act or speak amiss. Wrath, sickness, the constellation, wine, woe, changing humors, very often cause a man to act or speak amiss.

A man may not be avenged of every wrong; in every creature who knows how to rule his life, there must be moderation, according to the occasion. And therefore, so that he might live at ease, this wise worthy knight promised patience toward her, and she seriously swore to him that there never should be a fault in her. Here one may see a humble and wise agreement; thus she took her servant and her lord: servant in love, and lord in marriage. Then he was in both lordship and servitude. Servitude? No, but superior in lordship, since he has both his lady and love; surely, his lady, and his wife as well, who accepted that law of love. And in this happy state he went home with his wife to his country, not far from Penmark, where his dwelling was, and where he lived in happiness and comfort.

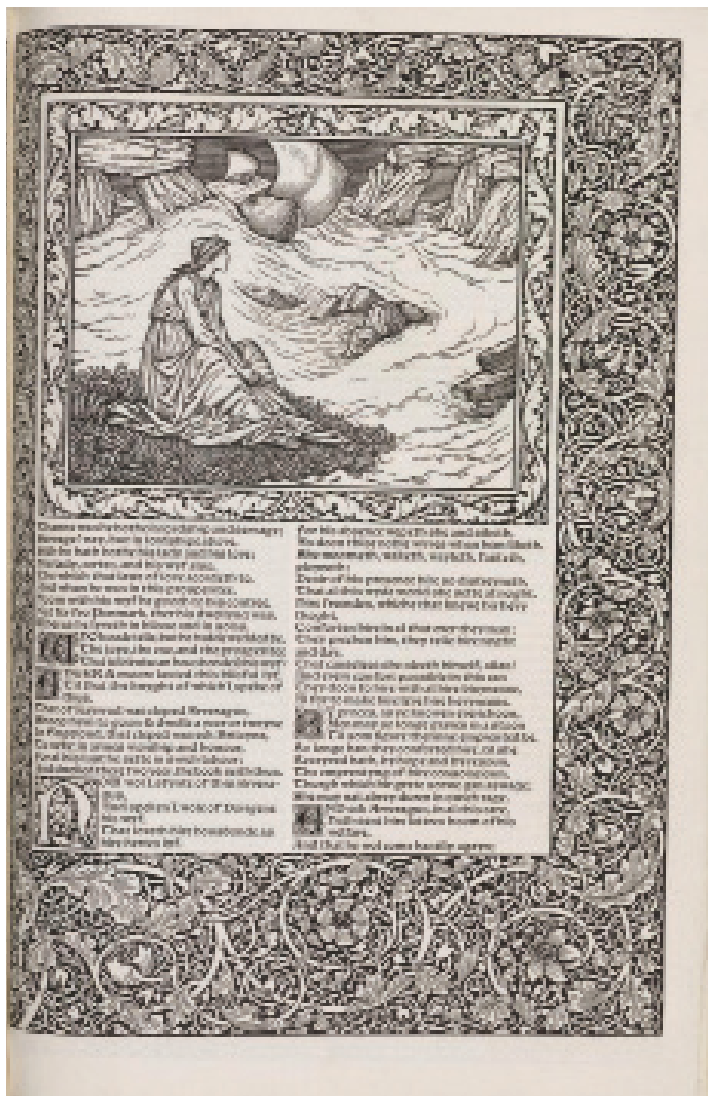


IMAGE 5.6: THE FRANKLIN’S TALE | A two page featuring a black and white illustration of Dorigen looking out at the rocks on the coast of Britany, which play an important role in The Franklin’s Tale.

Author: Edward Burne-Jones
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often she said to herself, “Alas! Is there no ship of so many that I see that will bring home my lord? Then my heart would be fully cured of its bitter, bitter pains.”

Another time she would sit there and ponder, and from the shore cast her eyes down. But when she saw the grisly black rocks, her heart would so quake for true fear that she could not hold herself on her feet. Then she would sit down on the grass and piteously look into the sea, and with sorrowful, cold sighs say just so: “Eternal God, who through Your providence guides the world by sure government, You make nothing in vain, as they say. But, Lord, these grisly, fiendish, black rocks, which seem more like a foul chaos of work than any fair creation by such a perfect, wise, and unchanging God: why have You created this irrational work? For by this work neither man nor bird nor brute is benefited, south or north, east or west.

“It does no good, in my mind, but harm. Do You not see, Lord, how it destroys mankind? Although they may not be remembered, rocks have slain a hundred thousand bodies of mankind, which is such a fair a part of Your work that You made it in Your own image. Then it should seem You had a great fondness toward men; but how then may it be that You created to destroy them in such a way that do no good, but always harm? I know well that scholars will say as they please by arguments that all is for the best, though I cannot understand their reasons. But may the same God that made the wind blow protect my lord! This is my conclusion; I leave all disputation to schol-

Who, unless he had been wedded, could tell the joy, the comfort, and wellbeing between husband and wife?

This blessed condition lasted a year and more, until the knight of whom I speak, who was called Arveragus of Kayrrud, laid his plans to go and dwell a year or two in England, which also was called Britain, to seek worship and honor in arms, for he set all his pleasure on such toils. And he dwelt there two years, as the book says.

Now I will leave Arveragus, and will speak of Dorigen his wife, who loved her husband as her heart’s blood. For in his absence she wept and sighed, as these noble wives do (when they will). She mourned, watched, wailed, fasted, lamented; desire for his presence so distracted her that she cared nothing for the whole wide world. Her friends, who knew her heavy thoughts, comforted her in all they could. They preached to her; day and night they told her that she was slaying herself for no good reason, alas! And they comforted her all they could, to make her leave her heaviness.

Through the process of time, as you all know, one may engrave in a stone so long that some figure will be imprinted on it. They comforted her so long that, with the aid of hope and reason, she received the imprint of their consolation. Through this her great sorrow began to assuage; she could not continue forever in such frenzy.

And while she was in all this sorrow, Arveragus had sent home to her letters telling of his welfare, and that he would soon return; otherwise, this sorrow would have slain her heart. Her friends saw her sorrow began to slacken, and on their knees begged her for God’s love to come and roam about with them, to drive away her dark imaginings. And finally she agreed, for well she saw that it was best.

Now her castle stood near to the sea, and for a diversion she often walked with her friends high upon the bank, from which she saw many ships and barges sailing on their course, wherever they would go. But then that became a part of her grief. For

ars. But I wish to God that all these black rocks were sunk into hell, for his sake! These rocks slay my heart for fear." Thus she would speak to herself, with many piteous tears.

Her friends saw that it was no diversion for her, but only a discomfort, to walk by the sea, and devised for her amusements in other places. They led her by rivers and springs and in other delightful places; they danced and they played at chess and backgammon.

So one day in the morning, they went to amuse themselves for the entire day in a nearby garden, in which they had made their provision of food and other things. This was on the sixth morning of May, and May with his soft rains had painted this garden full of leaves and flowers. And truly the craft of man's hand had so curiously arrayed this garden that never was a garden of such beauty, unless it would be paradise itself.

The scent and the fresh sight of flowers would have gladdened any heart that was ever born, unless too great a sickness or too great a sorrow distressed it; so full was it of delight and beauty.

After dinner they began to dance and sing, except Dorigen, who always made complaint or moan, because she saw not her husband and also her love enter into the dance. But nevertheless she must wait for a time and with good hope let her sorrow pass.

Upon this dance, among other men, there danced before Dorigen a squire who was fresher and more joyful in apparel than is the month of May, I believe. He sang and danced to surpass any man who is or was since the world was made. He was, if one would describe him, one of the most handsome men alive: young, strong, virtuous, rich, and wise; and well beloved and held in great honor. And in short, if I am to tell the truth, this servant to Venus, this lively squire, who was called Aurelius, had loved Dorigen, entirely without her knowledge, more than any creature for two years and more, as it happened, but never dared he tell her his woe. He drank all his penance without a cup.

He was in despair, he dared say nothing except that in his songs he would reveal his woe to some degree, as in a general complaining; he said he loved, and was in no way beloved. Of such matter he made many lays, songs, complaints, roundels, and virelays, about how he would dare not utter his sorrow, but languishes like a fury in hell; and die he must, he said, as did Echo for Narcissus, who dared not tell her woe. In other manner than this that I speak of he dared not reveal his passion to her; except that, by chance, sometimes at dances, where young people perform their customs of courtship, it may well be that he looked upon her face in such a way as a man who asks for grace; but she knew nothing of his intent.

Nevertheless it happened, before they went from that garden, that because he was her neighbor and a man of good reputation, and she had known him for a long time, they began to speak. And Aurelius drew more and more toward his matter and when he saw his time, he said thus: "Madame, by God That made this world, If I had known it would gladden your heart, I wish that the day when your Arveragus went over the sea, I, Aurelius, had gone to a place from which I never should have returned. For I well know that my service is in vain; my reward is but the breaking of my heart. Have pity upon my bitter pains, Madame, for with a word you may slay me or save me. I wish to God that I were buried here at your feet! I have now no time to say more; have mercy, sweet, or you will cause me to die!"

She looked at Aurelius: "Is this your desire?" she said. "Is this what you wish to say? Never before did I know what was in your mind. But now, Aurelius, I know it. By that God that gave me breath and soul, never in word or deed shall I be an untrue wife. As long as I have any senses, I will be his to whom I am bound. Take this for my final answer."

But in sport after that she said, "Aurelius, by the high God in heaven, yet would I consent to be your love, since I see you so piteously lamenting. Whenever that day comes that all along the coast of Brittany you remove all the rocks, stone by stone, so that they no longer obstruct the passage of ship or boat—I say, when you have made the coast so clear of rocks that there is no stone to be seen, then I will love you best of all men. Take here my pledge, in all that I can ever do."

"Is there no other mercy in you?" he said.

"No," she said, "by that Lord that made me! For I well know that shall never happen. Let such follies pass out of your heart. What delight should a man ever have to go about loving the wife of another man, who has her body whenever he wishes?"

Aurelius gave many sore sighs. He was woeful when he heard this; and with a sorrowful heart he answered, "Madame, this would be impossible! Then I must die of a sudden and horrible death." And with that word he turned back.

Then many of her other friends came roaming up and down in the paths, and knew nothing of this affair, but speedily began new revel; until the bright sun lost his hue, and the horizon had taken away from him his light (this is as much as to say, it was evening). And they went home in joy and contentment, except, alas, wretched Aurelius alone! He went to his house with sorrowful heart; he saw that he could never escape death, and felt his heart grow cold. Up to the heaven he held his hands and set himself down on his bare knees, and raving said his prayer; for true woe he was out of his wits and knew not what he spoke.

With piteous heart he began his complaint to the gods, and first to the sun: "Apollo," he said, "lord and ruler of every plant, herb, tree, and flower, who gives to each of them his times and seasons, according to your height in the sky, as your lodging changes toward north or south; lord Phoebus, cast your merciful eye upon wretched Aurelius, who is so lost. Behold, lord, my lady has decreed my guiltless death, unless your kindness should have some pity upon my dying heart. For well I know, lord Phoebus, that you may help me best of all except my lady, if you wish. Now promise to hear me tell you in what way I may be helped.

"Your blessed sister, Lucina the bright, chief goddess and queen of the sea (though Neptune has his godhead in the sea, yet is she empress over him), you well know, lord, that just as it is her desire to be kindled and lightened by your orb, for which reason she follows you eagerly, so too the sea desires by its nature to follow her, being goddess both in the sea and in rivers great and small.

"Therefore, Lord Phoebus, this is my prayer: perform this miracle or break my heart; that now at this next opposition, which shall be in the sign of the Lion, pray Lucina to bring a flood so great that it shall rise above the highest rock in Armorican Brittany by at least five fathoms, and let this flood last two years.

"Then, certainly, I may say to my lady, 'Keep your promise, the rocks are gone.' Lord Phoebus, do this miracle; ask her to go the same speed as you; I say, ask your sister that these two years she will go no faster in her course than you. Then shall she always be exactly at full, and the spring flood-tide will last day and night. And if she will not promise to grant me my dear sovereign lady in such a manner, pray her to sink every rock into her own dark region under the ground where Pluto dwells, or nevermore shall I gain my lady. Barefoot I will go a pilgrimage to your temple at Delphi. Lord Phoebus; see the tears on my cheeks, and have some pity on my pains."

And with that he fell down in a swoon and for a long time lay in a trance. His brother, who knew his trouble, caught him up and brought him to his bed. In this woe and torment I let this woeful creature lie in despair. He may choose, as far as I am concerned, whether he will live or die.

Arveragus was come home, with other valiant knights, in health and great honor as the flower of chivalry. Oh, now you are happy, Dorigen, who has in your arms your lively husband, the vigorous knight, the valiant warrior, who loves you as his own heart's life. He never thought to be suspicious whether any creature had spoken to her of love while he was gone; he had no fear of that. He gave no heed to any such matter, but danced, jostled, and showed her great enjoyment. Thus I leave them in happiness and bliss, and will tell of the sick Aurelius.

Two years and more the wretched Aurelius lay in languor and mad torment, before he could walk a step on earth; and he had no comfort in this time, except from his brother, a scholar, who knew of all this woeful matter. For in truth he dared say no word about it to any other creature. He carried it under his breast more secretly than Pamphilus carried his love for Galatea. His breast was whole, to outward view, but ever in his heart was the keen arrow. And you well know that in surgery the cure of a wound healed only on the surface is perilous, unless men could touch the arrow or get at it.

His brother wept and wailed privately, until at last it came to his mind that while he was at Orleans, in France, as young scholars who are desirous of studying curious arts seek in every nook and corner to learn this special knowledge, it came to his mind that, one day while he studied at Orleans, he saw a book of natural magic, which his friend, who was then a bachelor of law, had secretly left upon his desk, though he was there for a different field of study. This book spoke much of the celestial influences concerning the twenty-eight mansions which belong to the moon, and such folly as is not worth a fly in our day. For the faith of the Holy Church that is in our doctrine will not allow any illusion to harm us.

And as soon as he remembered this book his heart began to dance for joy, and he said quietly to himself, "My brother shall be cured speedily; for I am sure there are arts by which men create various apparitions, such as these deceiving magicians conjure up. For often at feasts, I have heard tell, within a large hall these magicians have made water and a barge come in and row up and down in the hall. Sometimes a grim lion has seemed to come, and sometimes flowers spring as in a meadow, sometimes a vine, with grapes white and red, sometimes a castle of mortar and stone. And when they wished, they caused it all to disappear immediately; so it seemed to every man's sight.

"Now then, I conclude thus, that if I could find some old comrade at Orleans who is acquainted with these mansions of the moon, or other natural magic besides, he should well cause my brother to possess his love. For by means of an illusion a clerk may make it appear to a man's sight that every one of the black rocks of Brittany be removed, and that ships come and go along the shore, and that this continue a day or two in such form. Then my brother would be entirely cured. Then she must keep her promise, or else at least he shall shame her."

Why should I make this a longer story? He came to his brother's bed and gave him such encouragement to go to Orleans that he started up at once and went ahead on his way in hopes to be relieved of his care. When they had almost arrived at that city, about two or three furlongs away, they met a young clerk roaming by himself who greeted them politely in Latin, and then said a marvelous thing. "I know the cause of your coming," he said. And before they went a foot further, he told them all that was in their minds. This scholar of Brittany asked him about the companions whom he had known in old days, and he answered him that they were dead; for which he wept many tears.

Aurelius alighted quickly from his horse and went forth home to his house with this magician, who made them well at ease; no provision that might give pleasure. Aurelius had never seen in his life a house so well appointed.

Before he went to supper, the magician showed him forests and parks full of wild beasts; there he saw harts with their lofty horns, the largest that eye ever saw. He beheld a hundred of them slain by dogs, and some bleeding from bitter arrow-wounds. When these wild deer vanished, he saw falconers upon a fair river, slaying the heron with their hawks. Then he saw knights jousting on a plain. And after this, the magician did him the pleasure to show him his lady in a dance, in which he himself was dancing, as it seemed to him. And when this master who created the magic saw that it was time, he clapped his hands, and, farewell, all our revel was gone.

And yet while they saw all this marvelous sight, they never stirred out of the house, but sat still in his study, where his books were, and no other creature but the three of them.

This master called his squire to him, and said thus: "Is our supper ready? It is almost an hour, I will swear, since I told you make our supper, when these honorable men went with me into my study, where my books are."

"Sir," said this squire, "when it pleases you it will be entirely ready, even if you wish to have it right now."

"Let us go to supper, then," he said, "that is best. These people in love must take repose sometime."

After supper they fell into talk over the sum which should be this master's reward for removing all the rocks of Brittany, and from the Gironde to the mouth of Seine. He raised difficulties and swore that he would not have less than a thousand pounds, and he would not be glad to do it for that sum, so God save him!

Aurelius answered directly, with a joyous heart, "Fie on a thousand pound! I would give this wide world, which men say is a ball, if I were lord of it. This bargain is done, for we are agreed. You shall be paid faithfully, by my word. But take care now that you delay us here no longer than tomorrow, for any negligence or sloth."

"No," this clerk said, "take here my faith in pledge to you."

Aurelius went to bed when he wished, and rested nearly all that night. Despite all his labor and his hope of bliss, his woeful heart had relief from suffering. In the morning, when it was day, they took the shortest road to Brittany, Aurelius and this magician, and dismounted at the place where they wished to be. And, as books remind me, this was the cold, frosty season of December. Phoebus grew old and of hue like latten, who in his hot declination shone with his bright beams like burnished gold; but now he had descended into Capricorn, where he shone fully pale, I dare well say. The bitter frosts, with sleet and rain, have destroyed the green in every garden. Janus with his double beard sits by the fire and drinks the wine out of his ox-horn; before him stands brawn of the tusked boar, and every lusty man cries, "Noel!"

Aurelius offered his master all the hospitality and reverence he could, and asked him to do his duty to bring him out of his bitter pains, or with a sword he would slit his own heart. This cunning scholar so pitied this man that he made as much haste as he could, day and night, to look for the most beneficial time for his experiment; that is to say, to create an appearance, by such an illusion or crafty trick—I do not have vocabulary of astrology—that she and every person should think and say that the rocks of Brittany were gone, or else sunk under the earth.

So at last he found his time to work his tricks and stage his miserable performance of wicked superstition. He brought forth his Toledo tables, well corrected; there lacked nothing, neither his tables of collected or expanded years, nor his roots, nor his other gear, such as his centres and his arguments, and his tables of proportional parts for his equations. And for his calculations he knew full well how far Alnath in the eighth sphere was pushed from the head of that fixed Aries above, which is calculated to be in the ninth sphere; cunningly he calculated by means of all this. When he had found his first mansion, by proportion he knew the rest, and he well knew the rising of his moon, in which was the planet's face and term, and all the rest. And he knew well the moon to be in a mansion favorable to his enterprise, and knew also the other matters to be observed for working such illusions and such misdoings as heathen people used in those days.

For this reason he no longer delayed, but through his magic it seemed for a week or two that all the rocks were gone. Aurelius, who was still despairing whether he should have his love or fare badly, waited night and day for this miracle. And when he knew that there was no hindrance, but that every rock was gone, he fell down at his master's feet immediately and said, "I, Aurelius, woeful wretch, thank you, lord, and Venus my lady, who have helped me from my cold misery." And he made his way forth to the temple where he knew he should see his lady. And when he saw his time, he then saluted his dear sovereign lady with a timid heart and humble face.

This woeful man said, "My own lady, whom I most fear and love as best I know how, and whom of all this world I would be most loathe to displease, if I did not suffer so much distress for the love of you that soon I must die here at your feet, I should never tell you how woebegone I am. But surely I must either die or make my complaint, as you slay me, an innocent man, with true pain. But though you have no pity for my death, consider this carefully before you break your pledge.

"For the sake of God in heaven, please repent before you murder me because I love you. For well you know what you promised, Madame; not that I claim anything of you as a right, my sovereign lady, but only ask it as a favor. Nevertheless, in a garden yonder, at such a spot, you know very well what you promised me, and you pledged

your word in my hand, to love me best; God knows, you said so, though I may be unworthy of it. Madame, I say it for your honor, more than to save my heart's life; I have done as you said, and if you wish, you may go and see. Do as you wish; remember your promise, for, alive or dead, you shall find me right in that garden. It all depends on you, to make me live or die. But well I know the rocks are gone.

He takes his leave, and she stood astonished; not a drop of blood was in all her face. She thought never to have come into such a trap. She said, "Alas that ever this should happen! For I never deemed that such a monstrosity or marvel could happen, by any possibility. It is against the course of nature. And home she went, a sorrowful creature; scarcely could she walk for utter fear, and for a whole day or two she wept and wailed and swooned, so that it was pitiful to behold. But why she was so she told no creature, for Arveragus was gone out of town.

But with a pale face and sorrowful expression she spoke to herself, and said thus in her complaint as I shall tell you. She said, "Alas! I complain about you, Fortune, who has bound me unawares in your chain, from which to escape I know no help, except only death or dishonor; one of these two it is necessary for me to choose. But nevertheless I had rather forfeit my life than have shame on my body, or lose my fair reputation, or know myself false. And by my death, surely, I may escape.

"Alas, have not many noble wives and many maidens slain themselves before this, rather than do wrong with her body? Yes, surely; lo! These histories testify it. When the thirty tyrants, full of cursedness, had slain Phidon at a feast in Athens, by their malice they commanded men to arrest his daughters and bring them before them entirely naked, to fulfill their foul pleasure, and they made them dance in their father's blood upon the pavement. May God give them damnation! For this reason these woeful maidens, in fear of this, secretly leaped into a well and drowned themselves, rather than lose their maidenhood; so the books relate.

"The people of Messene had fifty Lacedaemon maidens sought out, with whom they wished to satisfy their lust; but of that entire band there was none who was not slain, and with good will chose to die rather than consent to be robbed of her maidenhood. Why should I, then, fear to die?

"Lo also, the tyrant Aristoclides. He loved a maiden named Stymphalides, who, when her father was slain one night, went directly to Diana's temple, and laid hold of the image of Diana with her two hands, and would never let go. No creature could tear her hands from it, until she was slain in that very place. Now since maidens have had such scorn to be defiled with man's base pleasure, it seems to me that a wife ought indeed rather to slay herself than be defiled.

"What shall I say of Hasdrubal's wife, who slew herself at Carthage? For when she saw that the Romans had won the city, she took all her children and skipped down into the fire, and chose rather to die than that any Roman dishonored her.

"Did not Lucrece slay herself at Rome, alas, when she was violated by Tarquin, because she deemed it a shame to live when she had lost her honor?

The seven maidens of Miletus also for true fear and woe slew themselves rather than the people of Gaul should violate them.

I could tell now more than a thousand stories, I believe, concerning this matter. When Abradates was slain, his dear wife slew herself and let her blood flow into Abradates' deep, wide wounds, saying, "My body, at least, no creature shall defile, if I can hinder it."

"Why should I cite more examples of this, since so many have slain themselves rather than be defiled? I will end thus, for it is better for me to slay myself than so to be defiled. I will be true to Arveragus, or slay myself in some way, as did the dear daughter of Democion, because she would not be defiled. O Scedasus, it is a great pity to read how your daughters died, who slew themselves for the same cause, alas! It was as great pity, or indeed greater, for the Theban maiden that slew herself even for the same grief, to escape Nicanor. Another Theban maiden did likewise; because one of Macedonia had violated her, she redressed her maidenhood by her death. What shall I say of the wife of Niceratus, who for a like cause took her life? How true also was his love to Alcibiades, and chose rather to die than to suffer his body to be unburied! Lo, what a wife was Alcestis! What says Homer of Penelope the good? All Greece knows of her chastity. It is written thus of Laodamia, in truth, that when Protesilaus was slain at Troy, she would live no longer after his days. I may tell the same of noble Portia; she could not live without Brutus, to whom she had fully given her whole heart. The perfect wifeness of Artemisia is honored through all barbarian lands. O queen Teuta, your wifely chastity may be a mirror to all wives. The same thing I say of Bilia, of Rhodogune and of Valeria."

Thus Dorigen made her complaint a day or two, at all times intending to die. But nevertheless Arveragus, this worthy knight, came home the third evening, and asked her why she wept so sorely. And she began to weep ever more bitterly.

"Alas that ever I was born! Thus I said," she said, "this was my oath," and she told him what you have already heard; there is no need to tell more.

This husband, with cheerful countenance and in friendly fashion, answered and said as I shall tell you; "Is there

anything else but this, Dorigen?"

"Nay, nay," she said, "so may God help me; God forbid there would be more; this is too much."

"Yes, wife," he replied; "leave sleeping that which is quiet. It may yet be well today, by chance. You shall keep your pledge, by my faith! For may God so surely have mercy on me, for the true love I have for you I had far rather be stabbed to the heart, than you should not hold your pledge. A promise is the highest thing that a man may keep." But with that word he burst out weeping immediately, and said, "I forbid you, on pain of death, as long as your life lasts, to tell this matter to any creature. I will endure all my woe as best I can, and make no such sign of grief that people might judge or guess harm of you."

And he called forth a squire and maid, and said, "Go forth directly with Dorigen and bring her to such a place." They took their leave and went their way, but they knew not why she went there. He would tell his intention to no creature. Perhaps in truth many of you will think him a foolish man in this, that he would put his wife in jeopardy; listen to the tale, before you exclaim against her. She may have better fortune than you might suppose; and when you have heard the tale, you may judge.

This squire Aurelius, who was so amorous of Dorigen, happened by chance to meet her amidst the town, right in the busiest street, as she was bound straight for the garden where she had promised to go. And he also was bound for the garden; for he always noted well when she would go out of her house to any place. But thus they met, by chance or good fortune; and he saluted her with joyous mood, and asked where she was going.

And she answered, as if she were mad, "To the garden, as my husband ordered, to keep my promise, Alas! Alas!" Aurelius wondered about what had happened, and in his heart he had great compassion about her and her lament, and about Arveragus, the worthy knight who had told her to maintain everything she had promised, so loath was he that his wife should break her pledge. And Aurelius' heart was moved to great pity, and this made him consider carefully what would be best, so that he felt he would rather refrain from his desire rather than to be guilty of such a wretched and dishonorable act against nobility and all gentility.

For this reason he said thus in few words: "Madame, say to Arveragus, your lord, that since I see his great nobility to you (and I well see your distress), that it seemed better to him to suffer shame (and that would be a pity) than you should break your pledge to me, I would rather suffer perpetual woe than part the love between you. Into your hand, Madame, I release, cancelled, every assurance and every bond that you have made to me to this day from the time when you were born. I pledge my word that I shall never reproach you on the score of any promise. And here I take my leave of the best and truest wife that in all my days I have ever known. But let every woman beware what she promises; let her at least think of Dorigen." Thus surely a squire can do a gentle deed, as well as can a knight.

She thanked him upon her bare knees, and went home to her husband and told him everything, even as you have heard me tell it. And be assured, he was so well pleased that I could not tell how much; why should I explain this matter any further? Arveragus and his wife Dorigen led forth their days in sovereign bliss.

Never again was there trouble between them. Evermore he cherished her as though she were a queen, and she was true to him. Concerning these two people you will get no more from me.

Aurelius, who had forfeited all the expense, cursed the time when he was born. "Alas! alas!" he said, "that I promised a thousand pounds' weight of refined gold to this philosopher! What shall I do? I see nothing more but that I am undone. I must sell my heritage and be a beggar. I cannot remain here and shame all my family here, unless I can gain his mercy. But nevertheless I will seek of him to let me pay on certain days each year, and will thank him for his great courtesy. I will keep my word, I will not be false."

With sore heart he went to his coffer and brought to this clerk gold of the value of five hundred pounds, I believe, and asked him through his noble courtesy to grant him certain days to pay the remnant, and said, "Master, I dare well boast that I never failed of my word as yet. For truly my debt shall be paid to you, whatever may happen to me, even if I must go begging in my undergarments alone. But would you promise, upon security, to give me a respite for two or three years; then it will be well with me. For otherwise I must sell my heritage. There is no more to say."

This philosopher answered gravely and said thus, when he heard these words, "Have I not kept my covenant with you?"

"Yes, surely, well and truly," he said. "Have you not had your lady just as you desired?"

"No, no," he said and sighed sorrowfully.

"What was the cause? Tell me, if you can."

Aurelius began his tale immediately, and told him everything, as you have heard. There is no need to rehearse it again. He said, "Arveragus on account of his nobility would rather have died in sorrow and woe than that his wife would be false to her pledge." He told him also the sorrow of Dorigen, how loath she was to be a wicked wife, and that she had rather have died that day, and that it was through innocence she had sworn her oath. "She never heard tell before of magic illusion; that made me have pity upon her. And just as he sent her freely to me, so freely I sent her back to him. This is everything; there is no more to say."

This philosopher answered: "Dear friend, each of you did a gentle deed toward the other. You are a squire, he is a knight. But may God in his blessed power forbid, but a clerk may truly do a gentle deed as well as any of you.

Sir, I release you from your debt of a thousand pounds, as freely as if you had only now crept out of the earth and had never known me before now. For, sir, I will not take a penny from you for all my skill and all my labor. You have paid well for my subsistence. It is enough. And farewell, and have a good day." And he took his horse and went forth on his journey.

Gentle people, I would ask you this question now: Which do you think was the most noble? Now tell me, before you go farther. I know no more; my tale is finished.

Here is ended the Franklin's Tale.

THE DECAMERON

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313- 1375 C.E.)

Begun ca. 1349 and finished by 1353 C.E.

Italy

Boccaccio began writing his Decameron shortly after an outbreak of the plague in Florence, Italy, in 1348 that killed about three quarters of the population. The introduction to this frame tale depicts the horrors of the plague, with vivid descriptions of the dying and laments about the lack of a cure. In his story, seven women and three men leave Florence to take refuge in the countryside. They justify their decision in several ways: the right to self-preservation; the bad morals and lewd behavior of many of their neighbors (who are convinced that they are going to die anyway); and their own feelings of abandonment by their families. They decide to tell stories to pass the time: one story each for ten days (the Greek for "ten" is "deka" and for "day" is "hemera," from which Boccaccio derives his title). Each day, one of them chooses a theme for the stories. As entertaining as the stories are, the discussions between the stories are what make the collection special; the speakers carry on a battle of the sexes as they debate the meaning and relative value of each story. The same dynamic can be found in two other frame tales in this anthology, one of which was influenced by the Decameron: the Thousand and One Nights (written before the Decameron) with its gripping frame story of Shahrazad; and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, with the conversations (and arguments) among the pilgrims who are telling the tales.

Written by Laura J. Getty

THE DECAMERON

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Giovanni Boccaccio, translated by John Payne

Introduction

To the Ladies

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Giovanni Boccaccio, translated by Léopold Flameng

When I reflect how disposed you are by nature to compassion, I cannot help being apprehensive lest what I now offer to your acceptance should seem to have but a harsh and offensive beginning; for it presents at the very outset the mournful remembrance of that most fatal plague, so terrible yet in the memories of us all. But let not this dismay you from reading further, as though every page were to cost you sighs and tears. Rather let this beginning, disagreeable as it is, seem to you but as a rugged and steep mountain placed before a delightful valley, which appears more beautiful and pleasant, as the way to it was more difficult: for as joy usually ends in sorrow, so again the end of sorrow is joy. To this short fatigue (I call it short, because contained in few words,) immediately succeeds the mirth and pleasure I had before promised you; and which, but for that promise, you would scarcely expect to find. And in truth could I have brought you by any other way than this, I would gladly have done it: but as the occasion of the occurrences, of which I am going to treat, could not well be made out without such a relation, I am forced to use this Introduction.

In the year then of our Lord 1348, there happened at Florence, the finest city in all Italy, a most terrible plague; which, whether owing to the influence of the planets, or that it was sent from God as a just punishment for our sins, had broken out some years before in the Levant, and after passing from place to place, and making incredible havoc

all the way, had now reached the west. There, spite of all the means that art and human foresight could suggest, such as keeping the city clear from filth, the exclusion of all suspected persons, and the publication of copious instructions for the preservation of health; and notwithstanding manifold humble supplications offered to God in processions and otherwise; it began to show itself in the spring of the aforesaid year, in a sad and wonderful manner. Unlike what had been seen in the east, where bleeding from the nose is the fatal prognostic, here there appeared certain tumours in the groin or under the arm-pits, some as big as a small apple, others as an egg; and afterwards purple spots in most parts of the body; in some cases large and but few in number, in others smaller and more numerous—both sorts the usual messengers of death. To the cure of this malady, neither medical knowledge nor the power of drugs was of any effect; whether because the disease was in its own nature mortal, or that the physicians (the number of whom, taking quacks and women pretenders into the account, was grown very great,) could form no just idea of the cause, nor consequently devise a true method of cure; whichever was the reason, few escaped; but nearly all died the third day from the first appearance of the symptoms, some sooner, some later, without any fever or other accessory symptoms. What gave the more virulence to this plague, was that, by being communicated from the sick to the hale, it spread daily, like fire when it comes in contact with large masses of combustibles. Nor was it caught only by conversing with, or coming near the sick, but even by touching their clothes, or anything that they had before touched. It is wonderful, what I am going to mention; and had I not seen it with my own eyes, and were there not many witnesses to attest it besides myself, I should never venture to relate it, however worthy it were of belief. Such, I say, was the quality of the pestilential matter, as to pass not only from man to man, but, what is more strange, it has been often known, that anything belonging to the infected, if touched by any other creature, would certainly infect, and even kill that creature in a short space of time. One instance of this kind I took particular notice of: the rags of a poor man just dead had been thrown into the street; two hogs came up, and after rooting amongst the rags, and shaking them about in their mouths, in less than an hour they both turned round, and died on the spot.

These facts, and others of the like sort, occasioned various fears and devices amongst those who survived, all tending to the same uncharitable and cruel end; which was, to avoid the sick, and everything that had been near them, expecting by that means to save themselves. And some holding it best to live temperately, and to avoid excesses of all kinds, made parties, and shut themselves up from the rest of the world; eating and drinking moderately of the best, and diverting themselves with music, and such other entertainments as they might have within door; never listening to anything from without, to make them uneasy. Others maintained free living to be a better preservative, and would baulk no passion or appetite they wished to gratify, drinking and reveling incessantly from tavern to tavern, or in private houses (which were frequently found deserted by the owners, and therefore common to every one), yet strenuously avoiding, with all this brutal indulgence, to come near the infected. And such, at that time, was the public distress, that the laws, human and divine, were no more regarded; for the officers, to put them in force, being either dead, sick, or in want of persons to assist them, every one did just as he pleased. A third sort of people chose a method between these two: not confining themselves to rules of diet like the former, and yet avoiding the intemperance of the latter; but eating and drinking what their appetites required, they walked everywhere with odours and nose gays to smell to; as holding it best to corroborate the brain: for the whole atmosphere seemed to them tainted with the stench of dead bodies, arising partly from the distemper itself, and partly from the fermenting of the medicines within them. Others with less humanity, but perchance, as they supposed, with more security from danger, decided that the only remedy for the pestilence was to avoid it: persuaded, therefore, of this, and taking care for themselves only, men and women in great numbers left the city, their houses, relations, and effects, and fled into the country: as if the wrath of God had been restrained to visit those only within the walls of the city; or else concluding, that none ought to stay in a place thus doomed to destruction.

Thus divided as they were in their views, neither did all die, nor all escape; but falling sick indifferently, as well those of one as of another opinion; they who first set the example by forsaking others, now languished themselves without pity. I pass over the little regard that citizens and relations showed to each other; for their terror was such, that a brother even fled from his brother, a wife from her husband, and, what is more uncommon, a parent from his own child. Hence numbers that fell sick could have no help but what the charity of friends, who were very few, or the avarice of servants supplied; and even these were scarce and at extravagant wages, and so little used to the business that they were fit only to reach what was called for, and observe when their employer died; and this desire of getting money often cost them their lives. From this desertion of friends, and scarcity of servants, an unheard-of custom prevailed; no lady, however young or handsome, would scruple to be attended by a man-servant, whether young or old it mattered not, and to expose herself naked to him, the necessity of the distemper requiring it, as though it was to a woman; which might make those who recovered, less modest for the time to come. And many lost their lives, who might have escaped, had they been looked after at all. So that, between the scarcity of servants, and the violence of the distemper, such numbers were continually dying, as made it terrible to hear as well as to behold. Whence, from mere necessity, many customs were introduced different from what had been before known in the city.

It had been usual, as it now is, for the women who were friends and neighbours to the deceased, to meet together at his house, and to lament with his relations; at the same time the men would get together at the door, with a number of clergy, according to the person's circumstances; and the corpse was carried by people of his own rank, with the solemnity of tapers and singing, to that church where the deceased had desired to be buried. This custom was now laid aside, and, so far from having a crowd of women to lament over them, great numbers passed out of the world without a witness. Few were they who had the tears of their friends at their departure; those friends were laughing and making themselves merry the while; for even the women had learned to postpone every other concern to that of their own lives. Nor was a corpse attended by more than ten or a dozen, nor those citizens of credit, but fellows hired for the purpose; who would put themselves under the bier, and carry it with all possible haste to the nearest church; and the corpse was interred, without any great ceremony, where they could find room. With regard to the lower sort, and many of a middling rank, the scene was still more affecting; for they staying at home either through poverty or hopes of succour in distress, fell sick daily by thousands, and, having nobody to attend them, generally died: some breathed their last in the streets, and others shut up in their own houses, where the stench that came from them made the first discovery of their deaths to the neighbourhood. And, indeed, every place was filled with the dead. Hence it became a general practice, as well out of regard for the living as pity for the dead, for the neighbours, assisted by what porters they could meet with, to clear all the houses, and lay the bodies at the doors; and every morning great numbers might be seen brought out in this manner, to be carried away on biers, or tables, two or three at a time; and sometimes it has happened that a wife and her husband, two or three brothers, and a father and son, have been laid on together. It has been observed also, whilst two or three priests have walked before a corpse with their crucifix, that two or three sets of porters have fallen in with them; and where they knew but of one dead body, they have buried six, eight, or more: nor was there any to follow, and shed a few tears over them; for things were come to that pass, that men's lives were no more regarded than the lives of so many beasts. Thus it plainly appeared, that what the wisest in the ordinary course of things, and by a common train of calamities, could never be taught, namely, to bear them patiently, this, by the excess of calamity, was now grown a familiar lesson to the most simple and unthinking. The consecrated ground no longer containing the numbers which were continually brought thither, especially as they were desirous of laying every one in the parts allotted to their families, they were forced to dig trenches, and to put them in by hundreds, piling them up in rows, as goods are stowed in a ship, and throwing in a little earth till they were filled to the top.

Not to dwell upon every particular of our misery, I shall observe, that it fared no better with the adjacent country; for, to omit the different boroughs about us, which presented the same view in miniature with the city, you might see the poor distressed labourers, with their families, without either the aid of physicians, or help of servants, languishing on the highways, in the fields, and in their own houses, and dying rather like cattle than human creatures. The consequence was that, growing dissolute in their manners like the citizens, and careless of everything, as supposing every day to be their last, their thoughts were not so much employed how to improve, as how to use their substance for their present support. The oxen, asses, sheep, goats, swine, and the dogs themselves, ever faithful to their masters, being driven from their own homes, were left to roam at will about the fields, and among the standing corn, which no one cared to gather, or even to reap; and many times, after they had filled themselves in the day, the animals would return of their own accord like rational creatures at night.

What can I say more, if I return to the city? Unless that such was the cruelty of Heaven, and perhaps of men, that between March and July following, according to authentic reckonings, upwards of a hundred thousand souls perished in the city only; whereas, before that calamity, it was not supposed to have contained so many inhabitants. What magnificent dwellings, what noble palaces were then depopulated to the last inhabitant! What families became extinct! What riches and vast possessions were left, and no known heir to inherit them! What numbers of both sexes, in the prime and vigour of youth, whom in the morning neither Galen, Hippocrates, nor Æsculapius himself, would have denied to be in perfect health, breakfasted in the morning with their living friends, and supped at night with their departed friends in the other world or else to show by our habits the greatness of our distress. And if we go hence, it is either to see multitudes of the dead and sick carried along the streets; or persons who had been outlawed for their villanies, now facing it out publicly, in safe defiance of the laws; or the scum of the city, enriched with the public calamity, and insulting us with ribald ballads. Nor is anything now talked of, but that such a one is dead, or dying; and, were any left to mourn, we should hear nothing but lamentations. Or if we go home — I know not whether it fares with you as with myself — when I find out of a numerous family not one left besides a maidservant, I am frightened out of my senses; and go where I will, the ghosts of the departed seem always before me; not like the persons whilst they were living, but assuming a ghastly and dreadful aspect. Therefore the case is the same, whether we stay here, depart hence, or go home; especially as there are few left but ourselves who are able to go, and have a place to go to. Those few too, I am told, fall into all sorts of debauchery; and even cloistered ladies, supposing themselves entitled to equal liberties with others, are as bad as the worst. Now if this be so (as you see plainly it is), what do we here? What are we dreaming of? Why are we less regardful of our lives than other people

of theirs? Are we of less value to ourselves, or are our souls and bodies more firmly united, and so in less danger of dissolution? It is monstrous to think in such a manner; so many of both sexes dying of this distemper in the very prime of their youth afford us an undeniable argument to the contrary. Wherefore, lest through our own willfulness or neglect, this calamity, which might have been prevented, should befall us, I should think it best (and I hope you will join with me,) for us to quit the town, and avoiding, as we would death itself, the bad example of others, to choose some place of retirement, of which every one of us has more than one, where we may make ourselves innocently merry, without offering the least violence to the dictates of reason and our own consciences. There will our ears be entertained with the warbling of the birds, and our eyes with the verdure of the hills and valleys; with the waving of cornfields like the sea itself; with trees of a thousand different kinds, and a more open and serene sky; which, however overcast, yet affords a far more agreeable prospect than these desolate walls. The air also is pleasanter, and there is greater plenty of everything, attended with few inconveniences: for, though people die there as well as here, yet we shall have fewer such objects before us, as the inhabitants are less in number; and on the other part, if I judge right, we desert nobody, but are rather ourselves forsaken. For all our friends, either by death, or endeavouring to avoid it, have left us, as if we in no way belonged to them. As no blame then can ensue from following this advice, and perhaps sickness and death from not doing so, I would have us take our maids, and everything we may be supposed to want, and enjoy all the diversions which the season will permit, to-day in one place, to-morrow in another; and so continue to do, unless death should interpose, until we see what end Providence designs for these things. And of this too let me remind you, that our characters will stand as fair by our going away reputably, as those of others will do who stay at home with discredit."

The ladies having heard what Pampinea had to offer, not only approved of it, but had actually began to concert measures for their instant departure, when Filomena, who was a most discreet person, remarked: "Though Pampinea has spoken well, yet there is no occasion to run headlong into the affair, as you are about to do. We are but women, nor is any of us so ignorant as not to know how little able we shall be to conduct such an affair, without some man to help us. We are naturally fickle, obstinate, suspicious, and fearful; and I doubt much, unless we take somebody into our scheme to manage it for us, lest it soon be at an end; and perhaps, little to our reputation. Let us provide against this, therefore, before we begin."

Eliza then replied: "It is true, man is our sex's chief or head, and without his management, it seldom happens that any undertaking of ours succeeds well. But how are these men to be come at? We all know that the greater part of our male acquaintance are dead, and the rest all dispersed abroad, avoiding what we seek to avoid, and without our knowing where to find them. To take strangers with us, would not be altogether so proper: for, whilst we have regard to our health, we should so contrive matters, that, wherever we go to repose and divert ourselves, no scandal may ensue from it."

Whilst this matter was in debate, behold, three gentlemen came into the church, the youngest not less than twenty-five years of age, and in whom neither the adversity of the times, the loss of relations and friends, nor even fear for themselves, could stifle, or indeed cool, the passion of love. One was called Pamfilo, the second Filostrato, and the third Dioneo, all of them well bred, and pleasant companions; and who, to divert themselves in this time of affliction, were then in pursuit of their mistresses, who as it chanced were three of these seven ladies, the other four being all related to one or other of them. These gentlemen were no sooner within view, than the ladies had immediately their eyes upon them, and Pampinea said, with a smile, "See, fortune is with us, and has thrown in our way three prudent and worthy gentlemen, who will conduct and wait upon us, if we think fit to accept of their service." Neifile, with a blush, because she was one that had an admirer, answered: "Take care what you say, I know them all indeed to be persons of character, and fit to be trusted, even in affairs of more consequence, and in better company; but, as some of them are enamoured of certain ladies here, I am only concerned lest we be drawn into some scrape or scandal, without either our fault or theirs." Filomena replied: "Never tell me what other people may think, so long as I know myself to be virtuous; God and the truth will be my defence; and if they be willing to go, we will say with Pampinea, that fortune is with us."

The rest hearing her speak in this manner, gave consent that the gentlemen should be invited to partake in this expedition. Without more words, Pampinea, who was related to one of the three rose up, and made towards them, as they stood watching at a distance. Then, after a cheerful salutation, she acquainted them with the design in hand, and entreated that they would, out of pure friendship, oblige them with their company. The gentlemen at first took it all for a jest, but, being assured to the contrary, immediately answered that they were ready; and, to lose no time, gave the necessary orders for what they wished to have done. Every thing being thus prepared, and a messenger dispatched before, whither they intended to go, the next morning, which was Wednesday, by break of day, the ladies, with some of their women, and the gentlemen, with every one his servant, set out from the city, and, after they had travelled two short miles, came to the place appointed.

It was a little eminence, remote from any great road, covered with trees and shrubs of an agreeable verdure; and on the top was a stately palace, with a grand and beautiful court in the middle: within were galleries, and fine apartments elegantly fitted up, and adorned with most curious paintings; around it were fine meadows, and most

delightful gardens, with fountains of the purest and best water. The vaults also were stored with the richest wines, suited rather to the taste of copious toppers, than of modest and virtuous ladies. This palace they found cleared out, and everything set in order for their reception, with the rooms all graced with the flowers of the season, to their great satisfaction. The party being seated, Dioneo, who was the pleasantest of them all, and full of words, began "Your wisdom it is, ladies, rather than any foresight of ours, which has brought us hither. I know not how you have disposed of your cares; as for mine, I left them all behind me when I came from home. Either prepare, then, to be as merry as myself (I mean with decency), or give me leave to go back again, and resume my cares where I left them." Pampinea made answer, as if she had disposed of hers in like manner: "You say right, sir, we will be merry; we fled from our troubles for no other reason. But, as extremes are never likely to last, I, who first proposed the means by which such an agreeable company is now met together, being desirous to make our mirth of some continuance, do find there is a necessity for our appointing a principal, whom we shall honour and obey in all things as our head; and whose province it shall be to regulate our diversions. And that every one may make trial of the burthen which attends care, as well as the pleasure which there is in superiority, nor therefore envy what he has not yet tried, I hold it best that every one should experience both the trouble and the honour for one day. The first, I propose, shall be elected by us all, and, on the approach of evening, shall name a person to succeed for the following day: and each one, during the time of his or her government, shall give orders concerning the place where, and the manner how, we are to live."

These words were received with the highest satisfaction, and the speaker was, with one consent, appointed president for the first day: whilst Filomena, running to a laurel-tree, (for she had often heard how much that tree has always been esteemed, and what honour was conferred on those who were deservedly crowned with it,) made a garland, and put it upon Pampinea's head. That garland, whilst the company continued together, was ever after to be the ensign of sovereignty.

Pampinea, being thus elected queen, enjoined silence, and having summoned to her presence the gentlemen's servants, and their own women, who were four in number: "To give you the first example," said she, "how, by proceeding from good to better, we may live orderly and pleasantly, and continue together, without the least reproach, as long as we please, in the first place I declare Parmeno, Dioneo's servant, master of my household, and to him I commit the care of my family, and everything relating to my hall. Sirisco, Pamfilo's servant, I appoint my treasurer, and to be under the direction of Parmeno; and Tindaro I command to wait on Filostrato and the other two gentlemen, whilst their servants are thus employed. Mysia, my woman, and Licisca, Filomena's, I order into the kitchen, there to get ready what shall be provided by Parmeno. To Lauretta's Chimera, and Fiammetta's Stratilia, I give the care of the ladies' chambers, and to keep the room clean where we sit. And I will and command you all, on pain of my displeasure, that wherever you go, or whatever you hear and see, you bring no news here but what is good." These orders were approved by all; and the queen, rising from her seat, with a good deal of gaiety, added: "Here are gardens and meadows, where you may divert yourselves till nine o'clock, when I shall expect you back, that we may dine in the cool of the day."

The company were now at liberty, and the gentlemen and ladies took a pleasant walk in the garden, talking over a thousand merry things by the way, and diverting themselves by singing love songs, and weaving garlands of flowers. Returning at the time appointed, they found Parmeno busy in the execution of his office: for in a saloon below was the table set forth, covered with the neatest linen, with glasses reflecting a lustre like silver: and water having been presented to them to wash their hands, by the queen's order, Parmeno desired them to sit down. The dishes were now served up in the most elegant manner, and the best wines brought in, the servants waiting all the time with the most profound silence; and being well pleased with their entertainment, they dined with all the facetiousness and mirth imaginable. When dinner was over, as they could all dance, and some both play and sing well, the queen ordered in the musical instruments. Dioneo took a lute, and Fiammetta a viol, in obedience to the royal command; a dance was struck up, and the queen, with the rest of the company, took an agreeable turn or two, whilst the servants were sent to dinner; and when the dance was ended, they began to sing, and continued till the queen thought it time to break up. Her permission being given, the gentlemen retired to their chambers, remote from the ladies' lodging rooms, and the ladies did the same, and undressed themselves for bed.

It was little more than three, when the queen rose, and ordered all to be called, alleging that much sleep in the daytime was unwholesome. Then they went into a meadow of deep grass, where the sun had little power; and having the benefit of a pleasant breeze, they sat down in a circle, as the queen had commanded, and she addressed them in this manner:—"As the sun is high, and the heat excessive, and nothing is to be heard but the chirping of the cicadas among the olives, it would be madness for us to think of moving yet: this is an airy place, and here are chess-boards and backgammon tables to divert yourselves with; but if you will be ruled by me, you will not play at all, since it often makes the one party uneasy, without any great pleasure to the other, or to the lookers-on; but let us begin and tell stories, and in this manner one person will entertain the whole company; and by the time it has gone round, the worst part of the day will be over, and then we can divert ourselves as we like best. If this be agreeable to

you, then (for I wait to know your pleasure) let us begin; if not, you are at your own disposal till the evening." This motion being approved by all, the queen continued, "Let every one for this first day take what subject he fancies most:" and turning to Pamfilo, who sat on her right hand, she bade him begin. He readily obeyed, and spoke to this effect, so as to be distinctly heard by the whole company.

Day the Third

The Ninth Story

Gillette de narbonne recovereth the king of france of a fistula and demandeth for her husband bertrand de roussillon, who marrieth her against his will and betaketh him for despite to florence, where, he paying court to a young lady, gillette, in the person of the latter, lieth with him and hath by him two sons; wherefore after, holding her dear, he entertaineth her for his wife.

Lauretta's story being now ended, it rested but with the queen to tell, and she would not infringe upon Dioneo's privilege; wherefore, without waiting to be solicited by her companions, she began all blithesomely to speak thus: "Who shall tell a story that may appear goodly, now we have heard that of Lauretta? Certes, it was well for us that hers was not the first, for that few of the others would have pleased after it, as I misdoubt me will betide of those which are yet to tell this day. Natheless, be that as it may, I will e'en recount to you that which occurreth to me upon the proposed theme.

There was in the kingdom of France a gentleman called Isnard, Count of Roussillon, who, for that he was scant of health, still entertained about his person a physician, by name Master Gerard de Narbonne. The said count had one little son, and no more, hight Bertrand, who was exceeding handsome and agreeable, and with him other children of his own age were brought up. Among these latter was a daughter of the aforesaid physician, by name Gillette, who vowed to the said Bertrand an infinite love and fervent more than pertained unto her tender years. The count dying and leaving his son in the hands of the king, it behoved him betake himself to Paris, whereof the damsel abode sore disconsolate, and her own father dying no great while after, she would fain, as she might have had a seemly occasion, have gone to Paris to see Bertrand: but, being straitly guarded, for that she was left rich and alone, she saw no honourable way thereto; and being now of age for a husband and having never been able to forget Bertrand, she had, without reason assigned, refused many to whom her kinsfolk would have married her.

Now it befell that, what while she burned more than ever for love of Bertrand, for that she heard he was grown a very goodly gentleman, news came to her how the King of France, by an imposthume which he had had in his breast and which had been ill tended, had gotten a fistula, which occasioned him the utmost anguish and annoy, nor had he yet been able to find a physician who might avail to recover him thereof, albeit many had essayed it, but all had aggravated the ill; wherefore the king, despairing of cure, would have no more counsel nor aid of any. Hereof the young lady was beyond measure content and bethought herself that not only would this furnish her with a legitimate occasion of going to Paris, but that, should the king's ailment be such as she believed, she might lightly avail to have Bertrand to husband. Accordingly, having aforesaid learned many things of her father, she made a powder of certain simples useful for such an infirmity as she conceived the king's to be and taking horse, repaired to Paris.

Before aught else she studied to see Bertrand and next, presenting herself before the king, she prayed him of his favour to show her his ailment. The king, seeing her a fair and engaging damsel, knew not how to deny her and showed her that which ailed him. Whenas she saw it, she was certified incontinent that she could heal it and accordingly said, 'My lord, an it please you, I hope in God to make you whole of this your infirmity in eight days' time, without annoy or fatigue on your part.' The king scoffed in himself at her words, saying, 'That which the best physicians in the world have availed not neither known to do, how shall a young woman know?' Accordingly, he thanked her for her good will and answered that he was resolved no more to follow the counsel of physicians. Whereupon quoth the damsel, 'My lord, you make light of my skill, for that I am young and a woman; but I would have you bear in mind that I medicine not of mine own science, but with the aid of God and the science of Master Gerard de Narbonne, who was my father and a famous physician whilst he lived.'

The king, hearing this, said in himself, 'It may be this woman is sent me of God; why should I not make proof of her knowledge, since she saith she will, without annoy of mine, cure me in little time?' Accordingly, being resolved to essay her, he said, 'Damsel, and if you cure us not, after causing us break our resolution, what will you have ensue to you therefor?' 'My lord,' answered she, 'set a guard upon me and if I cure you not within eight days, let burn me alive; but, if I cure you, what reward shall I have?' Quoth the king, 'You seem as yet unhusbanded; if you do this, we will marry you well and worshipfully.' 'My lord,' replied the young lady, 'I am well pleased that you should marry me, but I will have a husband such as I shall ask of you, excepting always any one of your sons or of the royal house.' He readily promised her that which she sought, whereupon she began her cure and in brief, before the term limited, she brought him back to health.



IMAGE 5.7: GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO AND FLORENTINES WHO HAVE FLED FROM THE PLAGUE | In this introduction to *The Decameron*, the author is shown alongside his ten characters (three men and seven women) who left Florence to escape the plague.

Author: Master of 1482 and follower (illuminators)

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and loveth you dear; wherefore we doubt not but you will have a far happier life with her than with a lady of higher lineage.' Bertrand held his peace and the king let make great preparations for the celebration of the marriage.

The appointed day being come, Bertrand, sore against his will, in the presence of the king, espoused the damsel, who loved him more than herself. This done, having already determined in himself what he should do, he sought leave of the king to depart, saying he would fain return to his county and there consummate the marriage; then, taking horse, he repaired not thither, but betook himself into Tuscany, where, hearing that the Florentines were at war with those of Sienna, he determined to join himself to the former, by whom he was joyfully received and made captain over a certain number of men-at-arms; and there, being well provided of them, he abode a pretty while in their service.

The newly-made wife, ill content with such a lot, but hoping by her fair dealing to recall him to his county, betook herself to Roussillon, where she was received of all as their liege lady. There, finding everything waste and disordered for the long time that the land had been without a lord, with great diligence and solicitude, like a discreet lady as she was, she set all in order again, whereof the count's vassals were mightily content and held her exceeding dear, vowing her a great love and blaming the count sore for that he accepted not of her. The lady, having thoroughly ordered the county, notified the count thereof by two knights, whom she despatched to him, praying him that, an it were on her account he forbore to come to his county, he should signify it to her and she, to pleasure him, would depart thence; but he answered them very harshly, saying, 'For that, let her do her pleasure; I, for my part, will return thither to abide with her, whenas she shall have this my ring on her finger and in her arms a son by me begotten.' Now the ring in question he held very dear and never parted with it, by reason of a certain virtue which it had been given him to understand that it had.

The knights understood the hardship of the condition implied in these two well nigh impossible requirements, but, seeing that they might not by their words avail to move him from his purpose, they returned to the lady and

The king, feeling himself healed, said, 'Damsel, you have well earned your husband'; whereto she answered, 'Then, my lord, I have earned Bertrand de Roussillon, whom I began to love even in the days of my childhood and have ever since loved over all.' The king deemed it a grave matter to give him to her; nevertheless, having promised her and unwilling to fail of his faith, he let call the count to himself and bespoke him thus: 'Bertrand, you are now of age and accomplished [in all that behoveth unto man's estate]; wherefore it is our pleasure that you return to govern your county and carry with you a damsel, whom we have given you to wife.' And who is the damsel, my lord?' asked Bertrand; to which the king answered, 'It is she who hath with her medicines restored to us our health.'

Bertrand, who had seen and recognized Gillette, knowing her (albeit she seemed to him very fair) to be of no such lineage as sorted with his quality, said all disdainfully, 'My lord, will you then marry me to a she-leach? Now God forbid I should ever take such an one to wife!' 'Then,' said the king, 'will you have us fail of our faith, the which, to have our health again, we pledged to the damsel, who in guerdon thereof demanded you to husband?' 'My lord,' answered Bertrand, 'you may, an you will, take from me whatsoever I possess or, as your liegeman, bestow me upon whoso pleaseth you; but of this I certify you, that I will never be a consenting party unto such a marriage.' 'Nay,' rejoined the king, 'but you shall, for that the damsel is fair and wise

reported to her his reply; whereat she was sore afflicted and determined, after long consideration, to seek to learn if and where the two things aforesaid might be compassed, to the intent that she might, in consequence, have her husband again. Accordingly, having bethought herself what she should do, she assembled certain of the best and chiefest men of the county and with plaintive speech very orderly recounted to them that which she had already done for love of the count and showed them what had ensued thereof, adding that it was not her intent that, through her sojourn there, the count should abide in perpetual exile; nay, rather she purposed to spend the rest of her life in pilgrimages and works of mercy and charity for her soul's health; wherefore she prayed them take the ward and governance of the county and notify the count that she had left him free and vacant possession and had departed the country, intending nevermore to return to Roussillon. Many were the tears shed by the good folk, whilst she spoke, and many the prayers addressed to her that it would please her change counsel and abide there; but they availed nought. Then, commending them to God, she set out upon her way, without telling any whither she was bound, well furnished with monies and jewels of price and accompanied by a cousin of hers and a chamberwoman, all in pilgrims' habits, and stayed not till she came to Florence, where, chancing upon a little inn, kept by a decent widow woman, she there took up her abode and lived quietly, after the fashion of a poor pilgrim, impatient to hear news of her lord.

It befell, then, that on the morrow of her arrival she saw Bertrand pass before her lodging, a-horseback with his company, and albeit she knew him full well, natheless she asked the good woman of the inn who he was. The hostess answered, 'That is a stranger gentleman, who calleth himself Count Bertrand, a pleasant man and a courteous and much loved in this city; and he is the most enamoured man in the world of a she-neighbour of ours, who is a gentlewoman, but poor. Sooth to say, she is a very virtuous damsel and abideth, being yet unmarried for poverty, with her mother, a very good and discreet lady, but for whom, maybe, she had already done the count's pleasure.' The countess took good note of what she heard and having more closely enquired into every particular and apprehended all aright, determined in herself how she should do.

Accordingly, having learned the house and name of the lady whose daughter the count loved, she one day repaired privily thither in her pilgrim's habit and finding the mother and daughter in very poor case, saluted them and told the former that, an it pleased her, she would fain speak with her alone. The gentlewoman, rising, replied that she was ready to hearken to her and accordingly carried her into a chamber of hers, where they seated themselves and the countess began thus, 'Madam, meseemeth you are of the enemies of Fortune, even as I am; but, an you will, belike you may be able to relieve both yourself and me.' The lady answered that she desired nothing better than to relieve herself by any honest means; and the countess went on, 'Needs must you pledge me your faith, whereto an I commit myself and you deceive me, you will mar your own affairs and mine.' 'Tell me anything you will in all assurance,' replied the gentlewoman; 'for never shall you find yourself deceived of me.'

Thereupon the countess, beginning with her first enamourment, recounted to her who she was and all that had betided her to that day after such a fashion that the gentlewoman, putting faith in her words and having, indeed, already in part heard her story from others, began to have compassion of her. The countess, having related her adventures, went on to say, 'You have now, amongst my other troubles, heard what are the two things which it behoveth me have, an I would have my husband, and to which I know none who can help me, save only yourself, if that be true which I hear, to wit, that the count my husband is passionately enamoured of your daughter.' 'Madam,' answered the gentlewoman, 'if the count love my daughter I know not; indeed he maketh a great show thereof. But, an it be so, what can I do in this that you desire?' 'Madam,' rejoined the countess, 'I will tell you; but first I will e'en show you what I purpose shall ensue thereof to you, an you serve me. I see your daughter fair and of age for a husband and according to what I have heard, meseemeth I understand the lack of good to marry her withal it is that causeth you keep her at home. Now I purpose, in requital of the service you shall do me, to give her forthright of mine own monies such a dowry as you yourself shall deem necessary to marry her honorably.'

The mother, being needy, was pleased with the offer; algates, having the spirit of a gentlewoman, she said, 'Madam, tell me what I can do for you; if it consist with my honour, I will willingly do it, and you shall after do that which shall please you.' Then said the countess, 'It behoveth me that you let tell the count my husband by some one in whom you trust, that your daughter is ready to do his every pleasure, so she may but be certified that he loveth her as he pretendeth, the which she will never believe, except he send her the ring which he carrieth on his finger and by which she hath heard he setteth such store. An he send you the ring, you must give it to me and after send to him to say that your daughter is ready do his pleasure; then bring him hither in secret and privily put me to bed to him in the stead of your daughter. It may be God will vouchsafe me to conceive and on this wise, having his ring on my finger and a child in mine arms of him begotten, I shall presently regain him and abide with him, as a wife should abide with her husband, and you will have been the cause thereof.'

This seemed a grave matter to the gentlewoman, who feared lest blame should haply ensue thereof to her daughter; nevertheless, bethinking her it were honourably done to help the poor lady recover her husband and that she went about to do this to a worthy end and trusting in the good and honest intention of the countess, she not only promised her to do it, but, before many days, dealing with prudence and secrecy, in accordance with the latter's

instructions, she both got the ring (albeit this seemed somewhat grievous to the count) and adroitly put her to bed with her husband, in the place of her own daughter. In these first embracements, most ardently sought of the count, the lady, by God's pleasure, became with child of two sons, as her delivery in due time made manifest. Nor once only, but many times, did the gentlewoman gratify the countess with her husband's embraces, contriving so secretly that never was a word known of the matter, whilst the count still believed himself to have been, not with his wife, but with her whom he loved; and whenas he came to take leave of a morning, he gave her, at one time and another, divers goodly and precious jewels, which the countess laid up with all diligence.

Then, feeling herself with child and unwilling to burden the gentlewoman farther with such an office, she said to her, 'Madam, thanks to God and you, I have gotten that which I desired, wherefore it is time that I do that which shall content you and after get me gone hence.' The gentlewoman answered that, if she had gotten that which contented her, she was well pleased, but that she had not done this of any hope of reward, nay, for that herseemed it behoved her to do it, an she would do well. 'Madam,' rejoined the countess, 'that which you say liketh me well and so on my part I purpose not to give you that which you shall ask of me by way of reward, but to do well, for that meseemeth behoveful so to do.' The gentlewoman, then, constrained by necessity, with the utmost shamefastness, asked her an hundred pounds to marry her daughter withal; but the countess, seeing her confusion and hearing her modest demand, gave her five hundred and so many rare and precious jewels as were worth maybe as much more. With this the gentlewoman was far more than satisfied and rendered the countess the best thanks in her power; whereupon the latter, taking leave of her, returned to the inn, whilst the other, to deprive Bertrand of all farther occasion of coming or sending to her house, removed with her daughter into the country to the house of one of her kinsfolk, and he, being a little after recalled by his vassals and hearing that the countess had departed the country, returned to his own house.

The countess, hearing that he had departed Florence and returned to his county, was mightily rejoiced and abode at Florence till her time came to be delivered, when she gave birth to two male children, most like their father, and let rear them with all diligence. Whenas it seemed to her time, she set out and came, without being known of any, to Montpellier, where having rested some days and made enquiry of the count and where he was, she learned that he was to hold a great entertainment of knights and ladies at Roussillon on All Saints' Day and betook herself thither, still in her pilgrim's habit that she was wont to wear. Finding the knights and ladies assembled in the count's palace and about to sit down to table, she went up, with her children in her arms and without changing her dress, into the banqueting hall and making her way between man and man whereas she saw the count, cast herself at his feet and said, weeping, 'I am thine unhappy wife, who, to let thee return and abide in thy house, have long gone wandering miserably about the world. I conjure thee, in the name of God, to accomplish unto me thy promise upon the condition appointed me by the two knights I sent thee; for, behold, here in mine arms is not only one son of thine, but two, and here is thy ring. It is time, then, that I be received of thee as a wife, according to thy promise.'

The count, hearing this, was all confounded and recognized the ring and the children also, so like were they to him; but yet he said, 'How can this have come to pass?' The countess, then, to his exceeding wonderment and that of all others who were present, orderly recounted that which had passed and how it had happened; whereupon the count, feeling that she spoke sooth and seeing her constancy and wit and moreover two such goodly children, as well for the observance of his promise as to pleasure all his liegemen and the ladies, who all besought him thenceforth to receive and honour her as his lawful wife, put off his obstinate despite and raising the countess to her feet, embraced her and kissing her, acknowledged her for his lawful wife and those for his children. Then, letting clothe her in apparel such as beseemed her quality, to the exceeding joyance of as many as were there and of all other his vassals who heard the news, he held high festival, not only all that day, but sundry others, and from that day forth still honoured her as his bride and his wife and loved and tendered her over all."

Day the Fourth

The Second Story

Fra alberto giveth a lady to believe that the angel gabriel is enamoured of her and in his shape lieth with her sundry times; after which, for fear of her kinsmen, he casteth himself forth of her window into the canal and taketh refuge



IMAGE 5.8: BOCCACCIO BY MORGHEN | Engraved portrait of Boccaccio, by the artist Raffaello Sanzio Morghen.

Author: Raffaello Sanzio Morghen
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in the house of a poor man, who on the morrow carrieth him, in the guise of a wild man of the woods, to the piazza, where, being recognized, he is taken by his brethren and put in prison.

The story told by Fiammetta had more than once brought the tears to the eyes of the ladies her companions; but, it being now finished, the king with a stern countenance said, "My life would seem to me a little price to give for half the delight that Guiscardo had with Ghismonda, nor should any of you ladies marvel thereat, seeing that every hour of my life I suffer a thousand deaths, nor for all that is a single particle of delight vouchsafed me. But, leaving be my affairs for the present, it is my pleasure that Pampinea follow on the order of the discourse with some story of woe-ful chances and fortunes in part like to mine own; which if she ensue like as Fiammetta hath begun, I shall doubtless begin to feel some dew fallen upon my fire." Pampinea, hearing the order laid upon her, more by her affection apprehended the mind of the ladies her companions than that of Filostrato by his words, wherefore, being more disposed to give them some diversion than to content the king, farther than in the mere letter of his commandment, she bethought herself to tell a story, that should, without departing from the proposed theme, give occasion for laughter, and accordingly began as follows:

"The vulgar have a proverb to the effect that he who is naught and is held good may do ill and it is not believed of him; the which affordeth me ample matter for discourse upon that which hath been proposed to me and at the same time to show what and how great is the hypocrisy of the clergy, who, with garments long and wide and faces pale by art and voices humble and meek to solicit the folk, but exceeding loud and fierce to rebuke in others their own vices, pretend that themselves by taking and others by giving to them come to salvation, and to boot, not as men who have, like ourselves, to purchase paradise, but as in a manner they were possessors and lords thereof, assign unto each who dieth, according to the sum of the monies left them by him, a more or less excellent place there, studying thus to deceive first themselves, an they believe as they say, and after those who put faith for that matter in their words. Anent whom, were it permitted me to discover as much as it behoved, I would quickly make clear to many simple folk that which they keep hidden under those huge wide gowns of theirs. But would God it might betide them all of their cozening tricks, as it betided a certain minor friar, and he no youngling, but held one of the first casuists in Venice; of whom it especially pleaseth me to tell you, so as peradventure somewhat to cheer your hearts, that are full of compassion for the death of Ghismonda, with laughter and plesance.

There was, then, noble ladies, in Imola, a man of wicked and corrupt life, who was called Berto della Massa and whose lewd fashions, being well known of the Imolese, had brought him into such ill savour with them that there was none in the town who would credit him, even when he said sooth; wherefore, seeing that his shifts might no longer stand him in stead there, he removed in desperation to Venice, the receptacle of every kind of trash, thinking to find there new means of carrying on his wicked practices. There, as if conscience-stricken for the evil deeds done by him in the past, feigning himself overcome with the utmost humility and waxing devouter than any man alive, he went and turned Minor Friar and styled himself Fra Alberta da Imola; in which habit he proceeded to lead, to all appearance, a very austere life, greatly commending abstinence and mortification and never eating flesh nor drinking wine, whenas he had not thereof that which was to his liking. In short, scarce was any ware of him when from a thief, a pimp, a forger, a manslayer, he suddenly became a great preacher, without having for all that forsworn the vices aforesaid, whenas he might secretly put them in practice. Moreover, becoming a priest, he would still, whenas he celebrated mass at the altar, an he were seen of many, bewep our Saviour's passion, as one whom tears cost little, whenas he willed it. Brief, what with his preachings and his tears, he contrived on such wise to inveigle the Venetians that he was trustee and depository of well nigh every will made in the town and guardian of folk's monies, besides being confessor and counsellor of the most part of the men and women of the place; and doing thus, from wolf he was become shepherd and the fame of his sanctity was far greater in those parts than ever was that of St. Francis at Assisi.

It chanced one day that a vain simple young lady, by name Madam Lisetta da Ca Quirino, wife of a great merchant who was gone with the galleys into Flanders, came with other ladies to confess to this same holy friar, at whose feet kneeling and having, like a true daughter of Venice as she was (where the women are all feather-brained), told him part of her affairs, she was asked of him if she had a lover. Whereto she answered, with an offended air, 'Good lack, sir friar, have you no eyes in your head? Seem my charms to you such as those of yonder others? I might have lovers and to spare, an I would; but my beauties are not for this one nor that. How many women do you see whose charms are such as mine, who would be fair in Paradise?' Brief, she said so many things of this beauty of hers that it was a weariness to hear. Fra Alberto incontinent perceived that she savoured of folly and himseeming she was a fit soil for his tools, he fell suddenly and beyond measure in love with her; but, reserving blandishments for a more convenient season, he proceeded, for the nonce, so he might show himself a holy man, to rebuke her and tell her that this was vainglory and so forth. The lady told him he was an ass and knew not what one beauty was more than another, whereupon he, unwilling to vex her overmuch, took her confession and let her go away with the others.



IMAGE 5.9: A TALE FROM THE DECAMERON | An oil painting by John William Waterhouse, showing the characters of The Decameron sitting together as they tell their stories.

Author: Unknown

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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He let some days pass, then, taking with him a trusty companion of his, he repaired to Madam Lisetta's house and withdrawing with her into a room apart, where none might see him, he fell on his knees before her and said, 'Madam, I pray you for God's sake pardon me that which I said to you last Sunday, whenas you bespoke me of your beauty, for that the following night I was so cruelly chastised there that I have not since been able to rise from my bed till to-day.' Quoth Mistress Featherbrain, 'And who chastised you thus?' 'I will tell you,' replied the monk. 'Being that night at my orisons, as I still use to be, I saw of a sudden a great light in my cell and ere I could turn me to see what it might be, I beheld over against me a very fair youth with a stout cudgel in his hand, who took me by the gown and dragging me to my feet, gave me such a drubbing that he broke every bone in my body. I asked him why he used me thus and he answered, "For that thou presumedst to-day, to disparage the celestial charms of Madam Lisetta, whom I love over all things, save only God." "Who, then, are you?" asked I; and he replied that he was the angel Gabriel. "O my lord," said I, "I pray you pardon me"; and he, "So be it; I pardon thee on condition that thou go to her, as first thou mayst, and get her pardon; but if she pardons thee not, I will return to thee and give thee such a bout of it that I will make thee a woeful man for all the time thou shalt live here below." That which he said to me after I dare not tell you, except you first pardon me.'

My Lady Addlepate, who was somewhat scant of wit, was overjoyed to hear this, taking it all for gospel, and said, after a little, 'I told you, Fra Alberto, that my charms were celestial, but, so God be mine aid, it irketh me for you and I will pardon you forthright, so you may come to no more harm, provided you tell me truly that which the angel said to you after.' 'Madam,' replied Fra Alberto, 'since you pardon me, I will gladly tell it you; but I must warn you of one thing, to wit, that whatever I tell you, you must have a care not to repeat it to any one alive, an you would not mar your affairs, for that you are the luckiest lady in the world. The angel Gabriel bade me tell you that you pleased him so much that he had many a time come to pass the night with you, but that he feared to affright you. Now he sendeth to tell you by me that he hath a mind to come to you one night and abide awhile with you and (for that he is an angel and that, if he came in angel-form, you might not avail to touch him,) he purposeth, for your delectation, to come in guise of a man, wherefore he biddeth you send to tell him when you would have him come and in whose form, and he will come hither; whereof you may hold yourself blest over any other lady alive.'

My Lady Conceit answered that it liked her well that the angel Gabriel loved her, seeing she loved him well nor ever failed to light a candle of a groat before him, whereas she saw him depicted, and that what time soever he chose to come to her, he should be dearly welcome and would find her all alone in her chamber, but on this condition, that he should not leave her for the Virgin Mary, whose great well-wisher it was said he was, as indeed appeared, inasmuch as in every place where she saw him [limned], he was on his knees before her. Moreover, she said it must rest with him to come in whatsoever form he pleased, so but she was not affrighted.

Then said Fra Alberto, 'Madam, you speak sagely and I will without fail take order with him of that which you tell me. But you may do me a great favour, which will cost you nothing; it is this, that you will him come with this my body. And I will tell you in what you will do me a favour; you must know that he will take my soul forth of my body and put it in Paradise, whilst he himself will enter into me; and what while he abideth with you, so long will my soul abide in Paradise.' 'With all my heart,' answered Dame Littlewit. 'I will well that you have this consolation, in requital of the buffets he gave you on my account.' Then said Fra Alberto, 'Look that he find the door of your house open to-night, so he may come in thereat, for that, coming in human form, as he will, he might not enter save by the door.' The lady replied that it should be done, whereupon the monk took his leave and she abode in such a transport of exultation that her breech touched not her shift and herseemed a thousand years till the angel Gabriel should come to her.

Meanwhile, Fra Alberto, bethinking him that it behoved him play the cavalier, not the angel, that night proceeded to fortify himself with confections and other good things, so he might not lightly be unhorsed; then, getting leave, as soon as it was night, he repaired with one of his comrades to the house of a woman, a friend of his, whence he was used whiles to take his start what time he went to course the fillies; and thence, whenas it seemed to him time, having disguised himself, he betook him to the lady's house. There he tricked himself out as an angel with the trappings he had brought with him and going up, entered the chamber of the lady, who, seeing this creature all in white, fell on her knees before him. The angel blessed her and raising her to her feet, signed to her to go to bed, which she, studious to obey, promptly did, and the angel after lay down with his devotee. Now Fra Alberto was a personable man of his body and a lusty and excellent well set up on his legs; wherefore, finding himself in bed with Madam Lisetta, who was young and dainty, he showed himself another guess bedfellow than her husband and many a time that night took flight without wings, whereof she avowed herself exceeding content; and eke he told her many things of the glories of heaven. Then, the day drawing near, after taking order for his return, he made off with his trappings and returned to his comrade, whom the good woman of the house had meanwhile borne amicable company, lest he should get a fright, lying alone.

As for the lady, no sooner had she dined than, taking her waiting-woman with her, she betook herself to Fra Alberto and gave him news of the angel Gabriel, telling him that which she had heard from him of the glories of life eternal and how he was made and adding to boot, marvellous stories of her own invention. 'Madam,' said he, 'I know not how you fared with him; I only know that yesternight, whenas he came to me and I did your message to him, he suddenly transported my soul amongst such a multitude of roses and other flowers that never was the like thereof seen here below, and I abode in one of the most delightsome places that was aye until the morning; but what became of my body meanwhile I know not.' 'Do I not tell you?' answered the lady. 'Your body lay all night in mine arms with the angel Gabriel. If you believe me not, look under your left pap, whereas I gave the angel such a kiss that the marks of it will stay by you for some days to come.' Quoth the friar, 'Say you so? Then will I do to-day a thing I have not done this great while; I will strip myself, to see if you tell truth.' Then, after much prating, the lady returned home and Fra Alberto paid her many visits in angel-form, without suffering any hindrance.

However, it chanced one day that Madam Lisetta, being in dispute with a gossip of hers upon the question of female charms, to set her own above all others, said, like a woman who had little wit in her noddle, 'An you but knew whom my beauty pleaseth, in truth you would hold your peace of other women.' The other, longing to hear, said, as one who knew her well, 'Madam, maybe you say sooth; but knowing not who this may be, one cannot turn about so lightly.' Thereupon quoth Lisetta, who was eath enough to draw, 'Gossip, it must go no farther; but he I mean is the angel Gabriel, who loveth me more than himself, as the fairest lady (for that which he telleth me) who is in the world or the Maremma.' The other had a mind to laugh, but contained herself, so she might make Lisetta speak farther, and said, 'Faith, madam, an the angel Gabriel be your lover and tell you this, needs must it be so; but methought not the angels did these things.' 'Gossip,' answered the lady, 'you are mistaken; zounds, he doth what you wot of better than my husband and telleth me they do it also up yonder; but, for that I seem to him fairer than any she in heaven, he hath fallen in love with me and cometh full oft to lie with me; seestow now?'

The gossip, to whom it seemed a thousand years till she should be whereas she might repeat these things, took her leave of Madam Lisetta and foregathering at an entertainment with a great company of ladies, orderly recounted to them the whole story. They told it again to their husbands and other ladies, and these to yet others, and so in less than two days Venice was all full of it. Among others to whose ears the thing came were Lisetta's brothers-in-law, who, without saying aught to her, bethought themselves to find the angel in question and see if he knew how to fly, and to this end they lay several nights in wait for him. As chance would have it, some inkling of the matter came to

the ears of Fra Alberto, who accordingly repaired one night to the lady's house, to reprove her, but hardly had he put off his clothes ere her brothers-in-law, who had seen him come, were at the door of her chamber to open it.

Fra Alberto, hearing this and guessing what was to do, started up and having no other resource, opened a window, which gave upon the Grand Canal, and cast himself thence into the water. The canal was deep there and he could swim well, so that he did himself no hurt, but made his way to the opposite bank and hastily entering a house that stood open there, besought a poor man, whom he found within, to save his life for the love of God, telling him a tale of his own fashion, to explain how he came there at that hour and naked. The good man was moved to pity and it behoving him to go do his occasions, he put him in his own bed and bade him abide there against his return; then, locking him in, he went about his affairs. Meanwhile, the lady's brothers-in-law entered her chamber and found that the angel Gabriel had flown, leaving his wings there; whereupon, seeing themselves baffled, they gave her all manner hard words and ultimately made off to their own house with the angel's trappings, leaving her disconsolate.

Broad day come, the good man with whom Fra Alberto had taken refuge, being on the Rialto, heard how the angel Gabriel had gone that night to lie with Madam Lisetta and being surprised by her kinsmen, had cast himself for fear into the canal, nor was it known what was come of him, and concluded forthright that this was he whom he had at home. Accordingly, he returned thither and recognizing the monk, found means after much parley, to make him fetch him fifty ducats, an he would not have him give him up to the lady's kinsmen. Having gotten the money and Fra Alberto offering to depart thence, the good man said to him, 'There is no way of escape for you, an it be not one that I will tell you. We hold to-day a festival, wherein one bringeth a man clad bear-fashion and another one accoutred as a wild man of the woods and what not else, some one thing and some another, and there is a hunt held in St. Mark's Place, which finished, the festival is at an end and after each goeth whither it pleaseth him with him whom he hath brought. An you will have me lead you thither, after one or other of these fashions, I can after carry you whither you please, ere it be spied out that you are here; else I know not how you are to get away, without being recognized, for the lady's kinsmen, concluding that you must be somewhere hereabout, have set a watch for you on all sides.'

Hard as it seemed to Fra Alberto to go on such wise, nevertheless, of the fear he had of the lady's kinsmen, he resigned himself thereto and told his host whither he would be carried, leaving the manner to him. Accordingly, the other, having smeared him all over with honey and covered him with down, clapped a chain about his neck and a mask on his face; then giving him a great staff in on hand and in the other two great dogs which he had fetched from the shambles he despatched one to the Rialto to make public proclamation that whoso would see the angel Gabriel should repair to St. Mark's Place; and this was Venetian loyalty! This done, after a while, he brought him forth and setting him before himself, went holding him by the chain behind, to the no small clamour of the folk, who said all, 'What be this? What be this?' till he came to the place, where, what with those who had followed after them and those who, hearing the proclamation, were come thither from the Rialto, were folk without end. There he tied his wild man to a column in a raised and high place, making a show of awaiting the hunt, whilst the flies and gads gave the monk exceeding annoy, for that he was besmeared with honey. But, when he saw the place well filled, making as he would unchain his wild man, he pulled off Fra Alberto's mask and said, 'Gentlemen, since the bear cometh not and there is no hunt toward, I purpose, so you may not be come in vain, that you shall see the angel Gabriel, who cometh down from heaven to earth nights, to comfort the Venetian ladies.'

No sooner was the mask off than Fra Alberto was incontinent recognized of all, who raised a general outcry against him, giving him the scurviest words and the soundest rating was ever given a canting knave; moreover, they cast in his face, one this kind of filth and another that, and so they baited him a great while, till the news came by chance to his brethren, whereupon half a dozen of them sallied forth and coming thither, unchained him and threw a gown over him; then, with a general hue and cry behind them, they carried him off to the convent, where it is believed he died in prison, after a wretched life. Thus then did this fellow, held good and doing ill, without it being believed, dare to feign himself the angel Gabriel, and after being turned into a wild man of the woods and put to shame, as he deserved, bewailed, when too late, the sins he had committed. God grant it happen thus to all other knaves of his fashion!"

Day the Fifth

The Ninth Story

Federigo degli alberighi loveth and is not loved. He wasteth his substance in prodigal hospitality till there is left him but one sole falcon, which, having nought else, he giveth his mistress to eat, on her coming to his house; and she, learning this, changeth her mind and taking him to husband, maketh him rich again.

Filomena having ceased speaking, the queen, seeing that none remained to tell save only herself and Dioneo, whose privilege entitled him to speak last, said, with blithe aspect, "It pertaineth now to me to tell and I, dearest ladies, will willingly do it, relating a story like in part to the foregoing, to the intent that not only may you know how much the love of you can avail in gentle hearts, but that you may learn to be yourselves, whenas it behoveth, bestowers of your

guerdons, without always suffering fortune to be your guide, which most times, as it chanceth, giveth not discreetly, but out of all measure.

You must know, then, that Coppo di Borghese Domenichi, who was of our days and maybe is yet a man of great worship and authority in our city and illustrious and worthy of eternal renown, much more for his fashions and his merit than for the nobility of his blood, being grown full of years, delighted oftentimes to discourse with his neighbours and others of things past, the which he knew how to do better and more orderly and with more memory and elegance of speech than any other man. Amongst other fine things of his, he was used to tell that there was once in Florence a young man called Federigo, son of Messer Filippo Alberighi and renowned for deeds of arms and courtesy over every other bachelor in Tuscany, who, as betideth most gentlemen, became enamoured of a gentlewoman named Madam Giovanna, in her day held one of the fairest and sprightliest ladies that were in Florence; and to win her love, he held jousts and tourneyings and made entertainments and gave gifts and spent his substance without any stint; but she, being no less virtuous than fair, recked nought of these things done for her nor of him who did them. Federigo spending thus far beyond his means and gaining nought, his wealth, as lightly happeneth, in course of time came to an end and he abode poor, nor was aught left him but a poor little farm, on whose returns he lived very meagrely, and to boot a falcon he had, one of the best in the world. Wherefore, being more in love than ever and him-seeming he might no longer make such a figure in the city as he would fain do, he took up his abode at Campi, where his farm was, and there bore his poverty with patience, hawking whenas he might and asking of no one.

Federigo being thus come to extremity, it befell one day that Madam Giovanna's husband fell sick and seeing himself nigh upon death, made his will, wherein, being very rich, he left a son of his, now well grown, his heir, after which, having much loved Madam Giovanna, he substituted her to his heir, in case his son should die without lawful issue, and died. Madam Giovanna, being thus left a widow, betook herself that summer, as is the usage of our ladies, into the country with her son to an estate of hers very near that of Federigo; wherefore it befell that the lad made acquaintance with the latter and began to take delight in hawks and hounds, and having many a time seen his falcon flown and being strangely taken therewith, longed sore to have it, but dared not ask it of him, seeing it so dear to him. The thing standing thus, it came to pass that the lad fell sick, whereat his mother was sore concerned, as one who had none but him and loved him with all her might, and abode about him all day, comforting him without cease; and many a time she asked him if there were aught he desired, beseeching him tell it her, for an it might be gotten, she would contrive that he should have it. The lad, having heard these offers many times repeated, said, 'Mother mine, an you could procure me to have Federigo's falcon, methinketh I should soon be whole.'

The lady hearing this, bethought herself awhile and began to consider how she should do. She knew that Federigo had long loved her and had never gotten of her so much as a glance of the eye; wherefore quoth she in herself, 'How shall I send or go to him to seek of him this falcon, which is, by all I hear, the best that ever flew and which, to boot, maintaineth him in the world? And how can I be so graceless as to offer to take this from a gentleman who hath none other pleasure left?' Perplexed with this thought and knowing not what to say, for all she was very certain of getting the bird, if she asked for it, she made no reply to her son, but abode silent. However, at last, the love of her son so got the better of her that she resolved in herself to satisfy him, come what might, and not to send, but to go herself for the falcon and fetch it to him. Accordingly she said to him, 'My son, take comfort and bethink thyself to grow well again, for I promise thee that the first thing I do to-morrow morning I will go for it and fetch it to thee.' The boy was rejoiced at this and showed some amendment that same day.

Next morning, the lady, taking another lady to bear her company, repaired, by way of diversion, to Federigo's little house and enquired for the latter, who, for that it was no weather for hawking nor had been for some days past, was then in a garden he had, overlooking the doing of certain little matters of his, and hearing that Madam Giovanna asked for him at the door, ran thither, rejoicing and marvelling exceedingly. She, seeing him come, rose and going with womanly graciousness to meet him, answered his respectful salutation with 'Give you good day, Federigo!' then went on to say, 'I am come to make thee amends for that which thou hast suffered through me, in loving me more than should have behooved thee; and the amends in question is this that I purpose to dine with thee this morning familiarly, I and this lady my companion.' 'Madam,' answered Federigo humbly, 'I remember me not to have ever received any ill at your hands, but on the contrary so much good that, if ever I was worth aught, it came about through your worth and the love I bore you; and assuredly, albeit you have come to a poor host, this your gracious visit is far more precious to me than it would be an it were given me to spend over again as much as that which I have spent aforetime.' So saying, he shamefastly received her into his house and thence brought her into his garden, where, having none else to bear her company, he said to her, 'Madam, since there is none else here, this good woman, wife of yonder husbandman, will bear you company, whilst I go see the table laid.'

Never till that moment, extreme as was his poverty, had he been so dolorously sensible of the straits to which he had brought himself for the lack of those riches he had spent on such disorderly wise. But that morning, finding he had nothing wherewithal he might honourably entertain the lady, for love of whom he had aforetime entertained folk without number, he was made perforce aware of his default and ran hither and thither, perplexed beyond measure,



IMAGE 5.10: DECAMERON | An image from *The Decameron*, illustrated by Taddeo Crivelli, depicting the seven women and three men from Boccaccio's manuscript.

Author: User "Cassmus"

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like a man beside himself, inwardly cursing his ill fortune, but found neither money nor aught he might pawn. It was now growing late and he having a great desire to entertain the gentle lady with somewhat, yet choosing not to have recourse to his own labourer, much less any one else, his eye fell on his good falcon, which he saw on his perch in his little saloon; whereupon, having no other resource, he took the bird and finding him fat, deemed him a dish worthy of such a lady. Accordingly, without more ado, he wrung the hawk's neck and hastily caused a little maid of his pluck it and truss it and after put it on the spit and roast it diligently. Then, the table laid and covered with very white cloths, whereof he had yet some store, he returned with a blithe countenance to the lady in the garden and told her that dinner was ready, such as it was in his power to provide. Accordingly, the lady and her friend, arising, betook themselves to table and in company with Federigo, who served them with the utmost diligence, ate the good falcon, unknowing what they did.

Presently, after they had risen from table and had abidden with him awhile in cheerful discourse, the lady, thinking it time to tell that wherefor she was come, turned to Federigo and courteously bespoke him, saying, 'Federigo, I doubt not a jot but that, when thou hearest that which is the especial occasion of my coming hither, thou wilt marvel at my presumption, remembering thee of thy past life and of my virtue, which latter belike thou reputedst cruelty and hardness of heart; but, if thou hadst or hadst had children, by whom thou mightest know how potent is the love one beareth them, meseemeth certain that thou wouldst in part hold me excused. But, although thou hast none, I, who have one child, cannot therefore escape the common laws to which other mothers are subject and whose enforcements it behoveth me ensue, need must I, against my will and contrary to all right and seemliness, ask of thee a boon, which I know is supremely dear to thee (and that with good reason, for that thy sorry fortune hath left thee none other delight, none other diversion, none other solace), to wit, thy falcon, whereof my boy is so sore enamoured that, an I carry it not to him, I fear me his present disorder will be so aggravated that there may presently ensue thereof somewhat whereby I shall lose him. Wherefore I conjure thee,—not by the love thou bearest me and whereto thou art nowise beholden, but by thine own nobility, which in doing courtesy hath approved itself greater than in any other,—that it please thee give it to me, so by the gift I may say I have kept my son alive and thus made him for ever thy debtor.'

Federigo, hearing what the lady asked and knowing that he could not oblige her, for that he had given her the falcon to eat, fell a-weeping in her presence, ere he could answer a word. The lady at first believed that his tears

arose from grief at having to part from his good falcon and was like to say that she would not have it. However, she contained herself and awaited what Federigo should reply, who, after weeping awhile, made answer thus: ‘Madam, since it pleased God that I should set my love on you, I have in many things reputed fortune contrary to me and have complained of her; but all the ill turns she hath done me have been a light matter in comparison with that which she doth me at this present and for which I can never more be reconciled to her, considering that you are come hither to my poor house, whereas you deigned not to come what while I was rich, and seek of me a little boon, the which she hath so wrought that I cannot grant you; and why this cannot be I will tell you briefly. When I heard that you, of your favour, were minded to dine with me, I deemed it a light thing and a seemly, having regard to your worth and the nobility of your station, to honour you, as far as in me lay, with some choicer victual than that which is commonly set before other folk; wherefore, remembering me of the falcon which you ask of me and of his excellence, I judged him a dish worthy of you. This very morning, then, you have had him roasted upon the trencher, and indeed I had accounted him excellently well bestowed; but now, seeing that you would fain have had him on other wise, it is so great a grief to me that I cannot oblige you therein that methinketh I shall never forgive myself therefor.’ So saying, in witness of this, he let cast before her the falcon’s feathers and feet and beak.

The lady, seeing and hearing this, first blamed him for having, to give a woman to eat, slain such a falcon, and after inwardly much commended the greatness of his soul, which poverty had not availed nor might anyway avail to abate. Then, being put out of all hope of having the falcon and fallen therefore in doubt of her son’s recovery, she took her leave and returned, all disconsolate, to the latter, who, before many days had passed, whether for chagrin that he could not have the bird or for that his disorder was e’en fated to bring him to that pass, departed this life, to the inexpressible grief of his mother. After she had abidden awhile full of tears and affliction, being left very rich and yet young, she was more than once urged by her brothers to marry again, and albeit she would fain not have done so, yet, finding herself importuned and calling to mind Federigo’s worth and his last magnificence, to wit, the having slain such a falcon for her entertainment, she said to them, ‘I would gladly, an it liked you, abide as I am; but, since it is your pleasure that I take a [second] husband, certes I will never take any other, an I have not Federigo degli Alberighi.’ Whereupon her brothers, making mock of her, said ‘Silly woman that thou art, what is this thou sayest? How canst thou choose him, seeing he hath nothing in the world?’ ‘Brothers mine,’ answered she, ‘I know very well that it is as you say; but I would liefer have a man that lacketh of riches than riches that lack of a man.’ Her brethren, hearing her mind and knowing Federigo for a man of great merit, poor though he was, gave her, with all her wealth, to him, even as she would; and he, seeing himself married to a lady of such worth and one whom he had loved so dear and exceeding rich, to boot, became a better husband of his substance and ended his days with her in joy and solace.”

THE DIVINE COMEDY

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321 C.E.)

Composed between 1308- 1321 C.E.

Italy

Durante degli Alighieri, known to us as Dante, called his masterpiece simply *La Commedia* (The Comedy), not because it is funny, but because it begins sadly and ends happily. It is a deceptively simple title for such a complex and detailed work; as an example, Dante intended the first three lines to be read with four levels of meaning (literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical/mystical). Boccaccio, author of *The Decameron*, added the word “Divine” to the title, both for the subject matter and the quality of the work. In the story, Dante appears as the main character, although this “pilgrim” should not be confused with the author himself: The character has no clue about what is happening, while the author controls all. The *Divine Comedy* exists because Dante made the switch from writing love lyrics (with the focus on earthly love) to writing about spiritual love after his muse, Beatrice, died during one of the plagues in Florence. Just as Beatrice inspired Dante from afar during life (the two never had a romantic relationship), she becomes after death the angelic inspiration to turn his attention to God. Dante plays with several traditions in his work: It is a Christian epic, where the epic hero does not need to be brave (in fact, he faints several times) as long as he has divine intervention; it is a pro-Trojan work, following Virgil’s lead in the *Aeneid*; and it uses classical imagery and mythology to represent ideas (literally, Cerberus is a three-headed dog from Greek mythology, but he appears on the level of the Gluttonous to represent the concept of gulping down food). Virgil’s influence manifests itself in several other ways: not only as the epic poet who was, according to Dante, his great master, but



IMAGE 5.11: PORTRAIT OF DANTE ALIGHIERI | In this depiction, Dante wears a laurel wreath and a rather angry scowl.

Author: Gustave Doré
Source: WikiArt
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also as the poet who wrote of the foundation of the Roman Empire. Dante believed that a strong Holy Roman Empire (based in what is now Germany) would lead to the Second Coming of Christ, whose birth came during the original pax Romana (peace of Rome). It makes perfect sense, therefore, that Beatrice would task Virgil with being Dante's guide until she assumes that duty before the ascent through Heaven. It also would explain the urgency of Dante's prose; Dante believes that little time is left before the end of the world, so his work attempts to persuade its audience to change their ways now. In the first book, *Inferno* (Hell), Dante finds ways to represent how the punishment is the crime, often with astonishing creativity; in *Purgatorio* (Purgatory), Dante describes the way that sins are purged; and in *Paradiso* (Heaven), Dante displays his knowledge of the arts and sciences of his day. Geographically, Hell is described as a downward funnel, while the island of Purgatory is a funnel leading upward. Earth exists (for Dante) as a globe around which all other heavenly bodies move; Heaven exists in those circles that form around the Earth, with God in the space beyond. Heaven is therefore described both as a rose (with the petals forming the circles) and as a type of stadium, where everyone sits facing out, rather than in. Dante's goal at the end of the epic is to be granted a vision of God as he looks out into the empyrean.

[We have included "Inferno" from Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. Visit <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1004/pg1004-images.html> to read *The Divine Comedy* in its entirety.]

Written by Laura J. Getty

INFERNO

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Dante Alighieri, translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

CANTO I

The Dark Forest. The Hill Of Difficulty. The Panther, the Lion, and the Wolf. Virgil.

Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.

Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say
What was this forest savage, rough, and stern,
Which in the very thought renews the fear.

So bitter is it, death is little more;
But of the good to treat, which there I found,
Speak will I of the other things I saw there.

I cannot well repeat how there I entered,
So full was I of slumber at the moment
In which I had abandoned the true way.

But after I had reached a mountain's foot,
At that point where the valley terminated,
Which had with consternation pierced my heart,

Upward I looked, and I beheld its shoulders,
Vested already with that planet's rays
Which leadeth others right by every road.

Then was the fear a little quieted
That in my heart's lake had endured throughout
The night, which I had passed so piteously.

And even as he, who, with distressful breath,
Forth issued from the sea upon the shore,
Turns to the water perilous and gazes;

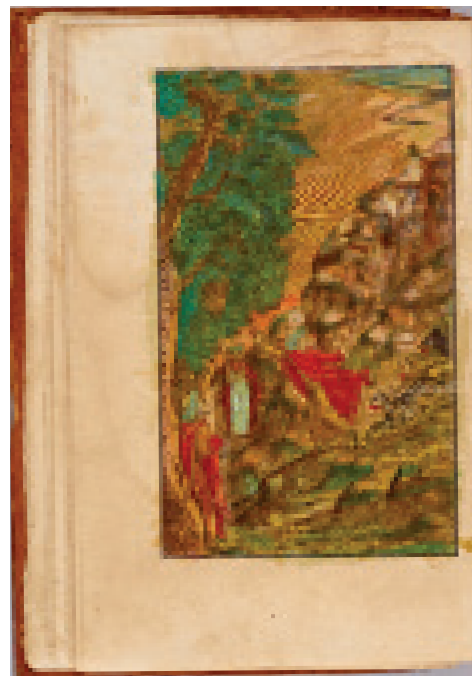


IMAGE 5.12: INFERNO: CANTO ONE | Dante flees through a dark forest, pursued by three dangerous animals, a lion, a leopard, and a wolf.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini

Source: Digital Dante

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So did my soul, that still was fleeing onward,
Turn itself back to re-behold the pass
Which never yet a living person left.

After my weary body I had rested,
The way resumed I on the desert slope,
So that the firm foot ever was the lower.

And lo! almost where the ascent began,
A panther light and swift exceedingly,
Which with a spotted skin was covered o'er!

And never moved she from before my face,
Nay, rather did impede so much my way,
That many times I to return had turned.

The time was the beginning of the morning,
And up the sun was mounting with those stars
That with him were, what time the Love Divine

At first in motion set those beauteous things;
So were to me occasion of good hope,
The variegated skin of that wild beast,

The hour of time, and the delicious season;
But not so much, that did not give me fear
A lion's aspect which appeared to me.

He seemed as if against me he were coming
With head uplifted, and with ravenous hunger,
So that it seemed the air was afraid of him;

And a she-wolf, that with all hungerings
Seemed to be laden in her meagreness,
And many folk has caused to live forlorn!

She brought upon me so much heaviness,
With the affright that from her aspect came,
That I the hope relinquished of the height.

And as he is who willingly acquires,
And the time comes that causes him to lose,
Who weeps in all his thoughts and is despondent,

E'en such made me that beast withouten peace,
Which, coming on against me by degrees
Thrust me back thither where the sun is silent.

While I was rushing downward to the lowland,
Before mine eyes did one present himself,
Who seemed from long continued silence hoarse

When I beheld him in the desert vast,
"Have pity on me," unto him I cried,
"Whiche'er thou art, or shade or real man!"

He answered me: "Not man; man once I was,
And both my parents were of Lombardy,
And Mantuans by country both of them.

'Sub Julio' was I born, though it was late,
And lived at Rome under the good Augustus,
During the time of false and lying gods.

A poet was I, and I sang that just
Son of Anchises, who came forth from Troy,
After that Ilion the superb was burned.

But thou, why goest thou back to such annoyance?
Why climb'st thou not the Mount Delectable,
Which is the source and cause of every joy?"

"Now, art thou that Virgilius and that fountain
Which spreads abroad so wide a river of speech?"
I made response to him with bashful forehead.

"O, of the other poets honour and light,
Avail me the long study and great love
That have impelled me to explore thy volume!

Thou art my master, and my author thou,
Thou art alone the one from whom I took
The beautiful style that has done honour to me.

Behold the beast, for which I have turned back;
Do thou protect me from her, famous Sage,
For she doth make my veins and pulses tremble."

"Thee it behoves to take another road,"
Responded he, when he beheld me weeping,
"If from this savage place thou wouldst escape;

Because this beast, at which thou criest out,
Suffers not any one to pass her way,
But so doth harass him, that she destroys him;

And has a nature so malign and ruthless,
That never doth she glut her greedy will,
And after food is hungrier than before.

Many the animals with whom she weds,
And more they shall be still, until the Greyhound
Comes, who shall make her perish in her pain.

He shall not feed on either earth or pelf,
But upon wisdom, and on love and virtue;
'Twixt Feltro and Feltro shall his nation be;

Of that low Italy shall he be the saviour,
On whose account the maid Camilla died,
Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus, of their wounds;

Through every city shall he hunt her down,
Until he shall have driven her back to Hell,
There from whence envy first did let her loose.

Therefore I think and judge it for thy best
Thou follow me, and I will be thy guide,
And lead thee hence through the eternal place,

Where thou shalt hear the desperate lamentations,
Shalt see the ancient spirits disconsolate,
Who cry out each one for the second death;

And thou shalt see those who contented are
Within the fire, because they hope to come,
Whene'er it may be, to the blessed people;

To whom, then, if thou wishest to ascend,
A soul shall be for that than I more worthy;
With her at my departure I will leave thee;

Because that Emperor, who reigns above,
In that I was rebellious to his law,
Wills that through me none come into his city.

He governs everywhere, and there he reigns;
There is his city and his lofty throne;
O happy he whom thereto he elects!"

And I to him: "Poet, I thee entreat,
By that same God whom thou didst never know,
So that I may escape this woe and worse,

Thou wouldst conduct me there where thou hast said,
That I may see the portal of Saint Peter,
And those thou makest so disconsolate."

Then he moved on, and I behind him followed.

CANTO II

The Descent. Dante's Protest and Virgil's Appeal. The Intercession of the Three Ladies Benedight.

Day was departing, and the embrowned air
Released the animals that are on earth
From their fatigues; and I the only one

Made myself ready to sustain the war,
Both of the way and likewise of the woe,
Which memory that errs not shall retrace.

O Muses, O high genius, now assist me!
O memory, that didst write down what I saw,
Here thy nobility shall be manifest!

And I began: "Poet, who guidest me,
Regard my manhood, if it be sufficient,
Ere to the arduous pass thou dost confide me.

Thou sayest, that of Silvius the parent,
While yet corruptible, unto the world
Immortal went, and was there bodily.

But if the adversary of all evil
Was courteous, thinking of the high effect
That issue would from him, and who, and what,

To men of intellect unmeet it seems not;
For he was of great Rome, and of her empire
In the empyreal heaven as father chosen;

The which and what, wishing to speak the truth,
Were stablished as the holy place, wherein
Sits the successor of the greatest Peter.

Upon this journey, whence thou givest him vaunt,
Things did he hear, which the occasion were
Both of his victory and the papal mantle.

Thither went afterwards the Chosen Vessel,
To bring back comfort thence unto that Faith,
Which of salvation's way is the beginning.

But I, why thither come, or who concedes it?
I not Aeneas am, I am not Paul,
Nor I, nor others, think me worthy of it.

Therefore, if I resign myself to come,
I fear the coming may be ill-advised;
Thou'rt wise, and knowest better than I speak."

And as he is, who unwill's what he willed,
And by new thoughts doth his intention change,
So that from his design he quite withdraws,

Such I became, upon that dark hillside,
Because, in thinking, I consumed the emprise,
Which was so very prompt in the beginning.

"If I have well thy language understood,"
Replied that shade of the Magnanimous,
"Thy soul attainted is with cowardice,

Which many times a man encumbers so,
It turns him back from honoured enterprise,
As false sight doth a beast, when he is shy.

That thou mayst free thee from this apprehension,
I'll tell thee why I came, and what I heard
At the first moment when I grieved for thee.

Among those was I who are in suspense,
And a fair, saintly Lady called to me
In such wise, I besought her to command me.



IMAGE 5.13: INFERNO: CANTO TWO | The Roman poet Virgil explains that he has been sent to guide Dante through the underworld.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini

Source: Digital Dante

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Her eyes where shining brighter than the Star;
And she began to say, gentle and low,
With voice angelical, in her own language:

‘O spirit courteous of Mantua,
Of whom the fame still in the world endures,
And shall endure, long-lasting as the world;

A friend of mine, and not the friend of fortune,
Upon the desert slope is so impeded
Upon his way, that he has turned through terror,

And may, I fear, already be so lost,
That I too late have risen to his succour,
From that which I have heard of him in Heaven.

Bestir thee now, and with thy speech ornate,
And with what needful is for his release,
Assist him so, that I may be consoled.

Beatrice am I, who do bid thee go;
I come from there, where I would fain return;
Love moved me, which compelleth me to speak.

When I shall be in presence of my Lord,
Full often will I praise thee unto him.’
Then paused she, and thereafter I began:

‘O Lady of virtue, thou alone through whom
The human race exceedeth all contained
Within the heaven that has the lesser circles,

So grateful unto me is thy commandment,
To obey, if ‘twere already done, were late;
No farther need’st thou ope to me thy wish.

But the cause tell me why thou dost not shun
The here descending down into this centre,
From the vast place thou burnest to return to.’

‘Since thou wouldst fain so inwardly discern,
Briefly will I relate,’ she answered me,
‘Why I am not afraid to enter here.

Of those things only should one be afraid
Which have the power of doing others harm;
Of the rest, no; because they are not fearful.

God in his mercy such created me
That misery of yours attains me not,
Nor any flame assails me of this burning.

A gentle Lady is in Heaven, who grieves
At this impediment, to which I send thee,
So that stern judgment there above is broken.



IMAGE 5.14: INFERNO: CANTO TWENTY-SIX | Dante and Virgil travel through the eighth circle of Hell, where sinners are punished for fraud by being turned into tongues of fire.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini

Source: Digital Dante

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In her entreaty she besought Lucia,
And said, "Thy faithful one now stands in need
Of thee, and unto thee I recommend him."

Lucia, foe of all that cruel is,
Hastened away, and came unto the place
Where I was sitting with the ancient Rachel.

"Beatrice" said she, "the true praise of God,
Why succourest thou not him, who loved thee so,
For thee he issued from the vulgar herd?"

Dost thou not hear the pity of his plaint?
Dost thou not see the death that combats him
Beside that flood, where ocean has no vaunt?"

Never were persons in the world so swift
To work their weal and to escape their woe,
As I, after such words as these were uttered,

Came hither downward from my blessed seat,
Confiding in thy dignified discourse,
Which honours thee, and those who've listened to it.

After she thus had spoken unto me,
Weeping, her shining eyes she turned away;
Whereby she made me swifter in my coming;

And unto thee I came, as she desired;
I have delivered thee from that wild beast,
Which barred the beautiful mountain's short ascent.

What is it, then? Why, why dost thou delay?
Why is such baseness bedded in thy heart?
Daring and hardihood why hast thou not,

Seeing that three such Ladies benedight
Are caring for thee in the court of Heaven,
And so much good my speech doth promise thee?"

Even as the flowerets, by nocturnal chill,
Bowed down and closed, when the sun whitens them,
Uplift themselves all open on their stems;

Such I became with my exhausted strength,
And such good courage to my heart there coursed,
That I began, like an intrepid person:

"O she compassionate, who succoured me,
And courteous thou, who hast obeyed so soon
The words of truth which she addressed to thee!

Thou hast my heart so with desire disposed
To the adventure, with these words of thine,
That to my first intent I have returned.

Now go, for one sole will is in us both,
Thou Leader, and thou Lord, and Master thou.”
Thus said I to him; and when he had moved,

I entered on the deep and savage way.

CANTO III

The Gate of Hell. The Inefficient or Indifferent. Pope Celestine V. The Shores of Acheron.¹Charon.²The Earthquake and the Swoon.

“Through me the way is to the city dolent;
Through me the way is to eternal dole;
Through me the way among the people lost.

Justice incited my sublime Creator;
Created me divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.

Before me there were no created things,
Only eterne, and I eternal last.
All hope abandon, ye who enter in!”

These words in sombre colour I beheld
Written upon the summit of a gate;
Whence I: “Their sense is, Master, hard to me!”

And he to me, as one experienced:
“Here all suspicion needs must be abandoned,
All cowardice must needs be here extinct.

We to the place have come, where I have told thee
Thou shalt behold the people dolorous
Who have foregone the good of intellect.”

And after he had laid his hand on mine
With joyful mien, whence I was comforted,
He led me in among the secret things.

There sighs, complaints, and ululations loud
Resounded through the air without a star,
Whence I, at the beginning, wept thereat.

Languages diverse, horrible dialects,
Accents of anger, words of agony,
And voices high and hoarse, with sound of hands,

Made up a tumult that goes whirling on
For ever in that air for ever black,
Even as the sand doth, when the whirlwind breathes.

And I, who had my head with horror bound,
Said: “Master, what is this which now I hear?
What folk is this, which seems by pain so vanquished?”

1 Acheron (The River of Woe) is one of the five rivers of the Greco-Roman Underworld. The others are Styx (The River of Hate), Phlegethon (The River of Wrath), Lethe (The River of Forgetfulness), and Cocytus (The River of Wailing).

2 The ferryman of the Underworld.

And he to me: "This miserable mode
Maintain the melancholy souls of those
Who lived withouten infamy or praise.

Commingled are they with that caitiff choir
Of Angels, who have not rebellious been,
Nor faithful were to God, but were for self.

The heavens expelled them, not to be less fair;
Nor them the nethermore abyss receives,
For glory none the damned would have from them."

And I: "O Master, what so grievous is
To these, that maketh them lament so sore?"
He answered: "I will tell thee very briefly.

These have no longer any hope of death;
And this blind life of theirs is so debased,
They envious are of every other fate.

No fame of them the world permits to be;
Misericord and Justice both disdain them.
Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass."

And I, who looked again, beheld a banner,
Which, whirling round, ran on so rapidly,
That of all pause it seemed to me indignant;

And after it there came so long a train
Of people, that I ne'er would have believed
That ever Death so many had undone.

When some among them I had recognised,
I looked, and I beheld the shade of him
Who made through cowardice the great refusal.

Forthwith I comprehended, and was certain,
That this the sect was of the caitiff wretches
Hateful to God and to his enemies.

These miscreants, who never were alive,
Were naked, and were stung exceedingly
By gadflies and by hornets that were there.

These did their faces irrigate with blood,
Which, with their tears commingled, at their feet
By the disgusting worms was gathered up.

And when to gazing farther I betook me,
People I saw on a great river's bank;
Whence said I: "Master, now vouchsafe to me,

That I may know who these are, and what law
Makes them appear so ready to pass over,
As I discern athwart the dusky light."



IMAGE 5.15: PURGATORIO: CANTO ONE |
After leaving Hell, Dante and Virgil encounter
Cato the Younger, who says that Dante must
clean himself before he can enter Purgatory.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini

Source: Digital Dante

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And he to me: "These things shall all be known
To thee, as soon as we our footsteps stay
Upon the dismal shore of Acheron."

Then with mine eyes ashamed and downward cast,
Fearing my words might irksome be to him,
From speech refrained I till we reached the river.

And lo! towards us coming in a boat
An old man, hoary with the hair of eld,
Crying: "Woe unto you, ye souls depraved!

Hope nevermore to look upon the heavens;
I come to lead you to the other shore,
To the eternal shades in heat and frost.

And thou, that yonder standest, living soul,
Withdraw thee from these people, who are dead!"
But when he saw that I did not withdraw,

He said: "By other ways, by other ports
Thou to the shore shalt come, not here, for passage;
A lighter vessel needs must carry thee."

And unto him the Guide: "Vex thee not, Charon;
It is so willed there where is power to do
That which is willed; and farther question not."

Thereat were quieted the fleecy cheeks
Of him the ferryman of the livid fen,
Who round about his eyes had wheels of flame.

But all those souls who weary were and naked
Their colour changed and gnashed their teeth together,
As soon as they had heard those cruel words.

God they blasphemed and their progenitors,
The human race, the place, the time, the seed
Of their engendering and of their birth!

Thereafter all together they drew back,
Bitterly weeping, to the accursed shore,
Which waiteth every man who fears not God.

Charon the demon, with the eyes of glede,
Beckoning to them, collects them all together,
Beats with his oar whoever lags behind.

As in the autumn-time the leaves fall off,
First one and then another, till the branch
Unto the earth surrenders all its spoils;

In similar wise the evil seed of Adam
Throw themselves from that margin one by one,
At signals, as a bird unto its lure.



IMAGE 5.16: PURGATORIO: CANTO TWENTY-TWO | Dante passes through the sixth layer of Purgatory, where gluttony transforms to temperance.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini

Source: Digital Dante

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So they depart across the dusky wave,
And ere upon the other side they land,
Again on this side a new troop assembles.

“My son,” the courteous Master said to me,
“All those who perish in the wrath of God
Here meet together out of every land;

And ready are they to pass o’er the river,
Because celestial Justice spurs them on,
So that their fear is turned into desire.

This way there never passes a good soul;
And hence if Charon doth complain of thee,
Well mayst thou know now what his speech imports.”

This being finished, all the dusk champaign
Trembled so violently, that of that terror
The recollection bathes me still with sweat.

The land of tears gave forth a blast of wind,
And fulminated a vermilion light,
Which overmastered in me every sense,

And as a man whom sleep hath seized I fell.

CANTO IV

*The First Circle, Limbo: Virtuous Pagans and the Unbaptized. The Four Poets, Homer, Horace, Ovid, and
Lucan. The Noble Castle Of Philosophy.*

Broke the deep lethargy within my head
A heavy thunder, so that I upstarted,
Like to a person who by force is wakened;

And round about I moved my rested eyes,
Uprisen erect, and steadfastly I gazed,
To recognise the place wherein I was.

True is it, that upon the verge I found me
Of the abysmal valley dolorous,
That gathers thunder of infinite ululations.

Obscure, profound it was, and nebulous,
So that by fixing on its depths my sight
Nothing whatever I discerned therein.

“Let us descend now into the blind world,”
Began the Poet, pallid utterly;
“I will be first, and thou shalt second be.”

And I, who of his colour was aware,
Said: “How shall I come, if thou art afraid,
Who’rt wont to be a comfort to my fears?”

And he to me: “The anguish of the people
Who are below here in my face depicts
That pity which for terror thou hast taken.

Let us go on, for the long way impels us.”
Thus he went in, and thus he made me enter
The foremost circle that surrounds the abyss.

There, as it seemed to me from listening,
Were lamentations none, but only sighs,
That tremble made the everlasting air.

And this arose from sorrow without torment,
Which the crowds had, that many were and great,
Of infants and of women and of men.

To me the Master good: “Thou dost not ask
What spirits these, which thou beholdest, are?
Now will I have thee know, ere thou go farther,

That they sinned not; and if they merit had,
‘Tis not enough, because they had not baptism
Which is the portal of the Faith thou holdest;

And if they were before Christianity,
In the right manner they adored not God;
And among such as these am I myself.

For such defects, and not for other guilt,
Lost are we and are only so far punished,
That without hope we live on in desire.”

Great grief seized on my heart when this I heard,
Because some people of much worthiness
I knew, who in that Limbo were suspended.

“Tell me, my Master, tell me, thou my Lord,”
Began I, with desire of being certain
Of that Faith which o’ercometh every error,

“Came any one by his own merit hence,
Or by another’s, who was blessed thereafter?”
And he, who understood my covert speech,

Replied: “I was a novice in this state,
When I saw hither come a Mighty One,
With sign of victory incoronate.

Hence he drew forth the shade of the First Parent,
And that of his son Abel, and of Noah,
Of Moses the lawgiver, and the obedient

Abraham, patriarch, and David, king,
Israel with his father and his children,
And Rachel, for whose sake he did so much,

And others many, and he made them blessed;
And thou must know, that earlier than these
Never were any human spirits saved.”

We ceased not to advance because he spake,
But still were passing onward through the forest,
The forest, say I, of thick-crowded ghosts.

Not very far as yet our way had gone
This side the summit, when I saw a fire
That overcame a hemisphere of darkness.

We were a little distant from it still,
But not so far that I in part discerned not
That honourable people held that place.

“O thou who honourest every art and science,
Who may these be, which such great honour have,
That from the fashion of the rest it parts them?”

And he to me: “The honourable name,
That sounds of them above there in thy life,
Wins grace in Heaven, that so advances them.”

In the mean time a voice was heard by me:
“All honour be to the pre-eminent Poet;
His shade returns again, that was departed.”

After the voice had ceased and quiet was,
Four mighty shades I saw approaching us;
Semblance had they nor sorrowful nor glad.

To say to me began my gracious Master:
“Him with that falchion in his hand behold,
Who comes before the three, even as their lord.

That one is Homer, Poet sovereign;
He who comes next is Horace, the satirist;
The third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan.

Because to each of these with me applies
The name that solitary voice proclaimed,
They do me honour, and in that do well.”

Thus I beheld assemble the fair school
Of that lord of the song pre-eminent,
Who o'er the others like an eagle soars.

When they together had discoursed somewhat,
They turned to me with signs of salutation,
And on beholding this, my Master smiled;

And more of honour still, much more, they did me,
In that they made me one of their own band;
So that the sixth was I, 'mid so much wit.

Thus we went on as far as to the light,
Things saying 'tis becoming to keep silent,
As was the saying of them where I was.



IMAGE 5.17: PURGATORIO: CANTO THIRTY | In this illustration, Dante is criticized by Beatrice for loving other women after her death, and they both observe the griffin.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini
Source: Digital Dante
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We came unto a noble castle's foot,
Seven times encompassed with lofty walls,
Defended round by a fair rivulet;

This we passed over even as firm ground;
Through portals seven I entered with these Sages;
We came into a meadow of fresh verdure.

People were there with solemn eyes and slow,
Of great authority in their countenance;
They spake but seldom, and with gentle voices.

Thus we withdrew ourselves upon one side
Into an opening luminous and lofty,
So that they all of them were visible.

There opposite, upon the green enamel,
Were pointed out to me the mighty spirits,
Whom to have seen I feel myself exalted.

I saw Electra with companions many,
'Mongst whom I knew both Hector and Aeneas,
Caesar in armour with gerfalcon eyes;

I saw Camilla and Penthesilea
On the other side, and saw the King Latinus,
Who with Lavinia his daughter sat;

I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin forth,
Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia,
And saw alone, apart, the Saladin.

When I had lifted up my brows a little,
The Master I beheld of those who know,
Sit with his philosophic family.

All gaze upon him, and all do him honour.
There I beheld both Socrates and Plato,
Who nearer him before the others stand;

Democritus, who puts the world on chance,
Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales,
Zeno, Empedocles, and Heraclitus;

Of qualities I saw the good collector,
Hight Dioscorides; and Orpheus saw I,
Tully and Livy, and moral Seneca,

Euclid, geometrician, and Ptolemy,
Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna,
Averroes, who the great Comment made.

I cannot all of them pourtray in full,
Because so drives me onward the long theme,
That many times the word comes short of fact.



IMAGE 5.18: PARADISO: CANTO FOUR | Beatrice and Dante face one another and discuss free will.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini

Source: Digital Dante

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The sixfold company in two divides;
Another way my sapient Guide conducts me
Forth from the quiet to the air that trembles;

And to a place I come where nothing shines.

CANTO V

The Second Circle: the Wanton. Minos. The Infernal Hurricane. Francesca Da Rimini.

Thus I descended out of the first circle
Down to the second, that less space begirds,
And so much greater dole, that goads to wailing.

There standeth Minos horribly, and snarls;
Examines the transgressions at the entrance;
Judges, and sends according as he girds him.

I say, that when the spirit evil-born
Cometh before him, wholly it confesses;
And this discriminator of transgressions

Seeth what place in Hell is meet for it;
Girds himself with his tail as many times
As grades he wishes it should be thrust down.

Always before him many of them stand;
They go by turns each one unto the judgment;
They speak, and hear, and then are downward hurled.

“O thou, that to this dolorous hostelry
Comest,” said Minos to me, when he saw me,
Leaving the practice of so great an office,

“Look how thou enterest, and in whom thou trustest;
Let not the portal’s amplitude deceive thee.”
And unto him my Guide: “Why criest thou too?”

Do not impede his journey fate-ordained;
It is so willed there where is power to do
That which is willed; and ask no further question.”

And now begin the dolesome notes to grow
Audible unto me; now am I come
There where much lamentation strikes upon me.

I came into a place mute of all light,
Which bellows as the sea does in a tempest,
If by opposing winds ‘t is combated.

The infernal hurricane that never rests
Hurtles the spirits onward in its rapine;
Whirling them round, and smiting, it molests them.

When they arrive before the precipice,
There are the shrieks, the plaints, and the laments,
There they blaspheme the puissance divine.

I understood that unto such a torment
The carnal malefactors were condemned,
Who reason subjugate to appetite.

And as the wings of starlings bear them on
In the cold season in large band and full,
So doth that blast the spirits maledict;

It hither, thither, downward, upward, drives them;
No hope doth comfort them for evermore,
Not of repose, but even of lesser pain.

And as the cranes go chanting forth their lays,
Making in air a long line of themselves,
So saw I coming, uttering lamentations,

Shadows borne onward by the aforesaid stress.
Whereupon said I: "Master, who are those
People, whom the black air so castigates?"

"The first of those, of whom intelligence
Thou fain wouldst have," then said he unto me,
"The empress was of many languages.

To sensual vices she was so abandoned,
That lustful she made licit in her law,
To remove the blame to which she had been led.

She is Semiramis, of whom we read
That she succeeded Ninus, and was his spouse;
She held the land which now the Sultan rules.

The next is she who killed herself for love,
And broke faith with the ashes of Sichaeus;
Then Cleopatra the voluptuous."

Helen I saw, for whom so many ruthless
Seasons revolved; and saw the great Achilles,
Who at the last hour combated with Love.

Paris I saw, Tristan; and more than a thousand
Shades did he name and point out with his finger,
Whom Love had separated from our life.

After that I had listened to my Teacher,
Naming the dames of old and cavaliers,
Pity prevailed, and I was nigh bewildered.

And I began: "O Poet, willingly
Speak would I to those two, who go together,
And seem upon the wind to be so light."

And, he to me: "Thou'lt mark, when they shall be
Nearer to us; and then do thou implore them
By love which leadeth them, and they will come."

Soon as the wind in our direction sways them,
My voice uplift I: "O ye weary souls!
Come speak to us, if no one interdicts it."

As turtle-doves, called onward by desire,
With open and steady wings to the sweet nest
Fly through the air by their volition borne,

So came they from the band where Dido is,
Approaching us athwart the air malign,
So strong was the affectionate appeal.

"O living creature gracious and benignant,
Who visiting goest through the purple air
Us, who have stained the world incarnadine,

If were the King of the Universe our friend,
We would pray unto him to give thee peace,
Since thou hast pity on our woe perverse.

Of what it pleases thee to hear and speak,
That will we hear, and we will speak to you,
While silent is the wind, as it is now.

Sitteth the city, wherein I was born,
Upon the sea-shore where the Po descends
To rest in peace with all his retinue.

Love, that on gentle heart doth swiftly seize,
Seized this man for the person beautiful
That was ta'en from me, and still the mode offends me.

Love, that exempts no one beloved from loving,
Seized me with pleasure of this man so strongly,
That, as thou seest, it doth not yet desert me;

Love has conducted us unto one death;
Caina waiteth him who quenched our life!"
These words were borne along from them to us.

As soon as I had heard those souls tormented,
I bowed my face, and so long held it down
Until the Poet said to me: "What thinkest?"

When I made answer, I began: "Alas!
How many pleasant thoughts, how much desire,
Conducted these unto the dolorous pass!"

Then unto them I turned me, and I spake,
And I began: "Thine agonies, Francesca,
Sad and compassionate to weeping make me.

But tell me, at the time of those sweet sighs,
By what and in what manner Love conceded,
That you should know your dubious desires?"

And she to me: "There is no greater sorrow
Than to be mindful of the happy time
In misery, and that thy Teacher knows.

But, if to recognise the earliest root
Of love in us thou hast so great desire,
I will do even as he who weeps and speaks.

One day we reading were for our delight
Of Launcelot, how Love did him enthrall.
Alone we were and without any fear.

Full many a time our eyes together drew
That reading, and drove the colour from our faces;
But one point only was it that o'ercame us.

When as we read of the much-longed-for smile
Being by such a noble lover kissed,
This one, who ne'er from me shall be divided,

Kissed me upon the mouth all palpitating.
Galeotto was the book and he who wrote it.
That day no farther did we read therein."

And all the while one spirit uttered this,
The other one did weep so, that, for pity,
I swooned away as if I had been dying,

And fell, even as a dead body falls.

CANTO XII

*The Minotaur. The Seventh Circle: The Violent. The River Phlegethon.³ The Violent Against Their Neighbours.
The Centaurs. Tyrants.*

The place where to descend the bank we came
Was alpine, and from what was there, moreover,
Of such a kind that every eye would shun it.

Such as that ruin is which in the flank
Smote, on this side of Trent, the Adige,
Either by earthquake or by failing stay,

For from the mountain's top, from which it moved,
Unto the plain the cliff is shattered so,
Some path 'twould give to him who was above;

Even such was the descent of that ravine,
And on the border of the broken chasm
The infamy of Crete was stretched along,

Who was conceived in the fictitious cow;
And when he us beheld, he bit himself,
Even as one whom anger racks within.

3 "Phlegethon" means "flaming".

My Sage towards him shouted: "Peradventure
Thou think'st that here may be the Duke of Athens,
Who in the world above brought death to thee?"

Get thee gone, beast, for this one cometh not
Instructed by thy sister, but he comes
In order to behold your punishments."

As is that bull who breaks loose at the moment
In which he has received the mortal blow,
Who cannot walk, but staggers here and there,

The Minotaur beheld I do the like;
And he, the wary, cried: "Run to the passage;
While he wroth, 'tis well thou shouldst descend."

Thus down we took our way o'er that discharge
Of stones, which oftentimes did move themselves
Beneath my feet, from the unwonted burden.

Thoughtful I went; and he said: "Thou art thinking
Perhaps upon this ruin, which is guarded
By that brute anger which just now I quenched.

Now will I have thee know, the other time
I here descended to the nether Hell,
This precipice had not yet fallen down.

But truly, if I well discern, a little
Before His coming who the mighty spoil
Bore off from Dis, in the supernal circle,

Upon all sides the deep and loathsome valley
Trembled so, that I thought the Universe
Was thrilled with love, by which there are who think

The world ofttimes converted into chaos;
And at that moment this primeval crag
Both here and elsewhere made such overthrow.

But fix thine eyes below; for draweth near
The river of blood, within which boiling is
Who'er by violence doth injure others."

O blind cupidity, O wrath insane,
That spurs us onward so in our short life,
And in the eternal then so badly steeps us!

I saw an ample moat bent like a bow,
As one which all the plain encompasses,
Conformable to what my Guide had said.

And between this and the embankment's foot
Centaur in file were running, armed with arrows,
As in the world they used the chase to follow.

Beholding us descend, each one stood still,
And from the squadron three detached themselves,
With bows and arrows in advance selected;

And from afar one cried: "Unto what torment
Come ye, who down the hillside are descending?
Tell us from there; if not, I draw the bow."

My Master said: "Our answer will we make
To Chiron, near you there; in evil hour,
That will of thine was evermore so hasty."

Then touched he me, and said: "This one is Nessus,
Who perished for the lovely Dejanira,
And for himself, himself did vengeance take.

And he in the midst, who at his breast is gazing,
Is the great Chiron, who brought up Achilles;
That other Pholus is, who was so wrathful.

Thousands and thousands go about the moat
Shooting with shafts whatever soul emerges
Out of the blood, more than his crime allots."

Near we approached unto those monsters fleet;
Chiron an arrow took, and with the notch
Backward upon his jaws he put his beard.

After he had uncovered his great mouth,
He said to his companions: "Are you ware
That he behind moveth whatever he touches?"

Thus are not wont to do the feet of dead men."
And my good Guide, who now was at his breast,
Where the two natures are together joined,

Replied: "Indeed he lives, and thus alone
Me it behoves to show him the dark valley;
Necessity, and not delight, impels us.

Some one withdrew from singing Halleluja,
Who unto me committed this new office;
No thief is he, nor I a thievish spirit.

But by that virtue through which I am moving
My steps along this savage thoroughfare,
Give us some one of thine, to be with us,

And who may show us where to pass the ford,
And who may carry this one on his back;
For 'tis no spirit that can walk the air."

Upon his right breast Chiron wheeled about,
And said to Nessus: "Turn and do thou guide them,
And warn aside, if other band may meet you."

We with our faithful escort onward moved
Along the brink of the vermilion boiling,
Wherein the boiled were uttering loud laments.

People I saw within up to the eyebrows,
And the great Centaur said: "Tyrants are these,
Who dealt in bloodshed and in pillaging.

Here they lament their pitiless mischiefs; here
Is Alexander, and fierce Dionysius
Who upon Sicily brought dolorous years.

That forehead there which has the hair so black
Is Azzolin; and the other who is blond,
Obizzo is of Esti, who, in truth,

Up in the world was by his stepson slain."
Then turned I to the Poet; and he said,
"Now he be first to thee, and second I."

A little farther on the Centaur stopped
Above a folk, who far down as the throat
Seemed from that boiling stream to issue forth.

A shade he showed us on one side alone,
Saying: "He cleft asunder in God's bosom
The heart that still upon the Thames is honoured."

Then people saw I, who from out the river
Lifted their heads and also all the chest;
And many among these I recognised.

Thus ever more and more grew shallower
That blood, so that the feet alone it covered;
And there across the moat our passage was.

"Even as thou here upon this side beholdest
The boiling stream, that aye diminishes,"
The Centaur said, "I wish thee to believe

That on this other more and more declines
Its bed, until it reunites itself
Where it behoveth tyranny to groan.

Justice divine, upon this side, is goading
That Attila, who was a scourge on earth,
And Pyrrhus, and Sextus; and for ever milks

The tears which with the boiling it unseals
In Rinier da Corneto and Rinier Pazzo,
Who made upon the highways so much war."

Then back he turned, and passed again the ford.



IMAGE 5.19: PARADISO: CANTO TWENTY | Heavenly souls form shapes with their bodies, eventually transforming into an eagle, one of the symbols of ancient Rome.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini

Source: Digital Dante

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CANTO XIII

The Wood of Thorns. The Harpies. The Violent Against Themselves. Suicides. Pier Della Vigna. Lano and Jacopo Da Sant' Andrea.

Not yet had Nessus reached the other side,
When we had put ourselves within a wood,
That was not marked by any path whatever.

Not foliage green, but of a dusky colour,
Not branches smooth, but gnarled and intertangled,
Not apple-trees were there, but thorns with poison.

Such tangled thickets have not, nor so dense,
Those savage wild beasts, that in hatred hold
'Twixt Cecina and Corneto the tilled places.

There do the hideous Harpies make their nests,
Who chased the Trojans from the Strophades,
With sad announcement of impending doom;

Broad wings have they, and necks and faces human,
And feet with claws, and their great bellies fledged;
They make laments upon the wondrous trees.

And the good Master: "Ere thou enter farther,
Know that thou art within the second round,"
Thus he began to say, "and shalt be, till

Thou comest out upon the horrible sand;
Therefore look well around, and thou shalt see
Things that will credence give unto my speech."

I heard on all sides lamentations uttered,
And person none beheld I who might make them,
Whence, utterly bewildered, I stood still.

I think he thought that I perhaps might think
So many voices issued through those trunks
From people who concealed themselves from us;

Therefore the Master said: "If thou break off
Some little spray from any of these trees,
The thoughts thou hast will wholly be made vain."

Then stretched I forth my hand a little forward,
And plucked a branchlet off from a great thorn;
And the trunk cried, "Why dost thou mangle me?"

After it had become embrowned with blood,
It recommenced its cry: "Why dost thou rend me?
Hast thou no spirit of pity whatsoever?"

Men once we were, and now are changed to trees;
Indeed, thy hand should be more pitiful,
Even if the souls of serpents we had been."

As out of a green brand, that is on fire
At one of the ends, and from the other drips
And hisses with the wind that is escaping;

So from that splinter issued forth together
Both words and blood; whereat I let the tip
Fall, and stood like a man who is afraid.

“Had he been able sooner to believe,”
My Sage made answer, “O thou wounded soul,
What only in my verses he has seen,

Not upon thee had he stretched forth his hand;
Whereas the thing incredible has caused me
To put him to an act which grieveth me.

But tell him who thou wast, so that by way
Of some amends thy fame he may refresh
Up in the world, to which he can return.”

And the trunk said: “So thy sweet words allure me,
I cannot silent be; and you be vexed not,
That I a little to discourse am tempted.

I am the one who both keys had in keeping
Of Frederick’s heart, and turned them to and fro
So softly in unlocking and in locking,

That from his secrets most men I withheld;
Fidelity I bore the glorious office
So great, I lost thereby my sleep and pulses.

The courtesan who never from the dwelling
Of Caesar turned aside her strumpet eyes,
Death universal and the vice of courts,

Inflamed against me all the other minds,
And they, inflamed, did so inflame Augustus,
That my glad honours turned to dismal mournings.

My spirit, in disdainful exultation,
Thinking by dying to escape disdain,
Made me unjust against myself, the just.

I, by the roots unwonted of this wood,
Do swear to you that never broke I faith
Unto my lord, who was so worthy of honour;

And to the world if one of you return,
Let him my memory comfort, which is lying
Still prostrate from the blow that envy dealt it.”

Waited awhile, and then: “Since he is silent,”
The Poet said to me, “lose not the time,
But speak, and question him, if more may please thee.”

Whence I to him: "Do thou again inquire
Concerning what thou thinks't will satisfy me;
For I cannot, such pity is in my heart."

Therefore he recommenced: "So may the man
Do for thee freely what thy speech implores,
Spirit incarcerated, again be pleased

To tell us in what way the soul is bound
Within these knots; and tell us, if thou canst,
If any from such members e'er is freed."

Then blew the trunk amain, and afterward
The wind was into such a voice converted:
"With brevity shall be replied to you.

When the exasperated soul abandons
The body whence it rent itself away,
Minos consigns it to the seventh abyss.

It falls into the forest, and no part
Is chosen for it; but where Fortune hurls it,
There like a grain of spelt it germinates.

It springs a sapling, and a forest tree;
The Harpies, feeding then upon its leaves,
Do pain create, and for the pain an outlet.

Like others for our spoils shall we return;
But not that any one may them revest,
For 'tis not just to have what one casts off.

Here we shall drag them, and along the dismal
Forest our bodies shall suspended be,
Each to the thorn of his molested shade."

We were attentive still unto the trunk,
Thinking that more it yet might wish to tell us,
When by a tumult we were overtaken,

In the same way as he is who perceives
The boar and chase approaching to his stand,
Who hears the crashing of the beasts and branches;

And two behold! upon our left-hand side,
Naked and scratched, fleeing so furiously,
That of the forest, every fan they broke.

He who was in advance: "Now help, Death, help!"
And the other one, who seemed to lag too much,
Was shouting: "Lano, were not so alert

Those legs of thine at joustings of the Toppo!"
And then, perchance because his breath was failing,
He grouped himself together with a bush.

Behind them was the forest full of black
She-mastiffs, ravenous, and swift of foot
As greyhounds, who are issuing from the chain.

On him who had crouched down they set their teeth,
And him they lacerated piece by piece,
Thereafter bore away those aching members.

Thereat my Escort took me by the hand,
And led me to the bush, that all in vain
Was weeping from its bloody lacerations.

“O Jacopo,” it said, “of Sant’ Andrea,
What helped it thee of me to make a screen?
What blame have I in thy nefarious life?”

When near him had the Master stayed his steps,
He said: “Who wast thou, that through wounds so many
Art blowing out with blood thy dolorous speech?”

And he to us: “O souls, that hither come
To look upon the shameful massacre
That has so rent away from me my leaves,

Gather them up beneath the dismal bush;
I of that city was which to the Baptist
Changed its first patron, wherefore he for this

Forever with his art will make it sad.
And were it not that on the pass of Arno
Some glimpses of him are remaining still,

Those citizens, who afterwards rebuilt it
Upon the ashes left by Attila,
In vain had caused their labour to be done.

Of my own house I made myself a gibbet.”

CANTO XV

The Violent Against Nature. Brunetto Latini.

Now bears us onward one of the hard margins,
And so the brooklet’s mist oershadows it,
From fire it saves the water and the dikes.

Even as the Flemings, ‘twixt Cadsand and Bruges,
Fearing the flood that tow’rds them hurls itself,
Their bulwarks build to put the sea to flight;

And as the Paduans along the Brenta,
To guard their villas and their villages,
Or ever Chiarentana feel the heat;

In such similitude had those been made,
Albeit not so lofty nor so thick,
Whoever he might be, the master made them.

Now were we from the forest so remote,
I could not have discovered where it was,
Even if backward I had turned myself,

When we a company of souls encountered,
Who came beside the dike, and every one
Gazed at us, as at evening we are wont

To eye each other under a new moon,
And so towards us sharpened they their brows
As an old tailor at the needle's eye.

Thus scrutinised by such a family,
By some one I was recognised, who seized
My garment's hem, and cried out, "What a marvel!"

And I, when he stretched forth his arm to me,
On his baked aspect fastened so mine eyes,
That the scorched countenance prevented not

His recognition by my intellect;
And bowing down my face unto his own,
I made reply, "Are you here, Ser Brunetto?"

And he: "May't not displease thee, O my son,
If a brief space with thee Brunetto Latini
Backward return and let the trail go on."

I said to him: "With all my power I ask it;
And if you wish me to sit down with you,
I will, if he please, for I go with him."

"O son," he said, "whoever of this herd
A moment stops, lies then a hundred years,
Nor fans himself when smiteth him the fire.

Therefore go on; I at thy skirts will come,
And afterward will I rejoin my band,
Which goes lamenting its eternal doom."

I did not dare to go down from the road
Level to walk with him; but my head bowed
I held as one who goeth reverently.

And he began: "What fortune or what fate
Before the last day leadeth thee down here?
And who is this that showeth thee the way?"

"Up there above us in the life serene,"
I answered him, "I lost me in a valley,
Or ever yet my age had been completed.

But yestermorn I turned my back upon it;
This one appeared to me, returning thither,
And homeward leadeth me along this road."



IMAGE 5.20: PARADISO: CANTO THIRTY-THREE | Dante witnesses the Virgil Mary, and Saint Bernard offers her a prayer on Dante's behalf.

Author: Teodolinda Barolini

Source: Digital Dante

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And he to me: "If thou thy star do follow,
Thou canst not fail thee of a glorious port,
If well I judged in the life beautiful.

And if I had not died so prematurely,
Seeing Heaven thus benignant unto thee,
I would have given thee comfort in the work.

But that ungrateful and malignant people,
Which of old time from Fesole descended,
And smacks still of the mountain and the granite,

Will make itself, for thy good deeds, thy foe;
And it is right; for among crabbed sorbs
It ill befits the sweet fig to bear fruit.

Old rumour in the world proclaims them blind;
A people avaricious, envious, proud;
Take heed that of their customs thou do cleanse thee.

Thy fortune so much honour doth reserve thee,
One party and the other shall be hungry
For thee; but far from goat shall be the grass.

Their litter let the beasts of Fesole
Make of themselves, nor let them touch the plant,
If any still upon their dunghill rise,

In which may yet revive the consecrated
Seed of those Romans, who remained there when
The nest of such great malice it became."

"If my entreaty wholly were fulfilled,"
Replied I to him, "not yet would you be
In banishment from human nature placed;

For in my mind is fixed, and touches now
My heart the dear and good paternal image
Of you, when in the world from hour to hour

You taught me how a man becomes eternal;
And how much I am grateful, while I live
Behoves that in my language be discerned.

What you narrate of my career I write,
And keep it to be glossed with other text
By a Lady who can do it, if I reach her.

This much will I have manifest to you;
Provided that my conscience do not chide me,
For whatsoever Fortune I am ready.

Such handsel is not new unto mine ears;
Therefore let Fortune turn her wheel around
As it may please her, and the churl his mattock."

My Master thereupon on his right cheek
Did backward turn himself, and looked at me;
Then said: "He listeneth well who noteth it."

Nor speaking less on that account, I go
With Ser Brunetto, and I ask who are
His most known and most eminent companions.

And he to me: "To know of some is well;
Of others it were laudable to be silent,
For short would be the time for so much speech.

Know them in sum, that all of them were clerks,
And men of letters great and of great fame,
In the world tainted with the selfsame sin.

Priscian goes yonder with that wretched crowd,
And Francis of Accorso; and thou hadst seen there
If thou hadst had a hankering for such scurf,

That one, who by the Servant of the Servants
From Arno was transferred to Bacchiglione,
Where he has left his sin-excited nerves.

More would I say, but coming and discoursing
Can be no longer; for that I behold
New smoke uprising yonder from the sand.

A people comes with whom I may not be;
Commended unto thee be my Tesoro,
In which I still live, and no more I ask."

Then he turned round, and seemed to be of those
Who at Verona run for the Green Mantle
Across the plain; and seemed to be among them

The one who wins, and not the one who loses.

CANTO XXXIV

Fourth Division of the Ninth Circle, the Judecca: Traitors to their Lords and Benefactors. Lucifer, Judas Iscariot, Brutus, and Cassius. The Chasm of Lethe. The Ascent.

"Vexilla Regis prodeunt Inferni'
Towards us; therefore look in front of thee,"
My Master said, "if thou discernest him."

As, when there breathes a heavy fog, or when
Our hemisphere is darkening into night,
Appears far off a mill the wind is turning,

Methought that such a building then I saw;
And, for the wind, I drew myself behind
My Guide, because there was no other shelter.

Now was I, and with fear in verse I put it,
There where the shades were wholly covered up,
And glimmered through like unto straws in glass.

Some prone are lying, others stand erect,
This with the head, and that one with the soles;
Another, bow-like, face to feet inverts.

When in advance so far we had proceeded,
That it my Master pleased to show to me
The creature who once had the beautiful semblance,

He from before me moved and made me stop,
Saying: "Behold Dis, and behold the place
Where thou with fortitude must arm thyself."

How frozen I became and powerless then,
Ask it not, Reader, for I write it not,
Because all language would be insufficient.

I did not die, and I alive remained not;
Think for thyself now, hast thou aught of wit,
What I became, being of both deprived.

The Emperor of the kingdom dolorous
From his mid-breast forth issued from the ice;
And better with a giant I compare

Than do the giants with those arms of his;
Consider now how great must be that whole,
Which unto such a part conforms itself.

Were he as fair once, as he now is foul,
And lifted up his brow against his Maker,
Well may proceed from him all tribulation.

O, what a marvel it appeared to me,
When I beheld three faces on his head!
The one in front, and that vermilion was;

Two were the others, that were joined with this
Above the middle part of either shoulder,
And they were joined together at the crest;

And the right-hand one seemed 'twixt white and yellow;
The left was such to look upon as those
Who come from where the Nile falls valley-ward.

Underneath each came forth two mighty wings,
Such as befitting were so great a bird;
Sails of the sea I never saw so large.

No feathers had they, but as of a bat
Their fashion was; and he was waving them,
So that three winds proceeded forth therefrom.

Thereby Cocytus wholly was congealed.
With six eyes did he weep, and down three chins
Trickled the tear-drops and the bloody drivel.

At every mouth he with his teeth was crunching
A sinner, in the manner of a brake,
So that he three of them tormented thus.

To him in front the biting was as naught
Unto the clawing, for sometimes the spine
Utterly stripped of all the skin remained.

“That soul up there which has the greatest pain,”
The Master said, “is Judas Iscariot;
With head inside, he plies his legs without.

Of the two others, who head downward are,
The one who hangs from the black jowl is Brutus;
See how he writhes himself, and speaks no word.

And the other, who so stalwart seems, is Cassius.
But night is reascending, and ‘tis time
That we depart, for we have seen the whole.”

As seemed him good, I clasped him round the neck,
And he the vantage seized of time and place,
And when the wings were opened wide apart,

He laid fast hold upon the shaggy sides;
From fell to fell descended downward then
Between the thick hair and the frozen crust.

When we were come to where the thigh revolves
Exactly on the thickness of the haunch,
The Guide, with labour and with hard-drawn breath,

Turned round his head where he had had his legs,
And grappled to the hair, as one who mounts,
So that to Hell I thought we were returning.

“Keep fast thy hold, for by such stairs as these,”
The Master said, panting as one fatigued,
“Must we perforce depart from so much evil.”

Then through the opening of a rock he issued,
And down upon the margin seated me;
Then tow’rds me he outstretched his wary step.

I lifted up mine eyes and thought to see
Lucifer in the same way I had left him;
And I beheld him upward hold his legs.

And if I then became disquieted,
Let stolid people think who do not see
What the point is beyond which I had passed.

“Rise up,” the Master said, “upon thy feet;
The way is long, and difficult the road,
And now the sun to middle-tierce returns.”

It was not any palace corridor
There where we were, but dungeon natural,
With floor uneven and unease of light.

“Ere from the abyss I tear myself away,
My Master,” said I when I had arisen,
“To draw me from an error speak a little;

Where is the ice? and how is this one fixed
Thus upside down? and how in such short time
From eve to morn has the sun made his transit?”

And he to me: “Thou still imaginest
Thou art beyond the centre, where I grasped
The hair of the fell worm, who mines the world.

That side thou wast, so long as I descended;
When round I turned me, thou didst pass the point
To which things heavy draw from every side,

And now beneath the hemisphere art come
Opposite that which overhangs the vast
Dry-land, and ‘neath whose cope was put to death

The Man who without sin was born and lived.
Thou hast thy feet upon the little sphere
Which makes the other face of the Judecca.

Here it is morn when it is evening there;
And he who with his hair a stairway made us
Still fixed remaineth as he was before.

Upon this side he fell down out of heaven;
And all the land, that whilom here emerged,
For fear of him made of the sea a veil,

And came to our hemisphere; and peradventure
To flee from him, what on this side appears
Left the place vacant here, and back recoiled.”

A place there is below, from Beelzebub
As far receding as the tomb extends,
Which not by sight is known, but by the sound

Of a small rivulet, that there descendeth
Through chasm within the stone, which it has gnawed
With course that winds about and slightly falls.

The Guide and I into that hidden road
Now entered, to return to the bright world;
And without care of having any rest

We mounted up, he first and I the second,
Till I beheld through a round aperture
Some of the beauteous things that Heaven doth bear;

Thence we came forth to rebehold the stars.

[NOTE: Our selection omits a number of cantos depicting various sins of fraud. The final third of the *Inferno* (Cantos XVIII-XXXIV) catalogs two different kinds of fraud: the first section (cantos XVIII-XXX) depicts “simple” fraud, deceiving others who have no special trust in the sinner (for example fortune-telling); the second and more damnable (XXXI-XXXIV), complex fraud or treachery, involves deceiving people who have a trusted relationship with the sinner (for example betraying one’s family or country). We have included just two cantos from “simple” fraud (XXVI and XXVII); these relate the stories of how Ulysses (Latin for Odysseus) and Guido da Montefeltro, two powerful and gifted individuals, come to be damned. After their stories, we conclude with the sins of complex fraud (XXXII-XXXIV), which take us to the end of the *Inferno*.]

THE SONG OF ROLAND

Anonymous or possibly composed by a poet named Tuold

Floruit or fl 1075-1100

Composed ca. eleventh century CE

French

The *Song of Roland* is actually founded upon an historical event, the Battle of Roncevaux Pass (778 CE), in which Roland, commander of the rear guard of Charlemagne’s army, was defeated by the Basques. This *chanson de geste* (“song of mighty deeds”) provides a powerful fusion of Germanic warrior and Christian cultures. The *Song* briskly moves its source material into a mythic dimension, with a 200 year old, semi-divine Charlemagne assigning his twelve peers and their troops to guard a high mountain pass in the Pyrenees against attack by 400,000 Saracen Muslims (an obvious epic inflation). In the figure of Ganelon, stepfather of Roland who betrays him, the epic depicts the qualities most abhorred by a warrior culture, deceit and disloyalty. In the figure of the martyred and brave—even to a point of rashness—Roland, the epic creates an ideal of the masculine fighting hero, despite the fact that he would have done well to listen to the advice of his wise friend Oliver. Composed of various threads from the oral tradition and written down sometime in the eleventh century, the *Song of Roland* served as an inspiration for the Crusaders. As such, it offers a particularly scurrilous portrait of Muslim warriors as cowards and villains who worship pagan deities. One of the first works in the French literary tradition, the *Song of Roland* memorializes its militant Christian culture through vivid description and dramatic action, especially in its set-pieces of hand-to-hand combat. In proclaiming that “pagans are wrong and the Christians are right,” the epic offers a world of moral absolutes with little room for shadings.

Written by Doug Thomson

Questions to consider while reading this selection:

1. How are the Muslims (Saracens) depicted in the epic?
2. What are the characteristics of the ideal masculine hero as can be gathered from depictions of the epic’s various characters? How does this ideal hero compare and contrast with other epic heroes?
3. In Laisse XCIV, Roland asserts that “We [the French] have the right, these gluttons [the Saracens] have the wrong!” What do you make of the moral absolutes that govern the poem (Christians right, pagans wrong. period)?
4. Archbishop Turpin is the leading religious figure in the epic. What do you make of his brand of Christianity?

LA CHANSON DE ROLAND

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Translated from the Seventh Edition of Leon Gautier by Léonce Rabillon

Edited, annotated, and compiled by Rhonda L. Kelley

Charlemagne in Spain

I.

[Carle our most noble Emperor and King](#),⁴

Hath tarried now full seven years in Spain,⁵

4 Charlemagne (aka Charles the Great, Charles I), King of the Franks and Lombards, Emperor of Europe (742-814).

5 Charlemagne was on a mission to Christianize Muslim Spain.

Conqu'ring the highland regions to the sea;
 No fortress stands before him unsubdued,
 Nor wall, nor city left, to be destroyed,
 Save Sarraguce,⁶ high on a mountain set.
 There rules the [King Marsile](#) who loves not God,
 Apollo⁷ worships and Mohammed serves;
 Nor can he from his evil doom escape.
 Aoi.⁸

Ganelon's Treason (summary)

At the end of his seven-year campaign against Spain, Charlemagne finds he cannot penetrate the walls of King Marsile's Saragossa. Fearful of a siege, Marsile promises through a messenger that if Charlemagne will leave Spain, then Marsile will present himself with a ransom at Charlemagne's court to be converted to Christianity. Charlemagne accepts the offer and sends an ambassador to convey same.

On the advice of Roland, Charlemagne's nephew and leader of his rear-guard, the Franks send Ganelon, Roland's stepfather, to deliver the message. Because all of the previous ambassadors to Marsile had died horrible deaths, Ganelon assumes that Roland is setting him up for a similar fate. In retaliation to the perceived insult, Ganelon betrays Roland and Charlemagne to King Marsile. Knowing that Roland would lead several other [Paladins](#) and the rear-guard, Ganelon tells Marsile how to ambush the rear-guard at the narrow mountain pass of Ronceval.

Prelude to the Great Battle.⁹

LXXXI.
[Olivier](#)¹⁰ from the summit of a hill¹¹
 On his right hand looks o'er a grassy vale,
 And views the Pagans'¹² onward marching hordes;
 Then straight he called his faithful friend Rollánd:
 "From Spain a distant rumbling noise I hear,
 So many hauberks white and flashing helms
 I see!—This will inflame our French men's hearts.
 The treason is the work of Ganelon
 Who named us for this post before the King."
 "Hush! Olivier!"—the Count Rollánd replies,
 "'Tis my step-father, speak no other word."
 Aoi.

LXXXII.
 Count Olivier is posted on a hill
 From whence Spain's Kingdom he descries,¹³ and all
 The swarming host of Saracens; their helms
 So bright bedecked with gold, and their great shields,
 Their 'broidered hauberks, and their waving flags,
 He cannot count the squadrons; in such crowds
 They come, his sight reached not unto their end.

6 [Saragossa](#).

7 Apollyon (aka Abaddon, an angel of destruction); medieval Christians believed that Muslims worshipped the unholy trinity of Muhammad, [Abaddon](#), and [Termagant](#). As Termagant is a fiction created by medieval Christians, it is, of course, untrue.

8 "The word "Aoi," which is placed at the end of every stanza, and found in no other ancient French poems, is interpreted differently by the commentators. M. Francisque Michel assimilated it at first to the termination of an ecclesiastical chant—Preface, xxvii.—and later to the Saxon Abeg, or the English Away, as a sort of refrain which the "jongleur" repeated at the end of the couplets. M. Génin explains it by *ad viam, a vei, avoie, away!* it is done, let us go on!

M. Gautier, with his skeptical honesty, declares the word unexplained. See Note 9, p. 4, of his seventh edition." (Léonce Rabillon, trans. *La Chanson de Roland*. Leon Gautier, 7th ed. New York: Holt and Company [1885]: x.)

9 The Battle of Ronceval Pass.

10 Roland's best friend and fellow-Paladin. Roland is engaged to Olivier's sister, Aude.

11 At Ronceval Pass, the rear-guard is about to be cut off from the rest of the army.

12 The Saracens or Muslim army.

13 Sees.

Then all bewildered he descends the hill,
Rejoins the French, and all to them relates.
Aoi.

LXXXIII.

Said Olivier: "I have seen Pagans more
Than eyes e'er saw upon the earth; at least
One hundred thousand warriors armed with shields,
In their white hauberks clad, with helmets laced,
Lances in rest, and burnished brazen spears.
Battle ye will have, such as ne'er was before.
French Lords, may God inspire you with his strength!
Stand firm your ground, that we may not succumb."
The French say: "Cursed be those who fly the field!
Ready to die, not one shall fail you here."
Aoi.

Roland's Pride.

LXXXIV.

Olivier said: "So strong the Pagan host;
Our French, methinks, in number are too few;
Companion Rollánd, sound your horn,¹⁴ that Carle¹⁵
May hear and send his army back to help."
Rollánd replies:—"Great folly would be mine,
And all my glory in sweet France be lost.
No, I shall strike great blows with Durendal;¹⁶
To the golden hilt the blade shall reek with blood.
In evil hour the felon¹⁷ Pagans came
Unto the Pass, for all are doomed to die!"
Aoi.

LXXXV.

"Rollánd, companion, sound your olifant,¹⁸
That Carle may hear and soon bring back the host.
With all his Baronage¹⁹ the king will give
Us help!"—Replied Rollánd:—"May God fore-fend
That for my cause my kindred e'er²⁰ be blamed,
Or that dishonor fall upon sweet France.
Nay, I will deal hard blows with Durendal,
This my good sword now girt unto my side
Whose blade you'll see all reeking with red blood.
Those felon Pagans have for their ill fate
Together met—yea, death awaits them all."
Aoi.

LXXXVI.

"Companion Rollánd, sound your olifant!
If Carle who passes through the mounts shall hear,
To you I pledge my word, the French return."
Answered Rollánd:—"May God forbid!—Ne'er be

14 An ivory battle horn.

15 Charlemagne.

16 Roland's sword.

17 Criminal, unlawful.

18 The battle horn is made of ivory and called an olifant for the animal whence it came (elephant).

19 That is the Barons or French nobility.

20 Ever.

It said by living man that Pagans could
 Cause me to blow my horn, to bring disgrace
 Upon my kin!—When on the battle field,
 I'll strike one thousand seven hundred blows,
 And Durendal all bleeding shall you see.
 [The French are brave and bravely will they strike.]
 Those Spanish Moors are doomed to certain death.”
 Aoi.

LXXXVII.

Olivier said:—”To me there seems no shame;
 I have beheld the Moors²¹ of Spain; they swarm
 O'er mountains, vales and lands, hide all the plains;
 Great is this stranger host; our number small.”
 Rollánd replies:—”The more my ardor grows.
 God and his [blessed] angels grant that France
 Lose naught of her renown through my default.
 Better to die than in dishonor [live.]
 The more we strike the more Carle's love we gain!”
 Aoi.

LXXXVIII.

Rollánd is brave and Olivier is wise;
 Both knights of wond'rous courage—and in arms
 And mounted on their steeds, they both will die
 Ere ²² they will shun the fight. Good are the Counts²³
 And proud their words.—The Pagan felons ride
 In fury on!—”Rollánd,” said Olivier,
 “One moment, look! Our foes so close, and Carle
 Afar from us—you have not deigned to blow
 Your horn! If came the king, no hurt were ours.
 Cast your eyes toward the great defiles²⁴ of Aspre;²⁵
 There see this most unhappy rear-guard. [Those
 Who here fight, ne'er shall fight on other fields.”]
 Rollánd retorts:—”Speak not such shameful words.
 Woe unto him who bears a coward's heart
 Within his breast. There firm shall we remain;
 The combat and the blows from us shall come.”
 Aoi.

LXXXIX.

Now when Rollánd the battle sees at hand,
 More than a leopard's or a lion's pride
 He shows. He calls the French and Olivier:
 “Companion, friend, pray, speak of this no more.
 The Emperor who left his French in trust
 To us, has cho's'n those twenty thousand men.
 Right well he knows none has a coward's soul.
 A man should suffer hurt for his good lord,
 Endure great cold or scorching heat, and give
 Even to his flesh and blood—Strike with your lance,
 And I with Durendal, my trusty sword,
 Carle's gift. If here I die, may he who wins

21 Muslims; also dark-skinned men.

22 Before.

23 The French noblemen.

24 A passage so narrow men must march single-file.

25 Aspre is another defile in the Pyrenees.

It, say:—'Twas once the sword of a brave knight."
Aoi.

XC.

[Turpin the Archbishop](#) from another side,
Spurring his courser, mounts a hill and calls
The French around. This sermon to them speaks:
"Seigneurs Barons, Carle left us here: for him,
Our King, our duty is to die, to aid
In saving Christendom, the Faith of Christ
Uphold. There, battle will ye have, for there
Before your eyes behold the Saracens.
Confess your sins, and for God's mercy pray!
For your soul's cure I absolution give....
If you should die, as holy martyrs ye
Will fall, and places find in Paradise!"
The French alight and fall upon their knees;
The Godly Archbishop grants them benison,
Giving for penance his command to strike.
Aoi.

XCI.

The French arise. They stand assoiled and quit
Of all sins, blessed by Turpin in God's name.
On swift [destriers](#)²⁶ they mount, armed cap-a-pie²⁷
Calls Olivier:—"Companion, sire, full well
You know, it is Count Ganelon who has
Betrayed us all, and guerdon²⁸ rich received
In gold and silver; well the Emp'ror should
Avenge us! King Marsile a bargain made
Of us, but swords will make the reck'ning good."
Aoi.

XCII.

Through the defiles of Spain hath passed Rollánd
Mounted on Veillantif,²⁹ his charger swift
And strong, bearing his bright and glitt'ring arms.
On goes the brave Rollánd, his lance borne up
Skyward, beneath its point a pennon bound,
Snow-white, whose fringes flap his hand.
Fair is his form, his visage bright with smiles.
Behind him follows Olivier his friend;
The French with joy, him as their champion, hail.
He on the Heathens throws a haughty glance,
But casts a sweet and humble look upon
His French, and to them speaks with courteous tone:
"Seigneurs Barons, march steadily and close.
These Pagans hither came to find a grave;
We here shall conquer such great spoil to-day
As never yet was gained by Kings of France."
Even as he spoke the word, the armies met.
Aoi.

26 War-horses.

27 Head to toe.

28 Reward.

29 Roland's war-horse.

XCIII.

Said Olivier:—"No care have I to speak,
 Since you deigned not to blow your olifant,
 All hope of help from Carle for you is lost.
 He knows no word of this; the fault lies not
 In him, nor are yon Knights to blame—ride on
 And gallop to the charge as best you can.
 Seigneurs Barons, recoil not from the foe,
 In God's name! bearing ever this in mind,
 Hard blows to deal and hard blows to endure
 Forget we not the war-cry of King Carle!"
 At this word all the French together shout.
 Who then had heard the cry, "Montjoie!"³⁰ had known
 What courage is. Then all together rush
 Right onward; God! with what an onset fierce!
 Deeply they spur their steeds for greater speed;
 They burn to fight. What else can they desire?
 The Saracens stand firm and nothing fear....
 Behold the Franks and Pagans hand to hand....
 Aoi.

The Melee.

XCIV.

The nephew of Marsile—his name Aëlroth,³¹
 Forward the first of all spurs on his horse
 Against our French, hurling forth insulting words:
 "To-day, French villains, ye will joust with us;
 Who was to guard you, has betrayed you; mad
 Must be the King who left you in the pass.
 So now the honor of sweet France is lost,
 And Carle the great shall lose his right arm here."
 Rolland heard.—God! what pain to him! He drives
 His golden spurs into his courser's flanks,
 And rushes at full speed against Aëlroth;
 His shield he breaks, dismays the hauberk linked;
 Cleaving his breast, he severs all the bones,
 And from the spine the ribs disjoint. The lance
 Forth from his body thrusts the Pagan's soul;
 The Heathen's corse³² reels from his horse, falls down
 Upon the earth, the neck cloven in two halves.
 Rolland still taunts him:—"Go thou, wretch, and know
 Carle was not mad. Ne'er did he treason love,
 And he did well to leave us in the pass.
 To-day sweet France will not her honor lose!
 Strike, Frenchmen, strike; the first sword-stroke is ours;
 We have the right, these gluttons have the wrong!"
 Aoi.

XCV.

Then comes a Duke whose name is Falsarun;
 He is the brother of the King Marsile.
 The lands of Dathan and of Abirun
 He holds: no viler wretch lives under Heaven.
 Vast is his forehead, and the space between

30 The afore-mentioned war-cry of Charlemagne.

31 The negative analog to Roland.

32 Corpse.

His deeply sunken eyes is half a foot.
 Seeing his nephew dead, in grief he bounds
 Forth from the serried ranks, and shouts aloud
 The Pagan war-cry, furious 'gainst the French.
 "To-day," he cries, "at last sweet France shall lose
 Her fame!"—When Olivier heard this, in wrath
 He pricks with golden spurs his charger's flanks,
 And, like true baron, lifts his arm to strike,
 Shivers the Pagan's shield, his hauberk tears
 Apart. The pennon's folds pass through his breast
 As with the shaft he hurls him from the selle,³³
 A mangled corpse;—here lies he on the ground.
 Unto the prostrate body Olivier
 Says proudly:—"Wretch, to me thy threats are vain!
 Strike boldly, Franks! The victory shall be ours!
 Montjoie!" he shouts, the battle-cry of Carle.
 Aoi.

XCVI.

A king, named Corsablis, from Barbarie,³⁴
 A distant land, is there.—The Pagan host
 He calls;—"The field is ours with ease: the French
 So few in numbers we may well disdain,
 Nor Carle shall rescue one; all perish here.
 To-day, they all are doomed to death!" Turpin
 The Archbishop heard him; lived no man on earth
 He hated more than Corsablis; he pricks
 His horse with both his spurs of purest gold,
 And 'gainst him rushes with tremendous force.
 The shield and hauberk split; and with a stroke
 Of the long lance into his body driven,
 Corsablis lifeless drops across the path;
 Him, though a corpse, Turpin addresses thus:
 "Thou, coward Pagan, thou hast lied! Great Carl
 My lord, was ever and will ever be
 Our help; and Frenchmen know not how to fly.
 As for thy fellows, we can keep them here;
 I tell you, each this day shall die.—Strike, Franks,
 Yourselves forget not. This first blow, thank God,
 Is ours! Montjoie!" cries he, to hold the field.
 Aoi.

XCVII.

Gérin³⁵ attacks Malprimis de Brigal
 Whose good shield now was not a denier³⁶ worth:
 The crystal boss all broken, and one half
 Fall'n on the ground. Down to the flesh Gérin
 His hauberk cleaves, and passes through his heart
 The brazen point of a stout lance. Then falls
 The Pagan chief and dies by that good blow;
 And Sathanas³⁷ bears off the wretched soul.
 Aoi.

33 Saddle.

34 Arabia.

35 A Paladin, one of the 12 Peers of Charlemagne.

36 French coin.

37 Satan.

XCVIII.

Gérier,³⁸ his comrade, strikes the Amurafle,³⁹
 Breaks his good shield, his hauberk white unmails,
 Plants in his heart a spear's steel point with such
 Good aim, one blow has pierced the body through;
 And his strong lance-thrust hurls him dead to earth.—
 Said Olivier: "A noble combat ours!"
 Aoi.

XCIX.

Duke Sansun⁴⁰ rushes on the Almazour;⁴¹
 He splits the shield with painted flowers and gold
 Embossed. The strong-mailed hauberk shelters not,
 As he is pierced through liver, heart and lungs.
 For him may mourn who will—death-struck he falls:
 "That is a Baron's stroke!" the Archbishop cries.
 Aoi.

C.

Anseïs⁴² gives his steed the rein, and charges
 Fierce on Turgis de Turteluse; beneath
 The golden boss asunder breaks the shield,
 Rips up the hauberk double-linked; so true
 The thrust, that all the steel passed through his breast.
 With this one blow the shaft has struck him dead.
 Rollánd exclaimed: "The stroke is of a Knight!"
 Aoi.

CI.

Then Engelier,⁴³ the Gasquin⁴⁴ of Burdele,
 Spurs deep his horse, and casting loose the rein,
 Rushes upon Escremiz de Valterne;
 Breaks down the buckler fastened to his throat
 And rends his gorget-mail; full in the breast
 The lance strikes deep and passes in between
 The collar bones; dead from the saddle struck
 He falls.—And Turpin says: "Ye all are lost!"
 Aoi.

CII.

Othon⁴⁵ assails a Pagan, Estorgant,
 His thrust hits hard the leather of the shield,
 Effacing its bright colors red and white,
 Breaks in his hauberk's sides, and plunges deep
 Within his heart a strong and trenchant spear,
 From off the flying steed striking him dead.
 This done, he says:—"No hope for you remains!"
 Aoi.

38 Another Paladin.

39 Admiral.

40 Also, Samson; another Paladin.

41 Arabic military title.

42 Paladin.

43 Paladin.

44 Gascon from Gascony, a region in France.

45 Also Otton or Otto; a Paladin.

CIII.

And Bérengier⁴⁶ smites now Estramaris,
 Splits down his shield, shivers his coat of mail
 In shreds and through his bosom drives a lance.
 Dead 'midst one thousand Saracens he drops.
 Of their twelve Peers⁴⁷ now ten have breathed their last:
 Chernuble—Margariz, the Count, survive.
 Aoi.

CIV.

Most valiant Knight is Margariz. 'Mid all
 Beauteous, strong, slender, quick of hand. He spurs
 His horse and charges Olivier; beneath
 The boss of purest gold his shield breaks down,
 Then at his side a pointed lance he aims;
 But God protects him, for the blow ne'er reached
 The flesh. The point grazed only, wounding not.
 Then Margariz unhindered rides away
 And sounds his horn to rally his own men.
 Aoi.

CV.

The battle rages fierce. All men engage.
 Rollánd, the dauntless, combats with his lance
 As long as holds the shaft. Fifteen good blows
 It dealt, then broke and fell; now his good sword,
 Loved Durendal, he draws, spurs on his steed
 'Gainst Chernubles, splits his bright helm adorned
 With gems; one blow cleaves through mail-cap and skull,
 Cutting both eyes and visage in two parts,
 And the white hauberk with its close-linked mail;
 Down to the body's fork, the saddle all
 Of beaten gold, still deeper goes the sword,
 Cuts through the courser's chine, nor seeks the joint.
 Upon the verdant grass fall dead both knight
 And steed. And then he cries: "Wretch! ill inspired
 To venture here! Mohammed helped thee not....
 Wretches like you this battle shall not win."
 Aoi.

CVI.

The Count Rollánd rides through the battle-field
 And makes, with Durendal's keen blade in hand,
 A mighty carnage of the Saracens.
 Ah! had you then beheld the valiant Knight
 Heap corse on corse; blood drenching all the ground;
 His own arms, hauberk, all besmeared with gore,
 And his good steed from neck to shoulder bleed!
 Still Olivier halts not in his career.
 Of the twelve Peers not one deserves reproach,
 And all the French strike well and massacre
 The foe. The Pagans dead or dying fall.
 Cries the Archbishop: "Well done, Knights of France!
 Montjoie! Montjoie! It is Carle's battle cry!"
 Aoi.

46 Paladin.

47 That is, the twelve Muslim Peers, negative analogs of the French Peers.

CVII.

Olivier grasps the truncheon⁴⁸ of his lance,
 Spurs through the storm and fury of the fight,
 And rushes on the Pagan Malsarun,
 Breaks down his shield with flowers and gold embossed,
 Thrusts from their orbs his eyes; his brains dashed out
 Are crushed and trampled 'neath the victor's feet;
 With seven hundred men of theirs he fell.
 The Count next slew Turgis and Estorgus;
 But now the shaft breaks short off by his hand.
 Then said Rollánd: "What mean you, Compagnon?⁴⁹
 In such a fight as this 'tis not a staff
 We need, but steel and iron, as I deem.
 Where now that sword called Halteclere, with hilt
 Of gold and crystal pommel?" "I lack time
 To draw it," valiant Olivier replies,
 "So busy is my hand in dealing blows!"
 Aoi.

CVIII.

Lord Olivier then his good sword unsheathed,
 For which Rollánd entreated him so much,
 And showed it to his friend with knightly pride;
 Strikes down a Pagan, Justin de Val-Ferrée,
 Whose head is severed by the blow; cuts through
 Th' embroider'd hauberk, through the body, through
 The saddle all with studs and gold embossed,
 And through the back-bone of the steed. Both man
 And steed fall on the grass before him, dead.
 Rollánd exclaims: "Henceforth, you are indeed
 My brother! These, the strokes loved by King Carle!"
 And echoes round the cry: "Montjoie! Montjoie!"
 Aoi.

CIX.

The Count Gérin sits on his horse, Sorel,
 And his companion Gérier, on Passe-Cerf,
 They loose the reins, and both spur on against
 A Pagan, Timozel. One strikes the shield,
 The other strikes the hauberk;—in his heart
 The two spears meet and hurl him lifeless down.
 I never heard it said nor can I know
 By which of them the swifter blow was struck.—
 Esperveris, son to Borel, was next
 By Engelier de Burdele⁵⁰ slain. Turpin
 With his own hand gave death to Siglorel
 Th' Enchanter who once entered hell, led there
 By Jupiter's craft. Turpin said:—"Forfeit paid
 For crime!"—"The wretch is vanquished," cried Rollánd,
 "My brother Olivier, such blows I love!"
 Aoi.

CX.

The combat paused not. Franks and Pagans vie
 In dealing blows; attacking now, and now

48 Handle.
 49 Companion.
 50 Another Paladin.

Defending. Splintered spears, dripping with blood
 So many; o'er the field such numbers strewn:
 Of banners torn and shattered gonfalons!
 So many valiant French mowed in their prime,
 Whom mothers and sweet wives will never see
 Again, nor those of France who in the Pass
 Await them! Carle for these shall weep and mourn.
 But what avails? Naught can he help them now.
 Ill service rendered Ganelon to them
 The day when he to Sarraguce repaired
 To sell his kin. Ere long for this he lost
 Both limb and life, judged and condemned at Aix,
 There to be hanged with thirty of his race
 Who were not spared the punishment of death.
 Aoi.

CXI.

The battle rages. Wonders all perform;
 Rollánd and Olivier strike hard; Turpin
 Th' Archbishop, deals more than a thousand blows;
 The twelve Peers dally not upon the field,
 While all the French together fight as if
 One man. By hundreds and by thousands fall
 The Pagans: none scapes death, save those who fly
 Whether they will or no, all lose their lives.
 And yet the French have lost their strongest arms,
 Their fathers and their kin they will ne'er see
 Again, nor Carle who waits them in the Pass.
 Meantime in France an awful scourge prevails:
 Wind, storm, rain, hail and flashing lightning bolts
 Conflict confusedly, and naught more true,
 The earth shook from Saint Michiel-del-Peril
 As far as to the Saints, from Besançon
 Unto the [sea-port] of Guitzand; no house
 Whose walls unshaken stood; darkness at noon
 Shrouded the sky. No beam of light above
 Save when a flash rips up the clouds. Dismayed
 Beholders cry:—"The world's last day has come,
 The destined end of all things is at hand!"
 Unwitting of the truth, their speech is vain....
 'Tis dolour⁵¹ for the death of Count Rollánd!
 Aoi.

CXII.

The French [strike] hard; they strike with all their force.
 In multitudes—by thousands die their foes;
 Not two out of one hundred thousand now
 Survive. [Turpin] says:—"Brave are all our men;—
 None braver under Heaven—In the Geste⁵²
 Of France 'tis writ true vassals have our Kings."
 Seeking their friends, they overrun the field.
 Their eyes are filled with tenderness and tears
 For their dear kindred they so fondly loved....
 Now King Marsile with his great host appears....
 Aoi.

51 Sadness.

52 Tales of Great Deeds.

CXIII.

Marsile advances 'midst a valley deep,
 Surrounded by the mighty host he brought,
 In twenty squadrons mustered and arrayed.
 Bright shine the helmets strewn with gold and gems,
 And shields and hauberks graced. They sound a charge
 With seven hundred clarions sending forth
 Loud blasts throughout the land—Thus said Rollánd:
 “Companion Olivier, my brother, friend,
 The traitor, Ganelon, has sworn our death....
 His treason is too sure; the Emp'ror Carle
 For this vile crime will take a vengeance deep.
 A long and cruel battle we shall have,
 Ere this unknown to man. There, I will fight
 With my good Durendal; you, friend, will strike
 With Halteclere—Those noble swords we bore
 Throughout so many lands; such combats won
 By them, vile strains must never chant their deeds.”
 Aoi.

CXIV.

When the French see the Pagan cohorts swarm
 The country o'er, they call on Olivier,
 Rollánd and the twelve Peers to guard their lives.
 Unto them now the Archbishop speaks his mind:
 “Barons, be not unworthy of yourselves!
 Fly not the field, for God's sake, that brave men
 Sing not ill songs of you! Far better die
 In battle. Doomed, I know, we are to death,
 And ere this day has passed, our lives are o'er.
 But for one thing ye can believe my word:
 For you God's Paradise stands open wide,
 And seats await you 'mid the blessèd Saints.”
 These words of comfort reassure the French;
 All in one voice cry out:—”Montjoie! Montjoie!”
 Aoi.

CXV.

There was a Saracen from Sarraguce
 Lord of one half the city—Climorin,
 Unlike a Baron; he received the faith
 Of Ganelon, and sealed the treacherous bond
 By pressing on his lip a kiss—Besides
 Unto him gave his sword and carbuncle.⁵³
 “I will,” said he, “put your great France to shame
 And from the Emperor's head shake off the crown!”
 Mounted on Barbamouche that faster flies
 Than hawk or swallow on the wing, he spurs
 His courser hard, and dropping on its neck
 The rein, he strikes Engelier de Gascoigne;
 Hauberk nor shield is for him a defense:
 Deep in the core the Pagan thrusts his spear
 So mightily, its point comes out behind,
 And with the shaft o'erturns him on the field
 A corse;—he cries. “Fit for destruction these!
 Strike, Pagans, strike, and let us break their lines!”

53 Shield, perhaps.

The French cry: "God! to lose so brave a Knight!"...
Aoi.

CXVI.

The Count Rollánd calls Olivier: "You know,
Companion, sire, Engelier is no more....
No better Knight had we"—The Count replies:
"God grant that I avenge him well!" He drives
His golden spurs into his charger's flanks;
And waving Halteclere's blood dripping blade,
The Pagan he assails, and deals a blow....
O'erthrown is Climorin. The fiends of hell
Bear off his soul. The Knight then slays the Duke
Alphaien, beheads Escababi,
Unhorses seven Arabs with such skill
They rise no more to fight. Then said Rollánd:
"Wroth is my sire, and by my side achieves
Renown! by such good blows Carl's love is gained.
Strike, Chevaliers!⁵⁴ strike on!"—he cries aloud.
Aoi.

CXVII.

From elsewhere is Valdabrun who armed
Marsile a Knight; lord of four hundred ships.
There is no sailor but swears by his name;
'Twas he by treason took Jerusalem,
Who there the shrine of Solomon profaned,
And slew before the Fonts the Patriarch;
'Twas he, received Count Ganelon's vile oath
And gave him with his sword a thousand marks;
Faster than falcon in its flight his steed
Named Graminond. He sharply spurs his flanks
And rushes 'gainst the mighty Duke Sansun,
Breaks down his shield—the hauberk rends, and thrusts
Within his breast the pennon of the flag;
The shaft o'erthrows him from the saddle, dead.
"Strike Pagans! strike, for we shall conquer them!"
The French say:—"God! what Baron true we lose!"
Aoi.

CXVIII.

When Count Rollánd sees Sansun lifeless fall,
You may well know what grief was his. He spurs
His horse down on the Pagan. Durendal
More worth than precious gold he lifts to strike
With all his might; gold studded helm, head, trunk,
Hauberk asunder cleaves; the blow, e'en through
The gold boss'd saddle, strikes the courser's back,
Killing both horse and man. Blame or approve
Who may. The Pagans say:—"Hard is this blow!"
Retorts Rollánd:—"For yours no pity can
I feel—With you the vaunting and the wrong!"
Aoi.

CXIX.

An African fresh from the desert land

Was there, Malquidant, son of king Malcud;
 His armor highly wrought in beaten gold
 Outshines all others in the sun's bright rays.
 Mounted upon his horse named Salt-Perdut,
 He aims a blow at Anseïs' shield, and cuts
 The azure and vermillion all away.
 His hauberk rives asunder, side from side,
 And through his body pass both point and shaft.
 The Count is dead.—His last breath spent and flown.
 The French say:—"Baron, such great woe for you!"
 Aoi.

CXX.
 The Archbishop Turpin rides across the fields;
 No shaven priest sang ever mass so well
 As he, and showed such prowess in his deeds.
 He to the Pagan:—"May God send all ills
 To thee, who slew the knight my heart bewails!"
 Turpin spurs hard his good steed 'gainst the wretch;
 One blow strikes down his strong Toledo shield:
 The miscreant dead upon the green sward falls.
 Aoi.

CXXI.
 Elsewhere stands Grandomie who is the son
 Of Capuel king of Cappadoce. He sits
 A steed named Marmorie, than flying bird
 More swift. Loosening the rein, and spurring deep,
 To smite Gérin with all his force he rides;
 Torn from the neck which bears it, shattered falls
 The purple shield, through the rent mail he drives
 The whole blue pennon in his breast. Gérin
 Drops lifeless by this blow, against a rock.
 The Pagan also slays Gérier, his friend,
 And Bérengier, and Gui de Saint-Antoine;
 Assailing then the noble Duke Austoire
 Who holds Valence and fiefs along the Rosne,
 He strikes him dead. The Saracens extol
 Their triumph, but how many fall of ours!
 Aoi.

CXXII.
 Hearing the Frenchmen's sobs, the Count Rollánd
 Grasps in his hand his sword, all reeking blood.
 His mighty heart nigh breaking with his grief,
 Cries to the foe:—"May God all evils send
 On thee! him hast thou slain for whom thou shalt
 Most dearly pay!—" He spurs his flying steed....
 Conquer who may—these two fight hand to hand.
 Aoi.

CXXIII.
 A wise and valiant knight was Grandonie,
 Virtuous and fearless vassal. 'Mid his way
 Encountering Count Rollánd, though never seen
 Before, at once he knew 'twas he, as well
 By his proud mien and noble beauty, as

By his fair countenance and lofty look.
 Awe-struck, despite himself, he vainly tries
 To fly, but rooted to the spot he stays.
 The Count Rollánd smites him so skillfully,
 He splits in two the nazal, helm, nose, mouth,
 And teeth, the body and mailed-armor, then
 Hews through the golden selle, both silver-flaps;
 With a still deeper stroke the courser's back
 Is gashed. So both are slain past remedy.
 The men of Spain cry out all sorrowful;
 But say the French:—"Well our defender strikes."
 Aoi.

CXXIV.

Marv'lous the battle, and the tumult fierce;
 The French of strength and fury full, raise high
 Their swords: backs, ribs and wrists are slashed; the flesh
 Cut through rent garments to the quick; along
 The verdant soil the red blood runs in streams.
 The Pagans cry:—"We cannot more endure!
 Great land, Mohammed curse thee!—More than all
 This people bold."—Not one who does not cry
 "Marsile! ride on, O King, thy aid we need!"
 Aoi.

CXXV.

A battle fierce and wonderful!—Hard strike
 The French with glittering lance, and there you might
 Have seen what miseries man can suffer: Mowed
 And heaped in bloody mounds, all gasping out
 Their lives, some on their backs, some on their teeth—
 The Saracens give way, willing or not;
 By the French lances forced, they fly the field.
 Aoi.

CXXVI.

Marsile his warriors massacred beholds,
 And, bidding all his horns and trumpets blow,
 Rides forward, and his whole van rides with him.
 In the van rode a Saracen, Abisme,
 The vilest wretch among his men, sunk deep
 In crimes and shame, who has no faith in God,
 Sainte Marie's son; as black as melted pitch
 His face; more fond of blood and treason foul
 Than of the gold of all Galice. None saw
 Him laugh or play; for courage and rash deeds
 He pleased the vile Marsile whose dragon flag
 He bears. No pity can the Archbishop feel
 For him, and at his sight he craves to try
 His arm, all softly saying to himself:
 "This Saracen is but a heretic;
 Far better die than not to give him death.
 Ne'er cowardice nor coward I endured!"
 Aoi.

CXXVII.

The Archbishop gives the signal for the fight;

He rides the horse he captured from Grossaille,
 A King he slew among the Danes: a horse
 Of wondrous fleetness, light-hoofed, slender-limbed;
 Thigh short; with broad and mighty haunch; the flanks
 Are long, and very high his spine; pure white
 His tail, and yellow is his mane—his ears
 Are small—light brown his head. This paragon
 Of all the beasts of earth has not his peer.
 The Archbishop, baron-like, spurs on the horse,
 Full bent upon the encounter with Abisme;
 He gains his side and hard he strikes his shield
 Glittering with gems, topaz and amethyst,
 Crystals and carbuncles, which to him gave
 The Emir Galafés—a demon's gift
 To this in Val-Metas. Him Turpin smites
 Nor mercy shows; 'gainst such a blow avails
 The shield but little; sheer from side to side
 Passes the blade ... dead on the place he falls.
 At such exploit amazed, the French exclaim:
 "The archbishop's crosier in his hand is safe!"
 Aoi.

CXXVIII.

The Count Rollánd calls Olivier: "With me,
 Companion, sire, confess that 'mong brave knights
 The archbishop upon earth or under Heav'n
 Has not his peer in casting spear or lance."
 Olivier answers:—"To his rescue on!"
 At this the French once more resume the fight.
 Hard are the blows, rough is the strife—Meantime
 The Christian host in greatest sorrow mourn.
 Aoi.

CXXIX.

Whoever could this fight describe? Rollánd
 And Olivier vie with Turpin in skill
 And glorious deeds—The slain can counted be;
 In charts and briefs their numbers are enrolled:
 More than four thousand fell, so says the Geste.
 Four times the French arms were victorious,
 But on the fifth, a cruel fate they met;
 The knights of France found there a grave, except
 Three more whose lives God saved; yet those brave knights,
 Ere falling, their last breath will dearly sell.
 Aoi.

The Horn.

CXXX.

Seeing so many warriors fall'n around,
 Rollánd unto his comrade Olivier
 Spoke thus: "Companion fair and dear, for God
 Whose blessing rest on you, those vassals true
 And brave lie corses on the battle-field:
 Look! We must mourn for France so sweet and fair,
 From henceforth widowed of such valiant knights.
 Carle, 'would you were amongst us, King and friend!

What can we do, say, brother Olivier,
 To bring him news of this sore strait of ours!"
 Olivier answers:—"I know not; but this
 I know; for us is better death than shame."
 Aoi.

CXXXI.
 Rollánd says;—"I will blow mine olifant,
 And Carle will hear it from the pass. I pledge
 My word the French at once retrace their steps."
 Said Olivier:—"This a great shame would be,
 One which to all your kindred would bequeathe
 A lifetime's stain. When this I asked of you,
 You answered nay, and would do naught. Well, now
 With my consent you shall not;—if you blow
 Your horn, of valor true you show no proof.
 Already, both your arms are drenched with blood."
 Responds the Count:—"These arms have nobly struck."
 Aoi.

CXXXII.
 "The strife is rude," Rollánd says—"I will blow
 My horn, that Carle may hear."—Said Olivier:—
 "This would not courage be. What I desired,
 Companion, you disdained. Were the king here,
 Safe would we be, but yon brave men are not
 To blame"—"By this my beard," said Olivier,
 "I swear, if e'er I see again sweet Aude,
 My sister, in her arms you ne'er shall lie."
 Aoi.

CXXXIII.
 Rollánd asked Olivier—"Why show to me
 Your anger, friend!"—"Companion, yours the fault;
 True courage means not folly. Better far
 Is prudence than your valiant rage. Our French
 Their lives have lost, your rashness is the cause.
 And now our arms can never more give Carle
 Their service good. Had you believed your friend,
 Amongst us would he be, and ours the field,
 The King Marsile, a captive or a corse.
 Rollánd, your valor brought ill fortune, nor
 Shall Carle the great e'er more our help receive,
 A man unequaled till God's judgment-day.
 Here you shall die, and dying, humble France, ...
 This day our loyal friendship ends—ere falls
 The Vesper-eve, dolorously we part!"
 Aoi.

CXXXIV.
 The Archbishop heard their strife. In haste he drives
 Into his horse his spurs of purest gold,
 And quick beside them rides. Then chiding them,
 Says:—"Sire Rollánd, and you, Sire Olivier,
 In God's name be no feud between you two;
 No more your horn shall save us; nathless⁵⁵ 'twere

Far better Carle should come and soon avenge
 Our deaths. So joyous then these Spanish foes
 Would not return. But as our Franks alight,
 Find us or slain or mangled on the field,
 They will our bodies on their chargers' backs
 Lift in their shrouds with grief and pity, all
 In tears, and bury us in holy ground:
 And neither wolves, nor swine, nor curs shall feed
 On us—" Replies Rollánd:—"Well have you said."
 Aoi.

CXXXV.

Rollánd raised to his lips the olifant,
 Drew a deep breath, and blew with all his force.
 High are the mountains, and from peak to peak
 The sound re-echoes; thirty leagues away
 'Twas heard by Carle and all his brave compeers.
 Cried the king:—"Our men make battle!—" Ganelon
 Retorts in haste:—"If thus another dared
 To speak, we should denounce it as a lie."
 Aoi.

CXXXVI.

The Count Rollánd in his great anguish blows
 His olifant so mightily, with such
 Despairing agony, his mouth pours forth
 The crimson blood, and his swoll'n temples burst.
 Yea, but so far the ringing blast resounds;
 Carle hears it, marching through the pass, Naimes harks,
 The French all listen with attentive ear.
 "That is Rollánd's horn!—" Carle cried, "which ne'er yet
 Was, save in battle, blown!—" But Ganelon
 Replies:—"No fight is there!—you, sire, are old,
 Your hair and beard are all bestrewn with gray,
 And as a child your speech. Well do you know
 Rollánd's great pride. 'Tis marvelous God bears
 With him so long. Already took he Noble
 Without your leave. The Pagans left their walls
 And fought Rollánd, your brave Knight, in the field;
 With his good blade he slew them all, and then
 Washed all the plain with water, that no trace
 Of blood was left—yea, oftentimes he runs
 After a hare all day and blows his horn.
 Doubtless he takes his sport now with his peers;
 And who 'neath Heav'n would dare attack Rollánd?
 None, as I deem. Nay, sire, ride on apace;
 Why do you halt? Still far is the Great Land."
 Aoi.

CXXXVII.

Rollánd with bleeding mouth and temples burst,
 Still in his anguish, blows his olifant;
 Carle hears it, and his Franks. The king exclaims:
 "That horn has a long breath!" Duke Naimes replies:
 "Rollánd it is, and in a sore distress,
 Upon my faith, a battle rages there!
 A traitor he who would deceive you now.

To arms! Your war-cry shout, your kinsman save!
Plainly enough you hear his call for help.”
Aoi.

CXXXVIII.

Carle orders all the trumpeters to sound
The march. The French alight. They arm themselves
With helmets, hauberks and gold hilted swords,
Bright bucklers, long sharp spears, with pennons white
And red and blue. The barons of the host
Leap on their steeds, all spurring on; while through
The pass they march, each to the other says:
“Could we but reach Rollánd before he dies,
What deadly blows, with his, our swords would strike!”
But what avails?—Too late they will arrive.
Aoi.

CXXXIX.

The ev'n⁵⁶ is clear, the sun its radiant beams
Reflects upon the marching legions. Spears,
Hauberks and helms, shields painted with bright flowers,
Gold pennons all ablaze with glitt'ring hues.
Burning with wrath the Emperor rides on;
The French with sad and angered looks. None there
But weeps aloud. All tremble for Rollánd.
The King commands Count Ganelon be seized
And given to the scullions of his house.
Their chief, named Bègue, he calls and bids: “Guard well
This man as one who all my kin betrayed.”
Him Bègue received, and set upon the Count
One hundred of his kitchen comrades—best
And worst;—they pluck his beard on lip and cheek;
Each deals him with his fist four blows, and falls
On him with lash and stick; they chain his neck
As they would chain a bear, and he is thrown
For more dishonor on a sumpter⁵⁷ mule,
There guarded so until to Carle brought back.
Aoi.

CXL.

High are the mountains, gloomy, terrible,
The valleys deep, and swift the rushing streams.
In van, in rear, the brazen trumpets blow,
Answ'ring the olifant. With angry look
Rides on the Emp'ror; filled with wrath and grief,
Follow the French, each sobbing, each in tears,
Praying that God may guard Rollánd, until
They reach the battle-field. With him what blows
Will they not strike? Alas! what boots it now?
Too late they are and can not come in time.
Aoi.

CXLI.

Carle in great anger rides—his snow-white beard
O'erspreads his breast-plate. Hard the Barons spur,

56 Evening.

57 Pack-horse.

For never one but inwardly doth rage
 That he is far from their great chief, Rollánd,
 Who combats now the Saracens of Spain:
 If wounded he, will one of his survive?
 O God! What Knights those sixty left by him!
 Nor King nor captain better ever had....
 Aoi.

The Rout.

CXLII.
 The Count Rollánd casts o'er the mounts and vales
 A glance: French corpses strew the plains in heaps;
 He for them mourns as gentle chevalier.
 At such a sight the noble hero weeps:
 "Seigneurs, to you may God be merciful!
 To all your souls may He grant Paradise,
 And there may they on beds of heavenly flowers
 Repose!—No better vassals lived! so long
 Have ye served me! So many lands for Carle
 Ye won!—The Emperor for this ill fate
 Has nurtured you!—O land of France, most sweet
 Art thou, but now forsaken and a waste.
 Barons of France, to-day I see you die
 For me; nor can I save or e'en defend
 Your lives. Be God your aid, who ne'er played false!
 Olivier, brother, I must not fail thee!
 If other death comes not, of grief I die.
 Come, sire companion ... come to fight again!"
 Aoi.

CXLIII.
 Soon to the field returns the Count Rollánd
 With Durendal in hand; as a true knight
 He fights. Faldrun del Pin he cleaves in half
 With twenty-four among the bravest foes.
 Never was man so bent upon revenge.
 As run wild deer before the chasing hounds,
 Before Rollánd the Pagans flee.—"Well done!"
 The Archbishop cries, "Such valor a true Knight
 Should have, when mounted, armed, on his good steed!
 Else, not four deniers is he worth: a monk
 In cloister should he be, and spend his life
 In praying for our sins!...." "Strike," said Rollánd,
 "No quarter!"⁵⁸—At the word the French renew
 The combat ... yet the Christian loss was great.
 Aoi.

CXLIV.
 When soldiers on the battle-field expect
 No quarter—desperate they fight; and thus
 The French, like lions, fiercely stand at bay.
 Like a true baron King Marsile rides forth
 Upon his steed Gaignon, and spurs him on
 Against Bevum, of Belne and Digun lord,
 His buckler cleaves, his hauberk with a blow
Shatters, and lays him dead upon the field.

58 No mercy.

Then fall beneath the Pagan King, Ivoire
 And Ivun; then Gerard de Roussillon.⁵⁹—
 The Count Rollánd is nigh and cries aloud:
 “God give damnation unto thee who thus
 So foully slay’st my friends! But ere we part,
 Dearly shalt thou abye it, and to-day
 Shalt learn the name my good sword bears.”—He strikes
 The King a true Knight’s stroke, and his right hand
 Lops at the wrist; then Turfaleu the fair,
 Marsile’s own son, beheads.⁶⁰ The Pagans say:
 “Aid us, Mahum!⁶¹ Avenge us, Gods of ours,
 On Carle, who brought such villains to our land,
 As rather than depart will die.”—And each
 To each cries: “Let us fly!”—Upon the word,
 A hundred thousand turn in sudden flight.
 Whoever calls them, ne’er will they return.
 Aoi.

CXLV.

Alas, it not avails! If Marsile flies,
 His uncle Marganice unhurt remained.
 ‘Tis he who held Carthage, Alferne, Garnaille,
 And Ethiopia, a land accursed;
 Chief of the Blacks, a thick-nosed, large-eared race.
 Of these he more than fifty thousand leads,
 Who ride on proudly, full of wrath, and shout
 The Pagan war-cry.—”Here,” said Count Rollánd,
 “Here shall we fall as martyrs. Well I know
 Our end is nigh; but dastard I count him
 Who sells not dear his life. Barons, strike well,
 Strike with your burnished swords, and set such price
 On death and life, that naught of shame shall fall
 On our sweet France. When Carle, my lord, shall come
 Upon this field, and see such slaughter here
 Of Saracens, fifteen to one of ours,
 Then will he breathe a blessing on his Knights.”
 Aoi.

Olivier’s Death.

CXLVI.

When sees Rollánd this tribe accursed, more black
 Than ink, with glist’ning teeth, their only gleam
 Of white, he said:—”Truly I know to-day
 We die! Strike, Frenchmen, that is my command.”
 And Olivier, “Woe to the laggards,” cries.
 These words the French hearts fired to meet the fray.
 Aoi.

CXLVII.

The Pagans, when they mark how few the French,
 Are filled with pride and comfort, and they say
 One to the other:—”Their King Carle is wrong!”—
 Upon his sorrel steed sits Marganice;
 Urging him hard with pricking spurs of gold,

59 The three Paladins not yet mentioned.

60 That is, Roland beheads Turfaleu, Marsile’s son.

61 Mohammed.

Encounters Olivier—strikes him behind,
 Drives his white hauberk-links into his heart,
 And through in front came forth the pointed lance.
 The Kalif⁶² cries:—"That blow struck home! Carlmagne,
 For thy mishap, left you to guard the Pass!
 That he has wronged us, little may he boast.
 Your death alone for us a vengeance full!"
 Aoi.

CXLVIII.

Olivier knows his death-wound. In his hand
 He grasps Halteclere's bright steel, and strikes a blow
 Well aimed upon the Kalif's pointed helm;
 He scatters golden flow'rs and gems in dust.
 His head the trenchant blade cleaves to the teeth,
 And dead the Kalif falls.—"Pagan accursed,"
 He cries, "not here shalt thou say Carle lost aught;
 To wife nor lady shalt thou ever boast
 In thine own land, that thou hast reft from Carle
 One denier's⁶³ worth, or me or others harmed!"
 And then he called Rollànd unto his aid.
 Aoi.

CXLIX.

Olivier feels that he is hurt to death.
 No vengeance can suffice him; Baron-like
 He strikes amid the press, cuts shields embossed
 And ashen shafts, and spears, feet, shoulders, wrists
 And breasts of horsemen. He who saw him thus
 Dismember Saracens, corse over corse
 Heap on the ground, would of a vassal true
 Remembrance keep. Nor does he now forget
 The rallying cry of Carle:—"Montjoie!" he cries
 Loudly and clear; then calls Rollànd, his friend
 And compeer:—"Sire companion, stand by me!
 This day our breaking hearts forever part!"
 Aoi.

CL.

Rollànd looks Olivier full in the face;
 Pale, livid, colorless; pure crimson blood
 Drips from his body, and streams on the earth.
 "God!" cried Rollànd, "I know not what to do,
 Companion, friend, thy courage was betrayed
 To-day; nor will such courage e'er be seen
 In human heart. Sweet France, oh! how shalt thou,
 As widow,⁶⁴ wail thy vassals true and brave,
 Humbled and wrecked! The great heart of King Carle
 Will break!" He spake and on his saddle swooned.
 Aoi.

CLI.

Behold Rollànd, there, fainting on his steed,
 While Olivier stands wounded to the death.

62 Caliph, Islamic nobleman.

63 A French coin.

64 France is the widow, bereft of her greatest defenders.

So great the loss of blood, his troubled eyes
 See naught afar or near, nor mortal man
 Can recognize. Encount'ring there Rollánd,
 Upon his golden-studded helm he struck
 A dreadful blow, which to the nose-plate cleft,
 And split the crest in twain, but left the head
 Untouched. Rollánd at this, upon him looks,
 And softly, sweetly asks:—"Sire compaignon!
 Was that blow meant for me? I am Rollánd
 By whom you are beloved so well; to me
 Could you by any chance, defiance give?"
 Said Olivier:—"I hear your speech, but see
 You now no more. May God behold you, friend!
 I struck the blow; beseech you, pardon me."
 Rollánd responds:—"I am not wounded—here
 And before God I pardon you." At this,
 Each to the other bends in courtesy.
 With such great tenderness and love they part.
 Aoi.

CLII.

Olivier feels the agony of death;
 His vacant eyes roll wildly in his head,
 And all his hearing and his sight are lost.
 Dismounting, on the ground he lies, and smites
 His breast, aloud confessing all his sins;
 With joined hands tow'rd Heaven lifted up
 He prays to God to give him Paradise,
 To bless Carl'magne, sweet France, and far beyond
 All other men, Rollánd, his compaignon.
 His heart fails—forward droops his helmet—prone
 Upon the earth he lies—'tis over now....
 The Count is dead. Rollánd, the Baron, mourns
 And weeps as never mortal mourned before.
 Aoi.

CLIII.

When sees the Count Rollánd the breath of life
 Gone from his friend, his body stretched on earth,
 His face low in the dust, his tears gush out
 With heavy sobs. Then tenderly he speaks:
 "Alas! for all thy valor, comrade dear!
 Year after year, day after day, a life
 Of love we led; ne'er didst thou wrong to me,
 Nor I to thee. If death takes thee away,
 My life is but a pain." While speaking thus,
 The Marchis⁶⁵ faints on Veillantif, his steed.
 But still firm in his stirrups of pure gold:
 Where'er Rollánd may ride, he cannot fall.
 Aoi.

CLIV.

Scarce hath the Count recovered from his swoon,
 When all the great disaster meets his sight;
 The French lie on the field; all lost to him
 Save the Archbishop and Gualtier de l'Hum,

65 Marquis, another noble title.

Who had descended from the mountain height
 Where he the men of Spain all day withstood
 Till all his own fell 'neath the Pagan swords.
 Willed he or not, he fled into the vale,
 And now upon Rollánd he calls for aid;
 "Most gentle Count, most valiant, where art thou?
 Néer had I fear where'er thou wert!—'tis I,
 Gualtier, who conquered Maëlgut, who am
 Old gray-haired Droün's nephew; till this day
 My courage won thy love. So well I fought
 Against the Saracens, my spear was broke,
 My shield was pierced, my hauberk torn and wrung,
 And in my body eight steel darts I bear.
 Done are my days, but dear the last I sold!"
 The words of that brave knight Rollánd has heard,
 Spurs on his steed and gallops to his help.
 Aoi.

CLV.

With grief and rage Rollánd's great heart is full;
 Amidst the thick ranks of a swarming foe
 He rides. He fights—and twenty Pagans fall
 Slain by his hand; by Gualtier's six, and five
 By the Archbishop's. Loud the Pagans cry:
 "Vile wretches these! Let none escape alive!
 Eternal shame to them who dare not make
 Attack; foul recreants those who let their flight
 Avail."—Renewing then their hues and cries,
 The Pagans rush from all parts 'gainst the knights.
 Aoi.

Charlemagne Approaches.

CLVI.

The Count Rollánd was ever great in war;
 Most valiant is Gualtier de l'Hum; Turpin
 The Archbishop, of a valor proved: each leaves
 The other naught to do, and 'mid the throng
 Strikes Pagans down, who though one thousand foot
 And forty thousand horsemen mustering, yet
 Dare not approach, forsooth; but from afar
 Against them hurl their jav'lins, spears and darts,
 Their lances and winged arrows. First of all
 Is slain Gualtier; Turpin de Reins' good shield
 Is pierced, his helmet broken, and his head
 Wounded, his hauberk shattered and dislinked;
 Four spears have pierced his body; his good steed
 Dies under him. Alas! the Archbishop falls.
 Aoi.

CLVII.

Hardly had Turpin fallen on the earth,
 By four spear-shafts transfixed, when the brave knight
 Sprang quickly to his feet once more. His look
 Sought for Rollánd to whom he ran in haste.
 One word he said:—"Unconquered yet am I!
 While life doth last, a true knight yields it not!"
 He draws Almace, his sword of burnished steel,

And rushing 'mid the throng, one thousand blows
 And more he deals.—Carle said in after days,
 Turpin spared none, as dead upon the field
 He saw four hundred men, some cut in twain,
 Some with lopped heads: so says the Geste of France,
 And one who saw the field, the brave Saint-Gille
 For whom God showed his might; who in the cloister
 Of Loüm wrote the record of these deeds.
 Who knows not this, he knows not any thing.
 Aoi.

CLVIII.

As hero fights the Count Rollánd; but all
 His body burns with heat and drips with sweat;
 His head is torn by pain; his temple burst
 By that strong blast he gave the olifant.
 Still would he know if Carle returns; once more
 He blows his horn—Alas, with feeble blast.
 Carle caught the distant sound, and, list'ning, waits:
 “Seigneurs,” cried he, “great evils fall apace;
 I hear his dying blast upon his horn.
 If we would find him yet alive, we need
 Urge on our steeds. Let all our trumpets blow!”
 Then sixty thousand trumps rang forth their peals;
 The hills reëcho, and the vales respond.
 The Pagans hear—and stay their gabbling mirth.
 One to the other says:—”’Tis Carle who comes!”
 Aoi.

CLIX.

The Pagans say:—”The Emperor returns;
 These are the clarions of the French we hear.
 If Carle should come, 'twill be our doom; if lives
 Rollánd, the war begins anew, and Spain
 Our land is lost to us for evermore.”
 Four hundred warriors well armed cap-a-pie,
 The bravest of the host, then closed their ranks
 And dashed in fierce attack against Rollánd.
 Mighty the deeds the Count must now achieve!
 Aoi.

CLX.

As they draw near, Rollánd calls up his pride
 And summons all his strength to meet the charge.
 No foot of ground he yields while life remains.
 Firm on his courser Veillantif he sits
 And gores his flanks with spurs of purest gold.
 Into the thickest ranks he and Turpin
 The Archbishop rush. And now the Pagans all
 Unto each other cry: “Hence, friends, away!
 The horns of those of France we now have heard,
 Carlemagne the mighty Emperor returns!”
 Aoi.

CLXI.

Nèr could the Count Rollánd a coward love,
 Nor proud, nor wicked men, nor faithless knights.

He calls to the Archbishop: "You, on foot,
 And I on horseback, sire! For love of you
 I by your side will stand; together we
 Will share or good or ill; I leave you not
 For aught of human mold. This day we shall
 Hurl back the Pagan charge, and Durendal
 Shall deal his mightiest blows!"—To this replies
 The Archbishop: "Traitor he who strikes not well!
 King Carle returns—Great shall his vengeance be!"
 Aoi.

CLXII.

The Pagans say: "For such ill were we born!
 What fatal morn this day for us has ris'n!
 Dead lie our lords and Peers! With his great host
 King Carle returns, the mighty Baron—Hark!
 His clarions sound, and loud the cry 'Montjoie;'
 Rollánd has so great pride, no man of flesh
 Can make him yield, or vanquished fall. 'Twere best
 We pierced him from afar, and left him lying
 Upon the field!'—'Twas done: darts, lances, spears,
 Javelins, winged arrows flew so thick,
 That his good shield was pierced, his hauberk rent
 And torn apart—his body yet unharmed.
 Veillantif, pierced with thirty wounds, falls dead
 Beneath the Count.—The affrighted Pagans fly.
 The Count Rollánd stands on the field, alone.
 Aoi.

The Last Benediction of the Archbishop.

CLXIII.

Raging in wrath the Pagans fly, and toward
 The land of Spain they haste. The Count Rollánd
 Pursues them not, for Veillantif lies dead.
 On foot he stands whether he will or not.
 To help Turpin, the Archbishop, fast he ran,
 His helm unclasped, removed the hauberk white
 And light, then ripped the sides of his bialt⁶⁶
 To find his gaping wounds; then tenderly
 Pressing him in his arms, on the green sward
 He laid him gently down, and fondly prayed:
 "O noble man, grant me your leave in this;
 Our brave compeers, so dear to us, have breathed
 Their last—we should not leave them on the field;
 I will their bodies seek and gather here,
 To lay them out before you."—"Go, and soon
 Return," the Archbishop said; "the field is yours
 And also mine, thanks to Almighty God!"
 Aoi.

CLXIV.

Alone the Count Rollánd retraced his steps
 Throughout the field. Vales, mounts, he searched, and found
 Gerin and his companion Gerier, then
 Berengier and Otun; here Anseis,

⁶⁶ "A sort of undergarment made of gold and silk brocade worn in time of war under the coat of mail, and in time of peace under the mantle of fur. In the latter case it was of silk." (Rabillon, 208).

There Sansun, then beyond, Gerard the old
 De Roussillon he found—one after one
 He bore each knight within his arms, and placed
 Them gently, side by side, before the knees
 Of Turpin who cannot restrain his tears;
 With lifted hands he blesses them and says:
 “Most hapless Knights!—May God the Glorious
 Receive your souls, and in his Paradise
 ‘Mid holy flowers place them!—In this hour
 Of death, my deepest grief is that no more
 The mighty Emperor I shall behold!”
 Aoi.

CLXV.

Rollánd turns back, and searching through the field,
 Has found, alas! his comrade Olivier...
 He pressed him ‘gainst his bosom tenderly,
 And, as he could, returning to Turpin,
 Stretched on a shield he lays him down among
 The other knights. The Archbishop then assoils⁶⁷
 And signs him with the holy cross. The grief
 And pity were more sore than heart can bear...
 Then said Rollánd:—”Fair comrade Olivier,
 Son of the good Count Renier, he who held
 The marches to the distant shores of Gennes;
 To break a lance, to pierce a shield, the brave
 To counsel, traitors to dismay and foil,
 No land e’er saw a better chevalier.”
 Aoi.

CLXVI.

When Count Rollánd beheld his Peers lie dead,
 And Olivier, that friend so tenderly
 Beloved, his soul by pity was o’erflowed;
 Tears from his eyes gush out, his countenance
 Turns pale; distressed, he can no longer stand.
 Would he or not, he swooned and fell to earth.
 The Archbishop said: “Baron, what woe is yours!”
 Aoi.

CLXVII.

The Archbishop, when he saw Count Rollánd swoon,
 Felt keener grief than e’er he felt before;
 Stretched forth his hand, and took the olifant.—
 Ronceval there is a running stream;
 Thence will he water bring to Count Rollánd.
 Staggering, with feeble steps, thither he goes,
 But loss of blood has made him all too weak:
 Ere he has gone an acre’s length, his heart
 Fails, and he sinks in mortal agony.
 Aoi.

CLXVIII.

Meantime the Count Rollánd revives.—Erect
 He stands, but with great pain; then downward looks
 And upward. Then he sees the noble lord

67 Absolves.

The Archbishop, holy minister of God,
 Beyond his comrades lying on the sward
 Stretched out.—He lifts his eyes to Heav'n, recalls
 His sins, and raising both his joinèd hands,
 He prays Our God to grant him paradise.—
 Turpin, Carle's Knight, is dead, who all his life,
 With doughty blows and sermons erudite,
 Ne'er ceased to fight the Pagans. May the Lord
 Grant him His holy blessing evermore!
 Aoi.

CLXIX.

The Count Rollánd sees lifeless on the field
 The Archbishop lie; gush from the gaping wounds
 His entrails in the dust, and through his skull
 The oozing brain pours o'er his brow.—In form
 Of holy Cross upon his breast Rollánd
 Disposes both his hands so fair and white,
 And mourned him in the fashion of his land:
 "O noble man! O knight of lineage pure!
 To the Glorious One of Heav'n I thee commend;
 For ne'er was man who Him more truly served,
 Nor since the Apostles' days, such prophet, strong,
 To keep God's law and draw the hearts of men.
 From ev'ry pain your soul be freed, and wide
 Before it ope the Gates of Paradise!"
 Aoi.

Roland's Death.

CLXX.

Rollánd now feels his death is drawing nigh:
 From both his ears the brain is oozing fast.
 For all his peers he prays that God may call
 Their souls to Him; to the Angel Gabriel
 He recommends his spirit. In one hand
 He takes the olifant, that no reproach
 May rest upon him; in the other grasps
 Durendal, his good sword. Forward he goes,
 Far as an arblast⁶⁸ sends a shaft, across
 A new-tilled ground and toward the land of Spain.
 Upon a hill, beneath two lofty trees,
 Four terraces of marble spread:—he falls
 Prone fainting on the green, for death draws near.
 Aoi.

CLXXI.

High are the mounts, and lofty are the trees.
 Four terraces are there, of marble bright:
 There Count Rollánd lies senseless on the grass.
 Him at this moment spies a Saracen
 Who lies among the corpses, feigning death,
 His face and body all besmeared with blood.
 Sudden he rises to his feet, and bounds
 Upon the Baron.—Handsome, brave and strong
 He was, but from his pride sprang mortal rage.
 He seized the body of Rollánd, and grasped

68 Crossbow.

His arms, exclaiming thus:—"Here vanquished Carle's
Great nephew lies!"—"This sword to Araby
I'll bear."—He drew it;—this aroused the Count.
Aoi.

CLXXII.

Rollánd perceived an alien hand would rob
Him of his sword; his eyes he oped; one word
He spoke:—"I trow,⁶⁹ not one of us art thou!"
Then with his olifant from which he parts
Never, he smites the golden studded helm,
Crushing the steel, the head, the bones; both eyes
Are from their sockets beaten out—o'erthrown
Dead at the Baron's feet he falls:—"O wretch,"
He cries, "how durst thou, or for good or ill,
Lay hands upon Rollánd? Who hears of this
Will call thee fool. Mine olifant is cleft,
Its gems and gold all scattered by the blow."
Aoi.

CLXXIII.

Now feels Rollánd that death is near at hand
And struggles up with all his force; his face
Grows livid;—[Durendal, his naked sword]
He holds;—beside him rises a gray rock
On which he strikes ten mighty blows through grief
And rage—The steel but grinds; it breaks not, nor
Is notched; then cries the Count:—"Saint Mary, help!
O Durendal! Good sword! ill starred art thou!
Though we two part, I care not less for thee.
What victories together thou and I,
Have gained, what kingdoms conquered, which now holds
White-bearded Carle! No coward's hand shall grasp
Thy hilt: a valiant knight has borne thee long,
Such as none shall e'er bear in France the Free!"
Aoi.

CLXXIV.

Rollánd smites hard the rock of Sardonix;⁷⁰
The steel but grinds, it breaks not, nor grows blunt;
Then seeing that he can not break his sword,
Thus to himself he mourns for Durendal:
"O good my sword, how bright and pure! Against
The sun what flashing light thy blade reflects!
When Carle passed through the valley of Moriane,
The God of Heaven by his Angel sent
Command that he should give thee to a Count,
A valiant captain; it was then the great
And gentle King did gird thee to my side.—
With thee I won for him Anjou—Bretaigne;⁷¹
For him with thee I won Poitou, le Maine
And Normandie⁷² the free; I won Provence
And Aquitaine, and Lombardie,⁷³ and all

69 Believe.

70 Sardonyx, onyx and sard.

71 Brittany.

72 Normandy.

73 Lombardy.

The Romanie;⁷⁴ I won for him Bavière,⁷⁵
 All Flandre⁷⁶—Buguerie⁷⁷—all Puillanie,⁷⁸
 Costentinnoble⁷⁹ which allegiance paid,
 And Saxonie⁸⁰ submitted to his power;
 For him I won Escoce⁸¹ and Galle,⁸² Irlande⁸³
 And Engleterre⁸⁴ he made his royal seat;
 With thee I conquered all the lands and realms
 Which Carle, the hoary-bearded monarch, rules.
 Now for this sword I mourn.... Far better die
 Than in the hands of Pagans let it fall!
 May God, Our Father, save sweet France this shame!”
 Aoi.

CLXXV.

Upon the grey rock mightily he smites,
 Shattering it more than I can tell; the sword
 But grinds.—It breaks not—nor receives a notch,
 And upwards springs more dazzling in the air.
 When sees the Count Rollánd his sword can never break,
 Softly within himself its fate he mourns:
 “O Durendal, how fair and holy thou!
 In thy gold-hilt are relics rare; a tooth
 Of great saint Pierre—some blood of Saint Basile,
 A lock of hair of Monseigneur Saint Denis,
 A fragment of the robe of Sainte-Marie.
 It is not right that Pagans should own thee;
 By Christian hand alone be held. Vast realms
 I shall have conquered once that now are ruled
 By Carle, the King with beard all blossom-white,
 And by them made great emperor and Lord.
 May thou ne’er fall into a cowardly hand.”
 Aoi.

CLXXVI.

The Count Rollánd feels through his limbs the grasp
 Of death, and from his head ev’n to his heart
 A mortal chill descends. Unto a pine
 He hastens, and falls stretched upon the grass.
 Beneath him lie his sword and olifant,
 And toward the Heathen land he turns his head,
 That Carle and all his knightly host may say:
 “The gentle Count a conqueror has died....”
 Then asking pardon for his sins, or great
 Or small, he offers up his glove to God.
 Aoi.

74 Romania (?).
 75 Bavaria.
 76 Flanders.
 77 Bulgaria.
 78 Poland.
 79 Constantinople.
 80 Germany home of the Saxons.
 81 Scotland.
 82 Gaul (Gallic France).
 83 Ireland.
 84 England.

CLXXVII.

The Count Rollánd feels now his end approach.
 Against a pointed rock, and facing Spain,
 He lies. Three times he beats his breast, and says:
 “Mea culpa! Oh, my God, may through thy grace,
 Be pardoned all my sins, or great or small,
 Until this hour committed since my birth!”
 Then his right glove he offers up to God,
 And toward him angels from high Heav’n descend.
 Aoi.

CLXXVIII.

Beneath a pine Rollánd doth lie, and looks
 Toward Spain—He broods on many things of yore:
 On all the lands he conquered, on sweet France,
 On all his kinsmen, on great Carle his lord
 Who nurtured him;—he sighs—nor can restrain
 His tears, but can not yet himself forget;
 Recalls his sins, and for the grace of God
 He prays:—”Our Father, never yet untrue,
 Who Saint-Lazare raised from the dead, and saved
 Thy Daniel from the lions’ claws—Oh, free
 My soul from peril, from my whole life’s sins!”
 His right hand glove he offered up to God;
 Saint Gabriel took the glove.—With head reclined
 Upon his arm, with hands devoutly joined
 He breathed his last. God sent his Cherubim,
 Saint-Raphaël, Saint Michiel del Peril.
 Together with them Gabriel came.—All bring
 The soul of Count Rollánd to Paradise....
 Aoi.

The Chastisement of the Saracens.

CLXXIX.

Rollánd is dead: God has his soul in heaven.
 To Ronceval the Emperor has come.
 There, neither road nor any path is seen,
 Nor vacant space, nor ell, nor foot of land
 That mounds of mangled bodies cover not,
 Pagans or French.—The Emperor exclaims:
 “Fair nephew, where art thou? The Archbishop, where?
 And Olivier, alas, where are they all?
 Gérin, Gérier, the two companions, where
 Are they? And where is Otes and Bérengier,
 Ives and Ivoire both to my heart so dear?
 The Gasquin Engelier, Sansun the Duke,
 Anseis the rash, Gerard de Roussillon
 The old, and my twelve Peers I left behind,
 What fate is theirs?”—What boots it? None replies.—
 “—God,” cries the King, “what grief is mine to think
 “I stood not here the battle to begin.”
 He tears his beard with anger; all his knights
 And barons weep great tears; dizzy with woe
 And swooning, twenty thousand fall to earth.
 Duke Naimes feels pity overflow his heart.
 Aoi.

CLXXX.

No baron is there now, no chevalier
 Who, in his pity, sheds not tears for sons,
 For brothers—nephews—friends—and for liege-lords.
 Many have fallen swooning on the earth,
 But Duke Naimés bore himself as valorous knight:
 He foremost said to Carle:—”Behold two leagues
 Away!—The roads are dark with clouds of dust.
 There swarm the Pagan tribes.... Ride on them now,
 Avenge this bitter woe.”—”O God,” said Carle,
 “Are they already flown so far?—our rights
 And honor shield! Those Pagans took from me
 The flower of my Sweet France!”—The King commands
 Gebuin, Otun, Tedbalt de Reins and Count
 Milun:—”Watch ye the field, the vales, the mounts;
 The slain, leave to their rest; see that no beast
 Nor lion, squire nor page approach. I charge
 You, let no man upon them lay his hand
 Until, with God’s assistance, we return.”
 They lovingly and with sweet tone reply:
 “Thus shall we do, just Emperor, dear sire!”
 Upon the field they keep one thousand knights.
 Aoi.

CLXXXI.

Now bids the Emperor his trumpets blow,
 Then forward at the head of his great host
 He rides, that Baron true. Of those of Spain
 He finds the tracks, points out the road; in quick
 Pursuit all follow Carle.... When sees the King
 The eve decline, he on the verdant grass
 Dismounts, and prostrate prays to God our Lord
 The sun to stay, the shades of night hold back
 And longer make the day. To him appears
 A Counselor-Angel with the swift command;
 “Ride on, O King, nor fear that night shall fall!
 God knows that thou hast lost the flower of France;
 But vengeance canst have now upon that horde
 Of unbelievers.” Thus the Angel spake.
 The Emp’ror rises and remounts his steed.
 Aoi.

CLXXXII.

To Carlemagne Our Lord now showed his might;
 The sun stays in its course. The Pagans fly,
 And fast the French pursuing, overtake
 Them in the Val-Tenebre. They drive them on
 Toward Sarraguce, while close behind them fall
 The upraised swords, and strew the ground with dead.
 No issue, no escape, by road or pass!
 In front deep Ebro rolls its mighty waves:
 No boat, no barge, no raft. They call for help
 On Tervagant, then plunge into the flood.
 Vain was their trust: some, weighted with their arms,
 Sink in a moment; others are swept down,
 And those most favored swallow monstrous draughts.

All drown most cruelly. The French cry out:
 “For your own woe wished ye to see Rollánd!”
 Aoi.

Charlemagne and Baligant at Ronceval (Summary and Excerpt)

Meanwhile, back at Saragossa, Marsile has summoned the aid of Baligant, his liege lord. Marsile, dying and unable to lead, hands over the defense of Saragossa to Baligant.

Baligant leads his army to engage Charlemagne at Ronceval, where the Franks are mourning and honoring the dead. Both armies fight with distinction, and Charlemagne meets Baligant on the battle field:

CCLXIII.

The mighty Emir⁸⁵ with a giant’s strength
 Smites Carle⁸⁶ upon the helm of burnished steel,
 Which splits in twain beneath the ponderous blow,
 Cuts through the silky hair, shears from the scalp
 Fully the breadth of a man’s palm and more,
 Baring the skull. Carle staggers, nearly falls,
 But God willed not that he should die or yield.
 Saint Gabriel, with eager flight once more
 Descends, demanding:—”What ails thee, great King?”
 Aoi.

CCLXIV.

When Carle the Angel’s heavenly accent hears,
 All thought or dread of death forsakes his soul,
 And in him springs again his former strength.
 The Emir by the royal sword of France
 Is struck, his helm all bright with gems is rent,
 His cloven skull pours out the brain, his face
 Is cleft to the very roots of his white beard:
 Dead falls the Pagan past recovery.
 Then shouts the King his rallying cry, “Montjoie!”
 Hearing his shout, Duke Naimés hastes up, and brings
 The charger Tecendur for Carle the great
 To mount. The Pagans turn their backs—God wills
 They should not stay. The Franks have their desires.
 Aoi.

The Death of Marsile;

Capture of Bramimunde

CCLXVI.

Amidst the sultry heat and clouds of dust
 The Pagans roused, by their foes harassed,
 Flee far for Sarraguçe. To her high tower
 Ascends Queen Bramimunde, where, seeing thus
 The routed Arabs fly, she calls her priests
 And canons, subjects to false law, by God
 Ne’er loved: their crowns no holy tonsure wear.
 She cries aloud:—”Aid us, Mahum!⁸⁷ Oh aid!
 O gentle King! Already vanquished are
 Our men, the Emir⁸⁸ slain in shameful death!”
 On hearing this, Marsile turned to the wall

85 Baligant is Emir of Babylon.
 86 Charlemagne.
 87 Mohammed.
 88 Baligant.

His covered face, and amid bitter tears
 His life departed. Soon the eager fiends
 Bore off to judgment his sin-burthened⁸⁹ soul.
 Aoi.

CCLXVII.

The Pagans all are slain [or put to flight];
 Carle wins the day. The gates of Sarraguce
 Are stormed, and well he knows, defense is vain.
 He takes the city. All the Christian host
 Pour in, and there repose their limbs this night.
 The King with snow-white beard is filled with pride:
 Queen Bramimunde gives up the citadels;
 Ten of these forts are large, and fifty small.
 Well helped are they whom God Almighty aids.
 Aoi.

CCLXVIII.

The sunny day had passed, the shades of night
 Had fallen; bright the moonlight; all the stars
 In heaven shone. Carle ruled in Sarraguce.
 Unto one thousand men he gave command
 To search throughout the city's synagogues
 And mosques for all their idols and graven signs
 Of gods—these to be broken up and crushed
 By ax and iron mallet he ordains.
 Nor sorcery nor falsehood left. King Carle
 Believes in God and serves him faithfully.
 Then bishops bless the fountains, leading up
 The Heathens to the blest baptismal Font.
 If one perchance resist the King, condemned
 Is he to die, or hanged, or burnt, or slain.
 More than one hundred thousand are baptized
 True Christians; but not so Queen Bramimunde:
 A captive shall she go unto sweet France
 And be converted by the King through love.
 Aoi.

The Punishment of Ganelon.

CCLXX.

From Spain at last the Emperor has returned
 To Aix, the noblest seat of France; ascends
 His palace, enters in the stately hall.—
 Now comes to greet him the fair [lady] Aude,
 And asks the King:—"Where is Rollánd the chief
 Who pledged his faith to take me for his wife?"
 Sore-pained, heart-broken, Carle, with weeping eyes,
 Tears his white beard.—"Ah! sister well beloved,
 Thou askest me of one who is no more.
 A worthier match I give thee in exchange;
 Loewis it is. I can not better say.
 He is my son, and will protect my realms."
 Aude answers:—"To my ear these words are strange.
 May God, His saints, His angels, all forfend
 That, if Rollánd lives not, I still should live."

89 Burdened.

Her color fades, she falls prone at the feet
 Of Carlemagne—dead ... God's mercy on her soul!
 Barons of France mourn her with pitying tears.
 Aoi.

CCLXXI.

Such was the end of Aude the beautiful.
 The King, in hope 'tis but a swoon, with tears
 And pity taking both her hands, uplifts
 Her form; the head upon the shoulders sinks.
 As soon as Carle knows it is death indeed,
 Four countesses he summons, bids them bear
 In haste the Lady to a nunnery.—
 All night they watched the body, and at morn
 Beside a shrine gently she was entombed
 With highest honors by the King's command.
 Aoi.

CCLXXII.

The Emperor is once more at Aix. There stands
 Amid the city 'fore the palace gate,
 In iron chains, the traitor Ganelon.
 His hands are fastened to a stake with thongs
 Of deer-skin by the sergeants who then beat
 His body well with staves and heavy cords.
 Such treatment was his true desert. He waits
 His coming doom, in agony of soul.
 Aoi.

CCLXXIII.

Written it is in ancient Geste of France
 That Carle then summoned men from all his lands,
 Who met at Aix's Chapelle. A solemn feast
 It was; some say the Baron Saint Silvestre's.
 This day began the plea and history
 Of Ganelon who wove the treason's plot.
 The Emperor bade them drag him to his bar.
 Aoi.

CCLXXIV.

"Seigneurs Barons," said to them Carle the King,
 "Judge Ganelon according to the law.—
 Among my host with me to Spain he came;
 His craft lost twenty thousand of my Franks;
 My nephew, whom ye nevermore shall see,
 And Olivier, the brave and courteous Knight.
 The traitor sold my brave twelve Peers for gain."
 Then Ganelon:—"May I be cursed ere I
 Deny. Of wealth and honors had [Rollánd]
 Deprived me, and for this, his loss and death
 I wrought, but treason none I will confess."
 Respond the French:—"On this we counsel take."
 Aoi.

CCLXXV.

In presence of the King stands Ganelon
 With bearing hardy, florid countenance;

Were he but loyal, as a Baron true
 His mien. Upon the French and judges he
 Has cast a glance, and on his thirty kin
 Who 'round him stand; then with firm voice exclaims:
 "Barons! Now hear me all, for love of God!
 I to the Emperor's host belonged, and served
 Him ever in all faith and love. Rollánd,
 His nephew, hatred bore to me, and fain
 Had doomed my days to torture and to death.
 As message-bearer I to King Marsile
 Was sent, wisdom alone my shield and guard;
 I gave defiance to Rollánd the bold,
 To Olivier and to their comrades all:
 By Carle and all his Barons this was heard.
 Revenge this was, but treason it was none."
 Reply the French:—"All this we well shall weigh."
 Aoi.

CCLXXXVI.

On seeing the great plea was to commence,
 Thirty good Knights were called by Ganelon
 Out of his kin, and one among them makes
 A speech all others hark: 'tis Pinabel
 Of Castel de Sorence, of greatest skill
 In words, and apt with reason plausible;
 Withal, a vassal brave to guard his arms.
 Thus to him Ganelon:—"In you my trust
 I place; my life from death, my name from shame
 Preserve!"—Said Pinabel:—"Thou shalt be saved.
 Dare one French Knight condemn thee to be hanged,
 And would the Emperor make us both to meet
 In combat, my good sword will his rash word
 Believe."—And at his feet falls Ganelon.
 Aoi.

CCLXXXVII.

Baiviers, Saines, Poitevins, Normans and French
 In council met;—Allemans, Tiedeis in great
 Array. Those from Alverne most courteous prove
 And show more kindness unto Pinabel.
 One to the others said:—"To leave this plea
 Right would it be, and pray Carl'magne, this once
 To pardon Ganelon who, from this day,
 Will serve his lord with truer faith and love.
 Rollánd lies in his grave; nor wealth, nor gold
 Restores him to your eyes. This cruel fight
 Is folly."—All the Knights approve, save one,
 Tierri, a brother of the Lord Geffrei.
 Aoi.

CCLXXXVIII.

To Carle his Barons come again, and say:
 "We pray you, sire, acquit Count Ganelon;
 Then will he serve you with true faith and love.
 Grant him his life which springs from noble race.
 Rollánd lies in his grave; ne'er shall we see
 Him more, nor treasures e'er can bring him back."

Exclaimed the King: "Vile traitors are ye all!"
Aoi.

CLXXIX.

Now, seeing all will fail him, o'er Carle's eyes
And features gloom descends; by grief o'erwhelmed
He cries: "Unhappy that I am!" Then stood
[Tierra], the brother of Geffrei, the Duke
D'Anjou, before the King. Thin, light of frame,
Hair raven-black, [face] somewhat brown of hue,
In height nor tall nor short; with courtesy
He spake thus to the Emp'ror: "Fair sire King,
Be not cast down. That I have served you well
Ere this, you know. 'Tis my ancestral right
To sit among the judges of the plea.
However guilty was Rolland against
Count Ganelon, his duty to the King
Should have restrained his hate. A treason foul
Ganelon wrought against Rolland; forsworn
In perjury tow'rd you, he lost himself.
For all his crimes his death I here demand,
Death by the cord; his body to the dogs
Be thrown away—the perjurer's just doom.
Should any of his kin deny the words
I speak, this sword of mine girt to my side
Will make them good."—All cry: "Well have you said."
Aoi.

CCLXXX.

Then toward the King advances Pinabel;
Tall, strong and swift, and brave. Strike he but once,
No second blow need follow; to the King
He said: "Sire, unto you belongs this plea.
Command these clamors to be hushed. There stands
Tierra who now his judgment has pronounced.
The lie I give him and to fight defy!"
With this his right hand glove of deer-skin gave
Unto the King who said: "I must receive
Good pledges." Of his kin then thirty knights
Were given as legal sureties of his pledge.
"I also give my pledge," the Emperor said,
"And have them guarded safe till judgment pass."
Aoi.

CCLXXXI.

When Tierra sees that now the fight is near,
He gives the Emperor his right hand glove.
To him the sureties Carle himself provides,
Bids that they bring four benches to the place
Whereon the combatants shall sit. The terms
Are judged by all the others as most fair.
Ogier de Dannemarche was chosen to rule
The lists. Then for their steeds and arms both called.
Aoi.

CCLXXXII.

Both knights now made them ready for the fight,

Were shriven, assoiled, and blessed; a mass have heard,
 Communion have received, and richest alms
 Bequeathed to monasteries.—Before striking
 They both appear.—Gold spurs their heels adorn;
 They wear white hauberks light and strong; bright helms
 Clasp on their heads, and gold hilt swords are girt
 Upon their thighs, and to their necks are bound
 Strong quartered shields; they wield in each right hand
 A trenchant sword, and on fleet steeds they mount;
 Then melt in tears one hundred thousand knights
 Who for Rollánd's sake wish Tierri well.
 Yea—but God knows what way the thing will end.
 Aoi.

CCLXXXIII.

Beyond the town of Aix a plain extends:
 And here our Barons will the combat try.
 Most valiant knights are both; the steeds they ride
 Are swift and stout; with spurs in flanks, and freed
 Of rein, they dash.—The warriors all their might
 And skill unite to strike the surest blow.
 Bucklers beneath the shock are torn and crushed,
 White hauberks rent in shreds, asunder bursts
 Each courser's girth, the saddles, turning, fall.
 One hundred thousand men look weeping on....
 Aoi.

CCLXXXIV.

Both knights leap on the earth, and, quick as light,
 Stand face to face.—Strong, fiery Pinabel
 And Tierri for each other seek. Their steeds
 Are fled.—But their gold-hilted swords they wield;
 And on the helms of steel they shower such blows
 As rashed the thongs. Loudly the knights lament,
 And Carle exclaims:—"Show thou the right, O God!"
 Aoi.

CCLXXXV.

Cried Pinabel:—"Tierri, surrender thou!
 Thy vassal I will be in faith and love,
 And to thy pleasure will I yield my wealth;
 But let the King forgive Count Ganelon!"
 Tierri replied:—"Thy offers all are vain;
 Vile treason were it such a pact to make;
 But God shall judge us and make plain the right."
 Aoi.

CCLXXXVI.

Then Tierri spake:—"I hold thee, Pinabel,
 As Baron true, great, strong, of handsome mold;
 Thy peers acknowledge thee as valiant knight;
 Well, let this combat cease, between the King
 And thee a covenant I will strive to make.
 On Ganelon such justice shall be done
 That future ages shall record the doom."
 They grasp again their swords and hew
 Each other's gold-encrusted helm with rage

So rash that sparkling fires spurt through the air.
 No power will now disjoint the combatants:
 The death of one can only close the strife.
 Aoi.

CCLXXXVII.

No braver man than Pinabel.—Such blows
 He deals on Tierri's helmet of Provence,
 That the sparks fly in showers, and, falling, set
 The grass ablaze. Then aiming at his foe
 His keen-edged brand, down to the brow cuts through
 His helm; the blade glides down across his face,
 And plows his right cheek with a deep red gash;
 Unto his stomach is the haubert rent,
 But God protects him, and averts his death.
 Aoi.

CCLXXXVIII.

Tierri, on seeing blood gush from his brow
 And tinge the grassy field, strikes Pinabel
 On his steel-burnished helmet, and cuts through
 To the nose-plate. His head is cleft in twain
 And gushes forth the brain. This fatal blow
 Gives Pinabel his death, and ends the fight.
 The French exclaim:—"O wondrous work of God!
 Full right it is that Ganelon be hanged
 With all his kin who sureties were for him!"
 Aoi.

CCLXXXIX.

Tierri had won, and on the battle-field
 The Emperor Carle arrived with an escort
 Of forty Barons,—Naimés the Duke, Ogier
 De Dannemarche, Geffrei d'Anjou, Willalmes
 De Blaive.—In close embrace the King has pressed
 Tierri, and with his mantle's sables wiped
 The warrior's face; then lays his furs aside
 And on his shoulders others are arrayed.
 Meanwhile the knight, by friendly hands disarmed,
 On an Arabian mule is placed, and so
 This valorous Baron full of joy returns
 To Aix.—Amid the place they all dismount,
 And now the sureties must abide their doom.
 Aoi.

CCXC.

Carlemagne around him calls his counts and dukes:
 "What counsel give ye touching those I kept,
 Unto this plea who came for Ganelon
 Themselves sworn hostages for Pinabel?"
 Respond the French:—"Let none of them survive!"—
 Carle then commands a road-keeper, Basbrun:
 "Hang them all up on yon accursed tree!
 By this gray beard of mine, I swear, if one
 Escape, thou diest but a villain's death!"—
 Answered the man:—"What else but to obey?"—
 Then by a hundred sergeants roughly seized,

Those thirty men are hanged.—Who man betrays
Destroys himself and others drags to death.
Aoi.

CCXCI.

And now have turned away Baiviers, Allemans,
Poitevins, Bretons and Normans; but more
Than all, the French advise that Ganelon
Should die a death of torture. Then they tie
With cords his hands and feet. Four sergeants bring
Four wild and fiery destriers, made mad
By a mare 'mid the field. A fearful end
For Ganelon; bound between them, limb from limb
Is rent away, each nerve and muscle stretched
And torn. The clear blood streams upon the green.
Thus perished Ganelon by a felon's death....
Traitors of evil deeds must never boast.
Aoi.

CCXCII.

When the Emperor Carle had wreaked his full revenge,
He called the bishops from the realms of France,
And from Baviere, and those of Alemaigne:
“Now in my [court] have I a captive, sprung
From noble race. Such sermons has she heard,
So good examples seen, she will believe
In the true God, and Christian faith embrace.
Baptize her so that He may save her soul;
God-mothers choose her of our noblest dames.”
With a great company the Baths at Aix
Were thronged, and soon before the holy Fonts
The Queen received the name of Juliane:
Henceforth a Christian holding fast the Truth.
Aoi.

CCXCIII.

But when the Emperor had made complete
His justice and his heavy wrath assuaged,
And brought Queen Bramimunde to Christian faith,
The day was over and the night had fall'n.
The King sought rest within his vaulted room.
Saint Gabriel brought him word from God and said:
“Carle, of thy empire summon all the hosts
For swiftest marching to the land of Bire;
So shalt thou succor King Vivien in Imphe,
The city compassed by the Pagan foe.
The Christians look to thee and cry for help.”—
Will has he none to go, the King, but moans:—
“O, God,” quoth he, “so troublous is my life!”—
Whereat he weeps, and tears his hoary beard.
Aoi.

THE LAIS OF MARIE DE FRANCE

Marie de France

Written in the late 1100s C.E.

France (Anglo-Norman)

In her works, the author states that her name is Marie, and she is from France. No other detail about the author's life is known, although there are quite a few educated guesses about her possible ties to various royal courts. Marie writes in Anglo-Norman (a version of medieval French), and she says that her *lais* are versions of oral tales told by Breton minstrels (from Brittany, on the coast of France).

Her *lais* are some of the earliest forms of courtly love literature that survive, influencing later knightly romances (such as *Sir Launfal*), stories of King Arthur's knights (such as Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*), and certain stories in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (in particular, the *Franklin's Tale*, which is itself based on a Breton *lai*).

Written by Laura J. Getty

THE LAIS OF MARIE DE FRANCE

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Marie de France, translated by Eugene Mason

THE LAY OF GUIGEMAR

Hearken, oh gentles, to the words of Marie. When the minstrel tells his tale, let the folk about the fire heed him willingly. For his part the singer must be wary not to spoil good music with unseemly words. Listen, oh lordlings, to the words of Marie, for she pains herself grievously not to forget this thing. The craft is hard—then approve the more sweetly him who carols the tune. But this is the way of the world, that when a man or woman sings more tunably⁹⁰ than his fellows, those about the fire fall upon him, pell-mell, for reason of their envy. They rehearse diligently the faults of his song, and steal away his praise with evil words. I will brand these folk as they deserve. They, and such as they, are like mad dogs—cowardly and felon—who traitorously bring to death men better than themselves. Now let the japer, and the smiler with his knife, do me what harm they may. Verily they are in their right to speak ill of me.

Hearken, oh gentles, to the tale I set before you, for thereof the Bretons already have made a Lay. I will not do it harm by many words, and here is the commencement of the matter. According to text and scripture, now I relate a certain adventure, which bechanced in the realm of Brittany, in days long gone before.

In that time when Arthur maintained his realm, the now in peace, the now in war, the King counted amongst his vassals a certain baron, named Oridial. This knight was lord of Leon, and was very near to his prince's heart, both in council chamber and in field. From his wife he had gotten two children, the one a son and the other a fair daughter. Nogent, he had called the damsel at the font, and the dansellon⁹¹ was named Guigemar—no goodlier might be found in any realm. His mother had set all her love upon the lad, and his father shewed him every good that he was able. When the varlet was no more a child, Oridial sent him to the King, to be trained as a page in the courtesies of the Court. Right serviceable was he in his station, and meetly praised of all. The term of his service having come, and he being found of fitting years and knowledge, the King made him knight with his own hand, and armed him in rich harness, according to his wish. So Guigemar gave gifts to all those about his person, and bidding farewell, took leave, and departed from the Court. Guigemar went his way to Flanders, being desirous of advancement, for in that kingdom ever they have strife and war. Neither in Loraine nor Burgundy, Anjou nor Gascony, might be found in that day a better knight than he, no, nor one his peer. He had but one fault, since of love he took no care. There was neither dame nor maiden beneath the sky, however dainty and kind, to whom he gave thought or heed, though had he required her love of any damsel, very willingly would she have granted his desire. Many there were who prayed him for his love, but might have no kiss in return. So seeing that he refrained his heart in this fashion, men deemed him a strange man, and one fallen into a perilous case.

In the flower of his deeds the good knight returned to his own land, that he might see again his father and lord, his mother and his sister, even as he very tenderly desired. He lodged with them for the space of a long month, and at the end of that time had envy to hunt within the wood. The night being come, Guigemar summoned his prick-

90 On key, in tune.

91 A-N, dancel; boy



IMAGE 5.21: MARIE DE FRANCE | Marie de France sits and writes her manuscript on a pedestal.

Author: Master of Jean de Papeleu

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ers⁹² and his squires,⁹³ and early in the morning rode within the forest. Great pleasure had Guigemar in the woodland, and much he delighted in the chase. A tall stag was presently started, and the hounds being uncoupled, all hastened in pursuit—the huntsmen before, and the good knight following after, winding upon his horn. Guigemar rode at a great pace after the quarry, a varlet riding beside, bearing his bow, his arrows and his spear. He followed so hotly that he over-passed the chase. Gazing about him he marked, within a thicket, a doe hiding with her fawn. Very white and wonderful was this beast, for she was without spot, and bore antlers upon her head. The hounds bayed about her, but might not pull her down. Guigemar bent his bow, and loosed a shaft at the quarry. He wounded the deer a little above the hoof, so that presently she fell upon her side. But the arrow glanced away, and returning upon itself, struck Guigemar in the thigh, so grievously, that straightway he fell from his horse upon the ground. Guigemar lay upon the grass, beside the deer which he had wounded to his hurt. He heard her sighs and groans, and perceived the bitterness of her pity. Then with mortal speech the doe spake to the wounded man in such fashion as this, “Alas, my sorrow, for now am I slain. But thou, Vassal, who hast done me this great wrong, do not think to hide from the vengeance of thy destiny. Never may surgeon and his medicine heal your hurt. Neither herb nor root nor potion can ever cure the wound within your flesh: For that there is no healing. The only balm to close that sore must be brought by a woman, who for her love will suffer such pain and sorrow as no woman in the world has

92 Whippers, the boys who keep the hunting dogs on the trail.

93 A-N, *La nuit somunt ses chevaliers, Ses veneürs e ses berniers*; (At night, he summoned his horsemen, his huntsmen, and his whippers)

endured before. And to the dolorous lady, dolorous knight. For your part you shall do and suffer so great things for her, that not a lover beneath the sun, or lovers who are dead, or lovers who yet shall have their day, but shall marvel at the tale. Now, go from hence, and let me die in peace.”

Guigemar was wounded twice over—by the arrow, and by the words he was dismayed to hear. He considered within himself to what land he must go to find this healing for his hurt, for he was yet too young to die. He saw clearly, and told it to his heart, that there was no lady in his life to whom he could run for pity, and be made whole of his wound. He called his varlet before him,

“Friend,” said he, “go forthwith, and bring my comrades to this place, for I have to speak with them.”

The varlet went upon his errand, leaving his master sick with the heat and fever of his hurt. When he was gone, Guigemar tore the hem from his shirt, and bound it straitly⁹⁴ about his wound. He climbed painfully upon the saddle, and departed without more ado, for he was desirous to be gone before any could come to stay him from his purpose. A green path led through the deep forest to the plain, and his way across the plain brought him to a cliff, exceeding high, and to the sea. Guigemar looked upon the water, which was very still, for this fair harbourage was land-locked from the main. Upon this harbour lay one only vessel, bearing a rich pavilion of silk, daintily furnished both without and within, and well it seemed to Guigemar that he had seen this ship before. Beneath the sky was no ship so rich or precious, for there was not a sail but was spun of silk, and not a plank, from keel to mast, but showed of ebony. Too fair was the nave for mortal man, and Guigemar held it in sore displeasure. He marvelled greatly from what country it had come, and wondered long concerning this harbour, and the ship that lay therein. Guigemar got him down from his horse upon the shore, and with mighty pain and labour climbed within the ship. He trusted to find merchantmen and sailors therein, but there was none to guard, and none he saw. Now within the pavilion was a very rich bed, carved by cunning workmen in the days of King Solomon. This fair bed was wrought of cypress wood and white ivory, adorned with gold and gems most precious. Right sweet were the linen cloths upon the bed, and so soft the pillow, that he who lay thereon would sleep, were he sadder than any other in the world. The counterpane was of purple from the vats of Alexandria, and overall was set a right fair coverlet of cloth of gold. The pavilion was litten⁹⁵ by two great waxen torches, placed in candlesticks of fine gold, decked with jewels worth a lord’s ransom. So the wounded knight looked on ship and pavilion, bed and candle, and marvelled greatly. Guigemar sat him down upon the bed for a little, because of the anguish of his wound. After he had rested a space he got upon his feet, that he might quit the vessel, but he found that for him there was no return. A gentle wind had filled the sails, and already he was in the open sea. When Guigemar saw that he was far from land, he was very heavy and sorrowful. He knew not what to do, by reason of the mightiness of his hurt. But he must endure the adventure as best he was able; so he prayed to God to take him in His keeping, and in His good pleasure to bring him safe to port, and deliver him from the peril of death. Then climbing upon the couch, he laid his head upon the pillow, and slept as one dead, until, with vespers, the ship drew to that haven where he might find the healing for his hurt.

Guigemar had come to an ancient city, where the King of that realm held his court and state. This King was full of years, and was wedded to a dame of high degree. The lady was of tender age, passing fresh and fair, and sweet of speech to all. Therefore was the King jealous of his wife beyond all measure. Such is the wont of age, for much it fears that old and young cannot mate together, and that youth will turn to youth. This is the death in life of the old.

The castle of this ancient lord had a mighty keep. Beneath this tower was a right fair orchard, together with a close, shut in by a wall of green marble, very strong and high. This wall had one only gate, and the door was watched of warders, both night and day. On the other side of this garden was the sea, so that none might do his errand in the castle therefrom, save in a boat. To hold his dame in the greater surety, the King had built a bower within the wall; there was no fairer chamber beneath the sun. The first room was the Queen’s chapel. Beyond this was the lady’s bedchamber, painted all over with shapes and colours most wonderful to behold. On one wall might be seen Dame Venus, the goddess of Love, sweetly flushed as when she walked the water, lovely as life, teaching men how they should bear them in loyal service to their lady. On another wall, the goddess threw Ovid’s book within a fire of coals. A scroll issuing from her lips proclaimed that those who read therein, and strove to ease them of their pains, would find from her neither service nor favour. In this chamber the lady was put in ward, and with her a certain maiden to hold her company. This damsel was her niece, since she was her sister’s child, and there was great love betwixt the twain. When the Queen walked within the garden, or went abroad, this maiden was ever by her side, and came again with her to the house. Save this damsel, neither man nor woman entered in the bower, nor issued forth from out the wall. One only man possessed the key of the postern, an aged priest, very white and frail. This priest recited the service of God within the chapel, and served the Queen’s plate and cup when she ate meat at table.

Now, on a day, the Queen had fallen asleep after meat, and on her awaking would walk a little in the garden. She called her companion to her, and the two went forth to be glad amongst the flowers. As they looked across the

94 immediately

95 lit

sea they marked a ship drawing near the land, rising and falling upon the waves. Very fearful was the Queen thereat, for the vessel came to anchorage, though there was no helmsman to direct her course. The dame's face became sanguine for dread, and she turned her about to flee, because of her exceeding fear. Her maiden, who was of more courage than she, stayed her mistress with many comforting words. For her part she was very desirous to know what this thing meant. She hastened to the shore, and laying aside her mantle, climbed within this wondrous vessel. Thereon she found no living soul, save only the knight sleeping fast within the pavilion. The damsel looked long upon the knight, for pale he was as wax, and well she deemed him dead. She returned forthwith to the Queen, and told her of this marvel, and of the good knight who was slain.

"Let us go together on the ship," replied the lady. "If he be dead we may give him fitting burial, and the priest shall pray meetly for his soul. Should he be yet alive perchance he will speak, and tell us of his case."

Without more tarrying the two damsels mounted on the ship, the lady before, and her maiden following after. When the Queen entered in the pavilion she stayed her feet before the bed, for joy and grief of what she saw. She might not refrain her eyes from gazing on the knight, for her heart was ravished with his beauty, and she sorrowed beyond measure, because of his grievous hurt. To herself she said, "In a bad hour cometh the goodly youth." She drew near the bed, and placing her hand upon his breast, found that the flesh was warm, and that the heart beat strongly in his side. Guigemar awoke at the touch, and saluted the dame as sweetly as he was able, for well he knew that he had come to a Christian land. The lady, full of thought, returned him his salutation right courteously, though the tears were yet in her eyes. Straightway she asked of him from what realm he came, and of what people, and in what war he had taken his hurt.

"Lady," answered Guigemar, "in no battle I received this wound. If it pleases you to hear my tale I will tell you the truth, and in nothing will I lie. I am a knight of Little Brittany. Yesterday I chased a wonderful white deer within the forest. The shaft with which I struck her to my hurt, returned again on me, and caused this wound upon my thigh, which may never be cured, nor made whole. For this wondrous Beast raised her plaint in a mortal tongue. She cursed me loudly, with many evil words, swearing that never might this sore be healed, save by one only damsel in the world, and her I know not where to find. When I heard my luckless fate I left the wood with what speed I might, and coming to a harbour, not far from thence, I lighted on this ship. For my sins I climbed therein. Then without oars or helm this boat ravished me from shore; so that I know not where I have come, nor what is the name of this city. Fair lady, for God's love, counsel me of your good grace, for I know not where to turn, nor how to govern the ship."

The lady made answer, "Fair sir, willingly shall I give you such good counsel as I may. This realm and city are the appanage⁹⁶ of my husband. He is a right rich lord, of high lineage, but old and very full of years. Also he is jealous beyond all measure; therefore it is that I see you now. By reason of his jealousy he has shut me fast between high walls, entered by one narrow door, with an ancient priest to keep the key. May God requite him for his deed. Night and day I am guarded in this prison, from whence I may never go forth, without the knowledge of my lord. Here are my chamber and my chapel, and here I live, with this, my maiden, to bear me company. If it pleases you to dwell here for a little, till you may pass upon your way, right gladly we shall receive you, and with a good heart we will tend your wound, till you are healed."

When Guigemar heard this speech he rejoiced greatly. He thanked the lady with many sweet words, and consented to sojourn in her hall awhile. He raised himself upon his couch, and by the courtesy of the damsels left the ship. Leaning heavily upon the lady, at the end he won to her maiden's chamber, where there was a fair bed covered with a rich dossal of brodered silk, edged with fur. When he was entered in this bed, the damsels came bearing clear water in basins of gold, for the cleansing of his hurt. They stanchd the blood with a towel of fine linen, and bound the wound strictly, to his exceeding comfort. So after the vesper meal was eaten, the lady departed to her own chamber, leaving the knight in much ease and content.

Now Guigemar set his love so fondly upon the lady that he forgot his father's house. He thought no more of the anguish of his hurt, because of another wound that was beneath his breast. He tossed and sighed in his unrest, and prayed the maiden of his service to depart, so that he might sleep a little. When the maid was gone, Guigemar considered within himself whether he might seek the dame, to know whether her heart was warmed by any ember of the flame that burned in his. He turned it this way and that, and knew not what to do. This only was clear, that if the lady refused to cure his wound, death, for him, was sure and speedy.

"Alas," said he, "what shall I do! Shall I go to my lady, and pray her pity on the wretch who has none to give him counsel? If she refuse my prayer, because of her hardness and pride, I shall know there is nought for me but to die in my sorrow, or, at least, to go heavily all the days of my life."

Then he sighed, and in his sighing lighted on a better purpose; for he said within himself that doubtless he was born to suffer, and that the best of him was tears. All the long night he spent in vigil and groanings and watchful-

⁹⁶ A gift of land, an official position, or money given to the younger children of kings and princes to provide for their maintenance. (OED)

ness. To himself he told over her words and her semblance. He remembered the eyes and the fair mouth of his lady, and all the grace and the sweetness, which had struck like a knife at his heart. Between his teeth he cried on her for pity, and for a little more would have called her to his side. Ah, had he but known the fever of the lady, and how terrible a lord to her was Love, how great had been his joy and solace. His visage would have been the more sanguine, which was now so pale of colour, because of the dolour that was his. But if the knight was sick by reason of his love, the dame had small cause to boast herself of health. The lady rose early from her bed, since she might not sleep. She complained of her unrest, and of Love who rode her so hardly. The maiden, who was of her company, saw clearly enough that all her lady's thoughts were set upon the knight, who, for his healing, sojourned in the chamber. She did not know whether his thoughts were given again to the dame. When, therefore, the lady had entered in the chapel, the damsel went straightway to the knight. He welcomed her gladly, and bade her be seated near the bed. Then he inquired, "Friend, where now is my lady, and why did she rise so early from her bed?"

Having spoken so far, he became silent, and sighed.

"Sir," replied the maiden softly, "you love, and are discreet, but be not too discreet therein. In such a love as yours there is nothing to be ashamed. He who may win my lady's favour has every reason to be proud of his fortune. Altogether seemly would be your friendship, for you are young, and she is fair."

The knight made answer to the maiden, "I am so fast in the snare, that I pray the fowler to slay me, if she may not free me from the net. Counsel me, fair sweet friend, if I may hope of kindness at her hand."

Then the maiden of her sweetness comforted the knight, and assured him of all the good that she was able. So courteous and refined was the maid.

When the lady had heard Mass, she hastened back to the chamber. She had not forgotten her friend, and greatly she desired to know whether he was awake or asleep, of whom her heart was fain. She bade her maiden to summon him to her chamber, for she had a certain thing in her heart to show him at leisure, were it for the joy or the sorrow of their days.

Guigemar saluted the lady, and the dame returned the knight his courtesy, but their hearts were too fearful for speech. The knight dared ask nothing of his lady, for reason that he was a stranger in a strange land, and was adread to show her his love. But—as says the proverb—he who will not tell of his sore, may not hope for balm to his hurt. Love is a privy wound within the heart, and none knoweth of that bitterness but the heart alone. Love is an evil which may last for a whole life long, because of man and his constant heart. Many there be who make of Love a gibe and a jest, and with specious words defame him by boastful tales. But theirs is not love. Rather it is folly and lightness, and the tune of a merry song. But let him who has found a constant lover prize her above rubies, and serve her with loyal service, being altogether at her will. Guigemar loved in this fashion, and therefore Love came swiftly to his aid. Love put words in his mouth, and courage in his heart, so that his hope might be made plain.

"Lady," said he, "I die for your love. I am in fever because of my wound, and if you care not to heal my hurt I would rather die. Fair friend, I pray you for grace. Do not gainsay me with evil words."

The lady hearkened with a smile to Guigemar's speech. Right daintily and sweetly she replied, "Friend, yea is not a word of two letters. I do not grant such a prayer every day of the week, and must you have your gift so quickly?"

"Lady," cried he, "for God's sake pity me, and take it not amiss. She, who loves lightly, may make her lover pray for long, so that she may hide how often her feet have trodden the pathway with another friend. But the honest dame, when she has once given her heart to a friend, will not deny his wish because of pride. The rather she will find her pride in humbleness, and love him again with the same love he has set on her. So they will be glad together, and since none will have knowledge or hearing of the matter, they will rejoice in their youth. Fair, sweet lady, be this thy pleasure?"

When the lady heard these words well she found them honest and true. Therefore without further prayings and ado she granted Guigemar her love and her kiss. Henceforward Guigemar lived greatly at his ease, for he had sight and speech of his friend, and many a time she granted him her embrace and tenderness, as is the wont of lovers when alone.

For a year and a half Guigemar dwelt with his lady, in solace and great delight. Then Fortune turned her wheel, and in a trice cast those down, whose seat had been so high. Thus it chanced to them, for they were spied upon and seen.

On a morning in summer time the Queen and her beau sat fondly together. The knight embraced her, eyes and face, but the lady stayed him, saying, "Fair sweet friend, my heart tells me that I shall lose you soon, for this hidden thing will quickly be made clear. If you are slain, may the same sword kill me. But if you win forth, well I know that you will find another love, and that I shall be left alone with my thoughts. Were I parted from you, may God give me neither joy, nor rest, nor peace, if I would seek another friend. Of that you need have no fear. Friend, for surety and comfort of my heart deliver me now some sark⁹⁷ of thine. Therein I will set a knot, and make this covenant with you, that never will you put your love on dame or maiden, save only on her who shall first unfasten this knot.

Then you will ever keep faith with me, for so cunning shall be my craft, that no woman may hope to unravel that coil, either by force or guile, or even with her knife.”

So the knight rendered the sark to his lady, and made such bargain as she wished, for the peace and assurance of her mind. For his part the knight took a fair girdle,⁹⁸ and girt it closely about the lady’s middle. Right secret was the clasp and buckle of this girdle. Therefore he required of the dame that she would never grant her love, save to him only, who might free her from the strictness of this bond, without injury to band or clasp. Then they kissed together, and entered into such covenant as you have heard.

That very day their hidden love was made plain to men. A certain chamberlain was sent by that ancient lord with a message to the Queen. This unlucky wretch, finding that in no wise could he enter within the chamber, looked through the window, and saw. Forthwith he hastened to the King, and told him that which he had seen. When the aged lord understood these words, never was there a sadder man than he. He called together the most trusty sergeants of his guard, and coming with them to the Queen’s chamber, bade them to thrust in the door. When Guigemar was found therein, the King commanded that he should be slain with the sword, by reason of the anguish that was his. Guigemar was in no whit dismayed by the threat. He started to his feet, and gazing round, marked a stout rod of fir, on which it is the use for linen to be hung. This he took in hand, and faced his foes, bidding them have a care, for he would do a mischief to them all. The King looked earnestly upon the fearless knight, inquiring of him who he was, and where he was born, and in what manner he came to dwell within his house. So Guigemar told over to him this story of his fate. He showed him of the Beast that he had wounded to his hurt; of the ship, and of his bitter wound; of how he came within the realm, and of the lady’s surgery. He told all to the ancient lord, to the last moment when he stood within his power. The King replied that he gave no credence to his word, nor believed that the story ran as he had said. If, however, the vessel might be found, he would commit the knight again to the waves. He would go the more heavily for the knight’s saving, and a glad day would it be if he made shipwreck at sea. When they had entered into this covenant together, they went forth to the harbour, and there discovered the barge, even as Guigemar had said. So they set him thereon, and prayed him to return unto his own realm.

Without sail or oar the ship parted from that coast, with no further tarrying. The knight wept and wrung his hands, complaining of his lady’s loss, and of her cherishing. He prayed the mighty God to grant him speedy death, and never to bring him home, save to meet again with her who was more desirable than life. Whilst he was yet at his orisons, the ship drew again to that port, from whence she had first come. Guigemar made haste to get him from the vessel, so that he might the more swiftly return to his own land. He had gone but a little way when he was aware of a squire of his household, riding in the company of a certain knight. This squire held the bridle of a destrier⁹⁹ in his hand, though no man rode thereon. Guigemar called to him by name, so that the varlet looking upon him, knew again his lord. He got him to his feet, and bringing the destrier to his master, set the knight thereon. Great was the joy, and merry was the feast, when Guigemar returned to his own realm. But though his friends did all that they were able, neither song nor game could cheer the knight, nor turn him from dwelling in his unhappy thoughts. For peace of mind they urged that he took to himself a wife, but Guigemar would have none of their counsel. Never would he wed a wife, on any day, either for love or for wealth, save only that she might first unloose the knot within his shirt. When this news was noised about the country, there was neither dame nor damsel in the realm of Brittany, but



IMAGE 5.22: THE LAI OF SIR LAUNFAL | A beautiful, well-dressed maiden rides a white horse through a crowd.

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98 belt

99 War horse

essayed to unfasten the knot. But there was no lady who could gain to her wish, whether by force or guile.

Now will I show of that lady, whom Guigemar so fondly loved. By the counsel of a certain baron the ancient King set his wife in prison. She was shut fast in a tower of grey marble, where her days were bad, and her nights worse. No man could make clear to you the great pain, the anguish and the dolour, that she suffered in this tower, wherein, I protest, she died daily. Two years and more she lay bound in prison, where warders came, but never joy or delight. Often she thought upon her friend.

“Guigemar, dear lord, in an evil hour I saw you with my eyes. Better for me that I die quickly, than endure longer my evil lot. Fair friend, if I could but win to that coast whence you sailed, very swiftly would I fling myself in the sea, and end my wretched life.” When she had said these words she rose to her feet, and coming to the door was amazed to find therein neither bolt nor key. She issued forth, without challenge from sergeant or warder, and hastening to the harbour, found there her lover’s ship, made fast to that very rock, from which she would cast her down. When she saw the barge she climbed thereon, but presently bethought her that on this ship her friend had gone to perish in the sea. At this thought she would have fled again to the shore, but her bones were as water, and she fell upon the deck. So in sore travail and sorrow, the vessel carried her across the waves, to a port of Brittany, guarded by a castle, strong and very fair. Now the lord of this castle was named Meriadus. He was a right warlike prince, and had made him ready to fight with the prince of a country nearby. He had risen very early in the morning, to send forth a great company of spears, the more easily to ravage this neighbour’s realm. Meriadus looked forth from his window, and marked the ship which came to port. He hastened down the steps of the perron,¹⁰⁰ and calling to his chamberlain, came with what speed he might to the ship. Then mounting the ladder he stood upon the deck. When Meriadus found within the ship a dame, who for beauty seemed rather a fay¹⁰¹ than a mere earthly woman, he seized her by her mantle, and brought her swiftly to his keep. Right joyous was he because of his good fortune, for lovely was the lady beyond mortal measure. He made no question as to who had set her on the barge. He knew only that she was fair, and of high lineage, and that his heart turned towards her with so hot a love as never before had he put on dame or damsel. Now there dwelt within the castle a sister of this lord, who was yet unwed. Meriadus bestowed the lady in his sister’s chamber, because it was the fairest in the tower. Moreover he commanded that she should be meetly served, and held in all reverence. But though the dame was so richly clothed and cherished, ever was she sad and deep in thought. Meriadus came often to cheer her with mirth and speech, by reason that he wished to gain her love as a free gift, and not by force. It was in vain that he prayed her for grace, since she had no balm for his wound. For answer she showed him the girdle about her body, saying that never would she give her love to man, save only to him who might unloose the buckle of that girdle, without harm to belt or clasp. When Meriadus heard these words, he spoke in haste and said, “Lady, there dwells in this country a very worthy knight, who will take no woman as wife, except she first untie a certain crafty knot in the hem of a shirt, and that without force or knife. For a little I would wager that it was you who tied this knot.”

When the lady heard thereof her breath went from her, and near she came to falling on the ground. Meriadus caught her in his arms, and cut the laces of her bodice, that she might have the more air. He strove to unfasten her girdle, but might not diserver the clasp. Yea, though every knight in the realm essayed to unfasten that cincture, it would not yield, except to one alone.

Now Meriadus made the lists ready for a great jousting, and called to that tournament all the knights who would aid him in his war. Many a lord came at his bidding, and with them Guigemar, amongst the first. Meriadus had sent letters to the knight, beseeching him, as friend and companion, not to fail him in this business. So Guigemar hastened to the need of his lord, and at his back more than one hundred spears. All these Meriadus welcomed very gladly, and gave them lodging within his tower. In honour of his guest, the prince sent two gentlemen to his sister, praying her to attire herself richly, and come to hall, together with the dame whom he loved so dearly well. These did as they were bidden, and arrayed in their sweetest vesture, presently entered in the hall, holding each other by the hand. Very pale and pensive was the lady, but when she heard her lover’s name her feet failed beneath her, and had not the maiden held her fast, she would have fallen on the floor. Guigemar rose from his seat at the sight of the dame, her fashion and her semblance, and stood staring upon her. He went a little apart, and said within himself, “Can this be my sweet friend, my hope, my heart, my life, the fair lady who gave me the grace of her love? From whence comes she; who might have brought her to this far land? But I speak in my folly, for well I know that this is not my dear. A little red, a little white, and all women are thus shapen. My thoughts are troubled, by reason that the sweetness of this lady resembles the sweetness of that other, for whom my heart sighs and trembles. Yet needs must that I have speech of the lady.”

Guigemar drew near to the dame. He kissed her courteously, and found no word to utter, save to pray that he might be seated at her side. Meriadus spied upon them closely, and was the more heavy because of their trouble. Therefore he feigned mirth.

100 an exterior set of steps and a platform at the main entrance to a large building such as a church or mansion.(OED)

101 fairy

“Guigemar, dear lord, if it pleases you, let this damsel essay to untie the knot of your sark, if so be she may loosen the coil.”

Guigemar made answer that very willingly he would do this thing. He called to him a squire who had the shirt in keeping, and bade him seek his charge, and deliver it to the dame. The lady took the sark in hand. Well she knew the knot that she had tied so cunningly, and was so willing to unloose; but for reason of the trouble at her heart, she did not dare essay. Meriadus marked the distress of the damsel, and was more sorrowful than ever was lover before.

“Lady,” said he, “do all that you are able to unfasten this coil.”

So at his commandment she took again to her the hem of the shirt, and lightly and easily unravelled the tie.

Guigemar marvelled greatly when he saw this thing. His heart told him that of a truth this was his lady, but he could not give faith to his eyes.

“Friend, are you indeed the sweet comrade I have known? Tell me truly now, is there about your body the girdle with which I girt you in your own realm?”

He set his hands to her waist, and found that the secret belt was yet about her sides.

“Fair sweet friend, tell me now by what adventure I find you here, and who has brought you to this tower?”

So the lady told over to her friend the pain and the anguish and the dolour of the prison in which she was held; of how it chanced that she fled from her dungeon, and lighting upon a ship, entered therein, and came to this fair haven; of how Meriadus took her from the barge, but kept her in all honour, save only that ever he sought for her love; “but now, fair friend, all is well, for you hold your lady in your arms.”

Guigemar stood upon his feet, and beckoned with his hand.

“Lords,” he cried, “hearken now to me. I have found my friend, whom I have lost for a great while. Before you all I pray and require of Meriadus to yield me my own. For this grace I give him open thanks. Moreover I will kneel down, and become his liege man. For two years, or three, if he will, I will bargain to serve in his quarrels, and with me, of riders, a hundred or more at my back.”

Then answered Meriadus, “Guigemar, fair friend, I am not yet so shaken or overborne in war, that I must do as you wish, right humbly. This woman is my captive. I found her: I hold her: and I will defend my right against you and all your power.”

When Guigemar heard these proud words he got to horse speedily, him and all his company. He threw down his glove, and parted in anger from the tower. But he went right heavily, since he must leave behind his friend. In his train rode all those knights who had drawn together to that town for the great tournament. Not a knight of them all but plighted faith to follow where he led, and to hold himself recreant and shamed if he failed his oath.

That same night the band came to the castle of the prince with whom Meriadus was at war. He welcomed them very gladly, and gave them lodging in his tower. By their aid he had good hope to bring this quarrel to an end. Very early in the morning the host came together to set the battle in array. With clash of mail and noise of horns they issued from the city gate, Guigemar riding at their head. They drew before the castle where Meriadus lay in strength, and sought to take it by storm. But the keep was very strong, and Meriadus bore himself as a stout and valiant knight. So Guigemar, like a wary captain, sat himself down before the town, till all the folk of that place were deemed by friend and sergeant to be weak with hunger. Then they took that high keep with the sword, and burnt it with fire. The lord thereof they slew in his own hall; but Guigemar came forth, after such labours as you have heard, bearing his lady with him, to return in peace to his own land.

From this adventure that I have told you, has come the Lay that minstrels chant to harp and viol—fair is that song and sweet the tune.

THE LAY OF SIR LAUNFAL

I will tell you the story of another Lay. It relates the adventures of a rich and mighty baron, and the Breton calls it, the Lay of Sir Launfal.

King Arthur—that fearless knight and courteous lord—removed to Wales, and lodged at Caerleon-on-Usk, since the Picts and Scots did much mischief in the land. For it was the wont of the wild people of the north to enter in the realm of Logres, and burn and damage at their will. At the time of Pentecost, the King cried a great feast. Thereat he gave many rich gifts to his counts and barons, and to the Knights of the Round Table. Never were such worship and bounty shown before at any feast, for Arthur bestowed honours and lands on all his servants—save only on one. This lord, who was forgotten and disliked of the King, was named Launfal. He was beloved by many of the Court, because of his beauty and prowess, for he was a worthy knight, open of heart and heavy of hand. These lords, to whom their comrade was dear, felt little joy to see so stout a knight misprized. Sir Launfal was son to a King of high descent, though his heritage was in a distant land. He was of the King’s household, but since Arthur gave him naught, and he was of too proud a mind to pray for his due, he had spent all that he had. Right heavy was Sir Launfal, when he considered these things, for he knew himself taken in the toils. Gentles, marvel not overmuch

hereat. Ever must the pilgrim go heavily in a strange land, where there is none to counsel and direct him in the path.

Now, on a day, Sir Launfal got him on his horse, that he might take his pleasure for a little. He came forth from the city, alone, attended by neither servant nor squire. He went his way through a green mead, till he stood by a river of clear running water. Sir Launfal would have crossed this stream, without thought of pass or ford, but he might not do so, for reason that his horse was all fearful and trembling. Seeing that he was hindered in this fashion, Launfal unbitted his steed, and let him pasture in that fair meadow, where they had come. Then he folded his cloak to serve him as a pillow, and lay upon the ground. Launfal lay in great misease, because of his heavy thoughts, and the discomfort of his bed. He

turned from side to side, and might not sleep. Now as the knight looked towards the river he saw two damsels coming towards him; fairer maidens Launfal had never seen. These two maidens were richly dressed in kirtles closely laced and shapen to their persons and wore mantles of a goodly purple hue. Sweet and dainty were the damsels, alike in raiment and in face. The elder of these ladies carried in her hands a basin of pure gold, cunningly wrought by some crafty smith—very fair and precious was the cup; and the younger bore a towel of soft white linen. These maidens turned neither to the right hand nor to the left, but went directly to the place where Launfal lay. When Launfal saw that their business was with him, he stood upon his feet, like a discreet and courteous gentleman. After they had greeted the knight, one of the maidens delivered the message with which she was charged.

“Sir Launfal, my demoiselle, as gracious as she is fair, prays that you will follow us, her messengers, as she has a certain word to speak with you. We will lead you swiftly to her pavilion, for our lady is very near at hand. If you but lift your eyes you may see where her tent is spread.”

Right glad was the knight to do the bidding of the maidens. He gave no heed to his horse, but left him at his provand in the meadow. All his desire was to go with the damsels, to that pavilion of silk and divers colours, pitched in so fair a place. Certainly neither Semiramis in the days of her most wanton power, nor Octavian, the Emperor of all the West, had so gracious a covering from sun and rain. Above the tent was set an eagle of gold, so rich and precious, that none might count the cost. The cords and fringes thereof were of silken thread, and the lances which bore aloft the pavilion were of refined gold. No King on earth might have so sweet a shelter, not though he gave in fee the value of his realm. Within this pavilion Launfal came upon the Maiden. Whiter she was than any altar lily, and more sweetly flushed than the new born rose in time of summer heat. She lay upon a bed with napery and coverlet of richer worth than could be furnished by a castle's spoil. Very fresh and slender showed the lady in her vesture of spotless linen. About her person she had drawn a mantle of ermine, edged with purple dye from the vats of Alexandria. By reason of the heat her raiment was unfastened for a little, and her throat and the rondure of her bosom showed whiter and more untouched than hawthorn in May. The knight came before the bed, and stood gazing on so sweet a sight. The Maiden beckoned him to draw near, and when he had seated himself at the foot of her couch, spoke her mind.

“Launfal,” she said, “fair friend, it is for you that I have come from my own far land. I bring you my love. If you are prudent and discreet, as you are goodly to the view, there is no emperor nor count, nor king, whose day shall be so filled with riches and with mirth as yours.”

When Launfal heard these words he rejoiced greatly, for his heart was litten by another's torch.

“Fair lady,” he answered, “since it pleases you to be so gracious, and to dower so graceless a knight with your love, there is naught that you may bid me do—right or wrong, evil or good—that I will not do to the utmost of my power. I will observe your commandment, and serve in your quarrels. For you I renounce my father and my father's house. This only I pray, that I may dwell with you in your lodging, and that you will never send me from your side.”

When the Maiden heard the words of him whom so fondly she desired to love, she was altogether moved, and granted him forthwith her heart and her tenderness. To her bounty she added another gift besides. Never might Launfal be desirous of aught, but he would have according to his wish. He might waste and spend at will and pleasure, but in his purse ever there was to spare. No more was Launfal sad. Right merry was the pilgrim, since one had set him on the way, with such a gift, that the more pennies he bestowed, the more silver and gold were in his pouch.

But the Maiden had yet a word to say.

“Friend,” she said, “hearken to my counsel. I lay this charge upon you, and pray you urgently, that you tell not to any man the secret of our love. If you show this matter, you will lose your friend, forever and a day. Never again may you see my face. Never again will you have seisin¹⁰² of that body, which is now so tender in your eyes.”

Launfal plighted faith, that right strictly he would observe this commandment. So the Maiden granted him her kiss and her embrace, and very sweetly in that fair lodging passed the day till evensong was come.

Right loath was Launfal to depart from the pavilion at the vesper hour, and gladly would he have stayed, had he been able, and his lady wished.

“Fair friend,” said she, “rise up, for no longer may you tarry. The hour is come that we must part. But one thing

I have to say before you go. When you would speak with me I shall hasten to come before your wish. Well I deem that you will only call your friend where she may be found without reproach or shame of men. You may see me at your pleasure; my voice shall speak softly in your ear at will; but I must never be known of your comrades, nor must they ever learn my speech.”

Right joyous was Launfal to hear this thing. He sealed the covenant with a kiss, and stood upon his feet. Then there entered the two maidens who had led him to the pavilion, bringing with them rich raiment, fitting for a knight's apparel. When Launfal had clothed himself therewith, there seemed no goodlier varlet under heaven, for certainly he was fair and true. After these maidens had refreshed him with clear water, and dried his hands upon the napkin, Launfal went to meat. His friend sat at table with him, and small will had he to refuse her courtesy. Very serviceably the damsels bore the meats, and Launfal and the Maiden ate and drank with mirth and content. But one dish was more to the knight's relish than any other. Sweeter than the dainties within his mouth, was the lady's kiss upon his lips.

When supper was ended, Launfal rose from table, for his horse stood waiting without the pavilion. The destrier was newly saddled and bridled, and showed proudly in his rich gay trappings. So Launfal kissed, and bade farewell, and went his way. He rode back towards the city at a slow pace. Often he checked his steed, and looked behind him, for he was filled with amazement, and all bemused concerning this adventure. In his heart he doubted that it was but a dream. He was altogether astonished, and knew not what to do. He feared that pavilion and Maiden alike were from the realm of faery.

Launfal returned to his lodging, and was greeted by servitors, clad no longer in ragged raiment. He fared richly, lay softly, and spent largely, but never knew how his purse was filled. There was no lord who had need of a lodging in the town, but Launfal brought him to his hall, for refreshment and delight. Launfal bestowed rich gifts. Launfal redeemed the poor captive. Launfal clothed in scarlet the minstrel. Launfal gave honour where honour was due. Stranger and friend alike he comforted at need. So, whether by night or by day, Launfal lived greatly at his ease. His lady, she came at will and pleasure, and, for the rest, all was added unto him.

Now it chanced, the same year, about the feast of St. John, a company of knights came, for their solace, to an orchard, beneath that tower where dwelt the Queen. Together with these lords went Gawain and his cousin, Yvain the fair. Then said Gawain, that goodly knight, beloved and dear to all, “Lords, we do wrong to disport ourselves in this pleasaunce without our comrade Launfal. It is not well to slight a prince as brave as he is courteous, and of a lineage prouder than our own.”

Then certain of the lords returned to the city, and finding Launfal within his hostel, entreated him to take his pastime with them in that fair meadow. The Queen looked out from a window in her tower, she and three ladies of her fellowship. They saw the lords at their pleasure, and Launfal also, whom well they knew. So the Queen chose of her Court thirty damsels—the sweetest of face and most dainty of fashion—and commanded that they should descend with her to take their delight in the garden. When the knights beheld this gay company of ladies come down the steps of the perron, they rejoiced beyond measure. They hastened before to lead them by the hand, and said such words in their ear as were seemly and pleasant to be spoken. Amongst these merry and courteous lords hasted not Sir Launfal. He drew apart from the throng, for with him time went heavily, till he might have clasp and greeting of his friend. The ladies of the Queen's fellowship seemed but kitchen wenches to his sight, in comparison with the loveliness of the maiden. When the Queen marked Launfal go aside, she went his way, and seating herself upon the herb, called the knight before her. Then she opened out her heart.

“Launfal, I have honoured you for long as a worthy knight, and have praised and cherished you very dearly. You may receive a queen's whole love, if such be your care. Be content: he to whom my heart is given, has small reason to complain him of the alms.”

“Lady,” answered the knight, “grant me leave to go, for this grace is not for me. I am the King's man, and dare not break my troth. Not for the highest lady in the world, not even for her love, will I set this reproach upon my lord.”

When the Queen heard this, she was full of wrath, and spoke many hot and bitter words.

“Launfal,” she cried, “well I know that you think little of woman and her love. There are sins more black that a man may have upon his soul. Traitor you are, and false. Right evil counsel gave they to my lord, who prayed him to suffer you about his person. You remain only for his harm and loss.”

Launfal was very dolent to hear this thing. He was not slow to take up the Queen's glove, and in his haste spake words that he repented long, and with tears.

“Lady,” said he, “I am not of that guild of which you speak. Neither am I a despiser of woman, since I love, and am loved, of one who would bear the prize from all the ladies in the land. Dame, know now and be persuaded, that she, whom I serve, is so rich in state, that the very meanest of her maidens, excels you, Lady Queen, as much in clerkly skill and goodness, as in sweetness of body and face, and in every virtue.”

The Queen rose straightway to her feet, and fled to her chamber, weeping. Right wrathful and heavy was she,

because of the words that had besmirched her. She lay sick upon her bed, from which, she said, she would never rise, till the King had done her justice, and righted this bitter wrong. Now the King that day had taken his pleasure within the woods. He returned from the chase towards evening, and sought the chamber of the Queen. When the lady saw him, she sprang from her bed, and kneeling at his feet, pleaded for grace and pity. Launfal—she said—had shamed her, since he required her love. When she had put him by, very foully had he reviled her, boasting that his love was already set on a lady, so proud and noble, that her meanest wench went more richly, and smiled more sweetly, than the Queen. Thereat the King waxed marvellously wrathful, and swore a great oath that he would set Launfal within a fire, or hang him from a tree, if he could not deny this thing, before his peers.

Arthur came forth from the Queen's chamber, and called to him three of his lords. These he sent to seek the knight who so evilly had entreated the Queen. Launfal, for his part, had returned to his lodging, in a sad and sorrowful case. He saw very clearly that he had lost his friend, since he had declared their love to men. Launfal sat within his chamber, sick and heavy of thought. Often he called upon his friend, but the lady would not hear his voice. He bewailed his evil lot, with tears; for grief he came nigh to swoon; a hundred times he implored the Maiden that she would deign to speak with her knight. Then, since the lady yet refrained from speech, Launfal cursed his hot and unruly tongue. Very near he came to ending all this trouble with his knife. Naught he found to do but to wring his hands, and call upon the Maiden, begging her to forgive his trespass, and to talk with him again, as friend to friend.

But little peace is there for him who is harassed by a King. There came presently to Launfal's hostel those three barons from the Court. These bade the knight forthwith to go with them to Arthur's presence, to acquit him of this wrong against the Queen. Launfal went forth, to his own deep sorrow. Had any man slain him on the road, he would have counted him his friend. He stood before the King, downcast and speechless, being dumb by reason of that great grief, of which he showed the picture and image.

Arthur looked upon his captive very evilly.

"Vassal," said he, harshly, "you have done me a bitter wrong. It was a foul deed to seek to shame me in this ugly fashion, and to smirch the honour of the Queen. Is it folly or lightness which leads you to boast of that lady, the least of whose maidens is fairer, and goes more richly, than the Queen?"

Launfal protested that never had he set such shame upon his lord. Word by word he told the tale of how he denied the Queen, within the orchard. But concerning that which he had spoken of the lady, he owned the truth, and his folly. The love of which he bragged was now lost to him, by his own exceeding fault. He cared little for his life, and was content to obey the judgment of the Court.

Right wrathful was the King at Launfal's words. He conjured his barons to give him such wise counsel herein, that wrong might be done to none. The lords did the King's bidding, whether good came of the matter, or evil. They gathered themselves together, and appointed a certain day that Launfal should abide the judgment of his peers. For his part Launfal must give pledge and surety to his lord, that he would come before this judgment in his own body. If he might not give such surety then he should be held captive till the appointed day. When the lords of the King's household returned to tell him of their counsel, Arthur demanded that Launfal should put such pledge in his hand, as they had said. Launfal was altogether mazed and bewildered at this judgment, for he had neither friend nor kindred in the land. He would have been set in prison, but Gawain came first to offer himself as his surety, and with him, all the knights of his fellowship. These gave into the King's hand as pledge, the fiefs and lands that they held of his Crown. The King having taken pledges from the sureties, Launfal returned to his lodging, and with him certain knights of his company. They blamed him greatly because of his foolish love, and chastened him grievously by reason of the sorrow he made before men. Every day they came to his chamber, to know of his meat and drink, for much they feared that presently he would become mad.

The lords of the household came together on the day appointed for this judgment. The King was on his chair, with the Queen sitting at his side. The sureties brought Launfal within the hall, and rendered him into the hands of his peers. Right sorrowful were they because of his plight. A great company of his fellowship did all that they were able to acquit him of this charge. When all was set out, the King demanded the judgment of the Court, according to the accusation and the answer. The barons went forth in much trouble and thought to consider this matter. Many amongst them grieved for the peril of a good knight in a strange land; others held that it were well for Launfal to suffer, because of the wish and malice of their lord. Whilst they were thus perplexed, the Duke of Cornwall rose in the council, and said,

"Lords, the King pursues Launfal as a traitor, and would slay him with the sword, by reason that he bragged of the beauty of his maiden, and roused the jealousy of the Queen. By the faith that I owe this company, none complains of Launfal, save only the King. For our part we would know the truth of this business, and do justice between the King and his man. We would also show proper reverence to our own liege lord. Now, if it be according to Arthur's will, let us take oath of Launfal, that he seek this lady, who has put such strife between him and the Queen. If her beauty be such as he has told us, the Queen will have no cause for wrath. She must pardon Launfal for his

rudeness, since it will be plain that he did not speak out of a malicious heart. Should Launfal fail his word, and not return with the lady, or should her fairness fall beneath his boast, then let him be cast off from our fellowship, and be sent forth from the service of the King.”

This counsel seemed good to the lords of the household. They sent certain of his friends to Launfal, to acquaint him with their judgment, bidding him to pray his damsel to the Court, that he might be acquitted of this blame. The knight made answer that in no wise could he do this thing. So the sureties returned before the judges, saying that Launfal hoped neither for refuge nor for succour from the lady, and Arthur urged them to a speedy ending, because of the prompting of the Queen.

The judges were about to give sentence upon Launfal, when they saw two maidens come riding towards the palace, upon two white ambling palfreys. Very sweet and dainty were these maidens, and richly clothed in garments of crimson sendal,¹⁰³ closely girt and fashioned to their bodies. All men, old and young, looked willingly upon them, for fair they were to see. Gawain, and three knights of his company, went straight to Launfal, and showed him these maidens, praying him to say which of them was his friend. But he answered never a word. The maidens dismounted from their palfreys, and coming before the dais where the King was seated, spake him fairly, as they were fair.

“Sire, prepare now a chamber, hung with silken cloths, where it is seemly for my lady to dwell; for she would lodge with you awhile.”

This gift the King granted gladly. He called to him two knights of his household, and bade them bestow the maidens in such chambers as were fitting to their degree. The maidens being gone, the King required of his barons to proceed with their judgment, saying that he had sore displeasure at the slowness of the cause.

“Sire,” replied the barons, “we rose from Council, because of the damsels who entered in the hall. We will at once resume the sitting, and give our judgment without more delay.”

The barons again were gathered together, in much thought and trouble, to consider this matter. There was great strife and dissension amongst them, for they knew not what to do. In the midst of all this noise and tumult, there came two other damsels riding to the hall on two Spanish mules. Very richly arrayed were these damsels in raiment of fine needlework, and their kirtles were covered by fresh fair mantles, embroidered with gold. Great joy had Launfal’s comrades when they marked these ladies. They said between themselves that doubtless they came for the succour of the good knight. Gawain, and certain of his company, made haste to Launfal, and said, “Sir, be not cast down. Two ladies are near at hand, right dainty of dress, and gracious of person. Tell us truly, for the love of God, is one of these your friend?”

But Launfal answered very simply that never before had he seen these damsels with his eyes, nor known and loved them in his heart.

The maidens dismounted from their mules, and stood before Arthur, in the sight of all. Greatly were they praised of many, because of their beauty, and of the colour of their face and hair. Some there were who deemed already that the Queen was overborne.

The elder of the damsels carried herself modestly and well, and sweetly told over the message wherewith she was charged.

“Sire, make ready for us chambers, where we may abide with our lady, for even now she comes to speak with thee.”

The King commanded that the ladies should be led to their companions, and bestowed in the same honourable fashion as they. Then he bade the lords of his household to consider their judgment, since he would endure no further respite. The Court already had given too much time to the business, and the Queen was growing wrathful, because of the blame

that was hers. Now the judges were about to proclaim their sentence, when, amidst the tumult of the town, there came riding to the palace the flower of all the ladies of the world. She came mounted upon a palfrey, white as snow, which carried her softly, as though she loved her burthen. Beneath the sky was no goodlier steed, nor one more gentle to the hand. The harness of the palfrey was so rich, that no king on earth might hope to buy trappings so precious, unless he sold or set his realm in pledge. The Maiden herself showed such as I will tell you. Passing slim was the lady, sweet of bodice and slender of girdle. Her throat was whiter than snow on branch, and her eyes were like flowers in the pallor of her face. She had a witching mouth, a dainty nose, and an open brow. Her eyebrows were brown, and her golden hair parted in two soft waves upon her head. She was clad in a shift of spotless linen, and above her snowy kirtle was set a mantle of royal purple, clasped upon her breast. She carried a hooded falcon upon her glove, and a greyhound followed closely after. As the Maiden rode at a slow pace through the streets of the city, there was none, neither great nor small, youth nor sergeant, but ran forth from his house, that he might content his heart with so great beauty. Every man that saw her with his eyes, marvelled at a fairness beyond that of any earthly woman. Little he cared for any mortal maiden, after he had seen this sight. The friends of Sir Launfal hastened to the knight, to tell him of his lady’s succour, if so it were according to God’s will.

“Sir comrade, truly is not this your friend? This lady is neither black nor golden, mean nor tall. She is only the most lovely thing in all the world.”

When Launfal heard this, he sighed, for by their words he knew again his friend. He raised his head, and as the blood rushed to his face, speech flowed from his lips.

“By my faith,” cried he, “yes, she is indeed my friend. It is a small matter now whether men slay me, or set me free; for I am made whole of my hurt just by looking on her face.”

The Maiden entered in the palace—where none so fair had come before—and stood before the King, in the presence of his household. She loosed the clasp of her mantle, so that men might the more easily perceive the grace of her person. The courteous King advanced to meet her, and all the Court got them on their feet, and pained themselves in her service. When the lords had gazed upon her for a space, and praised the sum of her beauty, the lady spake to Arthur in this fashion, for she was anxious to begone.

“Sire, I have loved one of thy vassals,—the knight who stands in bonds, Sir Launfal. He was always misprized in thy Court, and his every action turned to blame. What he said, that thou knowest; for over hasty was his tongue before the Queen. But he never craved her in love, however loud his boasting. I cannot choose that he should come to hurt or harm by me. In the hope of freeing Launfal from his bonds, I have obeyed thy summons. Let now thy barons look boldly upon my face, and deal justly in this quarrel between the Queen and me.”

The King commanded that this should be done, and looking upon her eyes, not one of the judges but was persuaded that her favour exceeded that of the Queen.

Since then Launfal had not spoken in malice against his lady, the lords of the household gave him again his sword. When the trial had come thus to an end the Maiden took her leave of the King, and made her ready to depart. Gladly would Arthur have had her lodge with him for a little, and many a lord would have rejoiced in her service, but she might not tarry. Now without the hall stood a great stone of dull marble, where it was the wont of lords, departing from the Court, to climb into the saddle, and Launfal by the stone. The Maiden came forth from the doors of the palace, and mounting on the stone, seated herself on the palfrey, behind her friend. Then they rode across the plain together, and were no more seen.

The Bretons tell that the knight was ravished by his lady to an island, very dim and very fair, known as Avalon. But none has had speech with Launfal and his faery love since then, and for my part I can tell you no more of the matter.

THE LAY OF THE WERE-WOLF

Amongst the tales I tell you once again, I would not forget the Lay of the Were-Wolf. Such beasts as he are known in every land. Bisclavret he is named in Brittany; whilst the Norman calls him Garwal.

It is a certain thing, and within the knowledge of all, that many a christened man has suffered this change, and ran wild in woods, as a Were-Wolf. The Were-Wolf is a fearsome beast. He lurks within the thick forest, mad and horrible to see. All the evil that he may, he does. He goeth to and fro, about the solitary place, seeking man, in order to devour him. Harken, now, to the adventure of the Were-Wolf, that I have to tell.

In Brittany there dwelt a baron who was marvellously esteemed of all his fellows. He was a stout knight, and a comely, and a man of office and repute. Right private was he to the mind of his lord, and dear to the counsel of his neighbours. This baron was wedded to a very worthy dame, right fair to see, and sweet of semblance. All his love was set on her, and all her love was given again to him. One only grief had this lady. For three whole days in every week her lord was absent from her side. She knew not where he went, nor on what errand. Neither did any of his house know the business which called him forth.

On a day when this lord was come again to his house, altogether joyous and content, the lady took him to task, right sweetly, in this fashion, “Husband,” said she, “and fair, sweet friend, I have a certain thing to pray of you. Right willingly would I receive this gift, but I fear to anger you in the asking. It is better for me to have an empty hand, than to gain hard words.”

When the lord heard this matter, he took the lady in his arms, very tenderly, and kissed her.

“Wife,” he answered, “ask what you will. What would you have, for it is yours already?”

“By my faith,” said the lady, “soon shall I be whole. Husband, right long and wearisome are the days that you spend away from your home. I rise from my bed in the morning, sick at heart, I know not why. So fearful am I, lest you do aught to your loss, that I may not find any comfort. Very quickly shall I die for reason of my dread. Tell me now, where you go, and on what business! How may the knowledge of one who loves so closely, bring you to harm?”

“Wife,” made answer the lord, “nothing but evil can come if I tell you this secret. For the mercy of God do not require it of me. If you but knew, you would withdraw yourself from my love, and I should be lost indeed.”

When the lady heard this, she was persuaded that her baron sought to put her by with jesting words. Therefore she prayed and required him the more urgently, with tender looks and speech, till he was overborne, and told her all the story, hiding naught.

“Wife, I become Bisclavret. I enter in the forest, and live on prey and roots, within the thickest of the wood.”

After she had learned his secret, she prayed and entreated the more as to whether he ran in his raiment, or went spoiled of vesture.

“Wife,” said he, “I go naked as a beast.”

“Tell me, for hope of grace, what you do with your clothing?”

“Fair wife, that will I never. If I should lose my raiment, or even be marked as I quit my vesture, then a Were-Wolf I must go for all the days of my life. Never again should I become man, save in that hour my clothing were given back to me. For this reason never will I show my lair.”



IMAGE 5.23: GERMAN WOODCUT | This woodcut depicts a werewolf transforming.

Author: User “Vearthy”

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“Husband,” replied the lady to him, “I love you better than all the world. The less cause have you for doubting my faith, or hiding any tittle from me. What savour is here of friendship? How have I made forfeit of your love; for what sin do you mistrust my honour? Open now your heart, and tell what is good to be known.”

So at the end, outwearied and overborne by her importunity, he could no longer refrain, but told her all.

“Wife,” said he, “within this wood, a little from the path, there is a hidden way, and at the end thereof an ancient chapel, where oftentimes I have bewailed my lot. Near by is a great hollow stone, concealed by a bush, and there is the secret place where I hide my raiment, till I would return to my own home.”

On hearing this marvel the lady became sanguine of visage, because of her exceeding fear. She dared no longer to lie at his side, and turned over in her mind, this way and that, how best she could get her from him. Now there was a certain knight of those parts, who, for a great while, had sought and required this lady for her love. This knight had spent long years in her service, but little enough had he got thereby, not even fair words, or a promise. To him the dame wrote a letter, and meeting, made her purpose plain.

“Fair friend,” said she, “be happy. That which you have coveted so long a time, I will grant without delay. Never again will I deny your suit. My heart, and all I have to give, are yours, so take me now as love and dame.”

Right sweetly the knight thanked her for her grace, and pledged her faith and fealty. When she had confirmed him by an oath, then she told him all this business of her lord—why he went, and what he became, and of his ravaging within the wood. So she showed him of the chapel, and of the hollow stone, and of how to spoil the Were-Wolf of his vesture. Thus, by the kiss of his wife, was Bisclavaret betrayed. Often enough had he ravished his prey in desolate places, but from this journey he never returned. His kinsfolk and acquaintance came together to ask of his tidings, when this absence was noised abroad. Many a man, on many a day, searched the woodland, but none might find him, nor learn where Bisclavaret was gone.

The lady was wedded to the knight who had cherished her for so long a space. More than a year had passed since Bisclavaret disappeared. Then it chanced that the King would hunt in that self-same wood where the Were-Wolf lurked. When the hounds were unleashed they ran this way and that, and swiftly came upon his scent. At the view the huntsman winded on his horn, and the whole pack were at his heels. They followed him from morn to eve, till he was torn and bleeding, and was all adread lest they should pull him down. Now the King was very close to the quarry, and when Bisclavaret looked upon his master, he ran to him for pity and for grace. He took the stirrup

within his paws, and fawned upon the prince's foot. The King was very fearful at this sight, but presently he called his courtiers to his aid.

"Lords," cried he, "hasten hither, and see this marvellous thing. Here is a beast who has the sense of man. He abases himself before his foe, and cries for mercy, although he cannot speak. Beat off the hounds, and let no man do him harm. We will hunt no more to-day, but return to our own place, with the wonderful quarry we have taken."

The King turned him about, and rode to his hall, Bisclavaret following at his side. Very near to his master the Were-Wolf went, like any dog, and had no care to seek again the wood. When the King had brought him safely to his own castle, he rejoiced greatly, for the beast was fair and strong, no mightier had any man seen. Much pride had the King in his marvellous beast. He held him so dear, that he bade all those who wished for his love, to cross the Wolf in naught, neither to strike him with a rod, but ever to see that he was richly fed and kennelled warm. This commandment the Court observed willingly. So all the day the Wolf sported with the lords, and at night he lay within the chamber of the

King. There was not a man who did not make much of the beast, so frank was he and debonair. None had reason to do him wrong, for ever was he about his master, and for his part did evil to none. Every day were these two companions together, and all perceived that the King loved him as his friend.

Hearken now to that which chanced.

The King held a high Court, and bade his great vassals and barons, and all the lords of his venery to the feast. Never was there a goodlier feast, nor one set forth with sweeter show and pomp. Amongst those who were bidden, came that same knight who had the wife of Bisclavaret for dame. He came to the castle, richly gowned, with a fair company, but little he deemed whom he would find so near. Bisclavaret marked his foe the moment he stood within the hall. He ran towards him, and seized him with his fangs, in the King's very presence, and to the view of all. Doubtless he would have done him much mischief, had not the King called and chidden him, and threatened him with a rod. Once, and twice, again, the Wolf set upon the knight in the very light of day. All men marvelled at his malice, for sweet and serviceable was the beast, and to that hour had shown hatred of none. With one consent the household deemed that this deed was done with full reason, and that the Wolf had suffered at the knight's hand some bitter wrong. Right wary of his foe was the knight until the feast had ended, and all the barons had taken farewell of their lord, and departed, each to his own house. With these, amongst the very first, went that lord whom Bisclavaret so fiercely had assailed. Small was the wonder that he was glad to go.

No long while after this adventure it came to pass that the courteous King would hunt in that forest where Bisclavaret was found. With the prince came his wolf, and a fair company. Now at nightfall the King abode within a certain lodge of that country, and this was known of that dame who before was the wife of Bisclavaret. In the morning the lady clothed her in her most dainty apparel, and hastened to the lodge, since she desired to speak with the King, and to offer him a rich present. When the lady entered in the chamber, neither man nor leash might restrain the fury of the Wolf. He became as a mad dog in his hatred and malice. Breaking from his bonds he sprang at the lady's face, and bit the nose from her visage. From every side men ran to the succour¹⁰⁴ of the dame. They beat off the wolf from his prey, and for a little would have cut him in pieces with their swords. But a certain wise counsellor said to the King,

"Sire, hearken now to me. This beast is always with you, and there is not one of us all who has not known him for long. He goes in and out amongst us, nor has molested any man, neither done wrong or felony to any, save only to this dame, one only time as we have seen. He has done evil to this lady, and to that knight, who is now the husband of the dame. Sire, she was once the wife of that lord who was so close and private to your heart, but who went, and none might find where he had gone. Now, therefore, put the dame in a sure place, and question her straitly, so that she may tell—if perchance she knows thereof—for what reason this Beast holds her in such mortal hate. For many a strange deed has chanced, as well we know, in this marvellous land of Brittany."

The King listened to these words, and deemed the counsel good. He laid hands upon the knight, and put the dame in surety in another place. He caused them to be questioned right straitly, so that their torment was very grievous. At the end, partly because of her distress, and partly by reason of her exceeding fear, the lady's lips were loosed, and she told her tale. She showed them of the betrayal of her lord, and how his raiment was stolen from the hollow stone. Since then she knew not where he went, nor what had befallen him, for he had never come again to his own land. Only, in her heart, well she deemed and was persuaded, that Bisclavaret was he.

Straightway the King demanded the vesture of his baron, whether this were to the wish of the lady, or whether it were against her wish. When the raiment was brought him, he caused it to be spread before Bisclavaret, but the Wolf made as though he had not seen. Then that cunning and crafty counsellor took the King apart, that he might give him a fresh rede.¹⁰⁵

"Sire," said he, "you do not wisely, nor well, to set this raiment before Bisclavaret, in the sight of all. In shame

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and much tribulation must he lay aside the beast, and again become man. Carry your wolf within your most secret chamber, and put his vestment therein. Then close the door upon him, and leave him alone for a space. So we shall see presently whether the ravening beast may indeed return to human shape.”

The King carried the Wolf to his chamber, and shut the doors upon him fast. He delayed for a brief while, and taking two lords of his fellowship with him, came again to the room. Entering therein, all three, softly together, they found the knight sleeping in the King’s bed, like a little child. The King ran swiftly to the bed and taking his friend in his arms, embraced and kissed him fondly, above a hundred times. When man’s speech returned once more, he told him of his adventure. Then the King restored to his friend the fief that was stolen from him, and gave such rich gifts, moreover, as I cannot tell. As for the wife who had betrayed Bisclavaret, he bade her avoid his country, and chased her from the realm. So she went forth, she and her second lord together, to seek a more abiding city, and were no more seen.

The adventure that you have heard is no vain fable. Verily and indeed it chanced as I have said. The Lay of the Were-Wolf, truly, was written that it should ever be borne in mind.

LANCELOT, THE KNIGHT OF THE CART

Chrétien de Troyes

Ca. 1175-1181 C.E.

France

The French writer Wace translated Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain*, one of the most popular sources for Arthurian stories, into French in 1155 C.E. (and added the idea of the Round Table, not found in previous works on King Arthur). Not long after that, Chrétien de Troyes began writing his five Arthurian stories: *Erec and Enide*, *Cligès*, *Lancelot*, *Yvain*, and *Perceval*. His importance in the history of Arthurian literature is considerable, since he introduces a French knight who is the best knight of King Arthur’s court: Lancelot. Previously, British knights had been the greatest knight of the court, and other authors would follow Chrétien’s lead: the German *Parzival* in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s work, for example, becomes the best knight, while the anonymous author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* restores a British knight to the honored spot, and Thomas Malory in his *Le Morte d’Arthur* creates a British/French hybrid by making Galahad (the son of Lancelot and the British Elaine) the best knight. It was also Chrétien who made Lancelot the lover of Queen Guinevere. Prior to Chrétien, other knights had been Guinevere’s lover, but after Chrétien, the story was altered permanently. Many other writers before Chrétien had written about the Arthurian legends, but his version was considered the best (just as Homer’s versions of Greek legends surpassed previous versions). All of his stories examine the difficulty of following multiple codes at once: the knight with his liege lord; the knightly lover with his lady; and the knight with his religion. To be loyal to one’s lady can mean prioritizing her over one’s liege lord, or even over one’s religious and moral code. It is precisely this problem that Lancelot faces in Chrétien’s story.

Written by Laura J. Getty

LANCELOT KNIGHT OF THE CART

Chrétien de Troyes, translated by W. W. Comfort

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Part I: Vv. 1 Vv. 1840

Since my lady of Champagne wishes me to undertake to write a romance I shall very gladly do so, being so devoted to her service as to do anything in the world for her, without any intention of flattery. But if one were to introduce any flattery upon such an occasion, he might say, and I would subscribe to it, that this lady surpasses all others who are alive, just as the south wind which blows in May or April is more lovely than any other wind. But upon my word, I am not one to wish to flatter my lady. I will simply say: “The Countess is worth as many queens as a gem is worth of pearls and sards.” Nay I shall make no comparison, and yet it is true in spite of me; I will say, however, that



IMAGE 5.24: THE LAI OF THE HONEYSUCKLE | Tristan and Iseult walk together through a forest with bright flowers.

Author: Reginald L. Knowles
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her command has more to do with this work than any thought or pains that I may expend upon it. Here Chretien begins his book about the Knight of the Cart. The material and the treatment of it are given and furnished to him by the Countess, and he is simply trying to carry out her concern and intention. Here he begins the story.

Upon a certain Ascension Day King Arthur had come from Caerleon, and had held a very magnificent court at Camelot as was fitting on such a day. After the feast the King did not quit his noble companions, of whom there were many in the hall. The Queen was present, too, and with her many a courteous lady able to converse in French. And Kay, who had furnished the meal, was eating with the others who had served the food. While Kay was sitting there at meat, behold there came to court a knight, well equipped and fully armed, and thus the knight appeared before the King as he sat among his lords. He gave him no greeting, but spoke out thus: "King Arthur, I hold in captivity knights, ladies, and damsels who belong to thy dominion and household; but it is not because of any intention to restore them to thee that I make reference to them here; rather do I wish to proclaim and serve thee notice that thou hast not the strength or the resources to enable thee to secure them again. And be assured that thou shalt die before thou canst ever succour them." The King replies that he must needs endure what he has not the power to change; nevertheless, he is filled with grief. Then the knight makes as if to go away, and turns about, without tarrying longer before the King; but after reaching the door of the hall, he does not go down the stairs, but stops and speaks from there these words: "King, if in thy court there is a single knight in whom thou hast such confidence that thou wouldst dare to entrust

to him the Queen that he might escort her after me out into the woods whither I am going, I will promise to await him there, and will surrender to thee all the prisoners whom I hold in exile in my country if he is able to defend the Queen and if he succeeds in bringing her back again." Many who were in the palace heard this challenge, and the whole court was in an uproar. Kay, too, heard the news as he sat at meat with those who served. Leaving the table, he came straight to the King, and as if greatly enraged, he began to say: "O King, I have served thee long, faithfully, and loyally; now I take my leave, and shall go away, having no desire to serve thee more." The King was grieved at what he heard, and as soon as he could, he thus replied to him: "Is this serious, or a joke?" And Kay replied: "O King, fair sire, I have no desire to jest, and I take my leave quite seriously. No other reward or wages do I wish in return for the service I have given you. My mind is quite made up to go away immediately." "Is it in anger or in spite that you wish to go?" the King inquired; "seneschal, remain at court, as you have done hitherto, and be assured that I have nothing in the world which I would not give you at once in return for your consent to stay." "Sire," says Kay, "no need of that. I would not accept for each day's pay a measure of fine pure gold." Thereupon, the King in great dismay went off to seek the Queen. "My lady," he says, "you do not know the demand that the seneschal makes of me. He asks me for leave to go away, and says he will no longer stay at court; the reason of this I do not know. But he will do at your request what he will not do for me. Go to him now, my lady dear. Since he will not consent to stay for my sake, pray him to remain on your account, and if need be, fall at his feet, for I should never again be happy if I should lose his company." The King sends the Queen to the seneschal, and she goes to him. Finding him with the rest, she went up to him, and said: "Kay, you may be very sure that I am greatly troubled by the news I have heard of you. I am grieved to say that I have been told it is your intention to leave the King. How does this come about? What motive have you in your mind? I cannot think that you are so sensible or courteous as usual. I want to ask you to remain: stay with us here, and grant my prayer." "Lady," he says, "I give you thanks; nevertheless, I shall not remain." The Queen again makes her request, and is joined by all the other knights. And Kay informs her that he is growing tired of a service which is unprofitable. Then the Queen prostrates herself at full length before his feet. Kay beseeches her to rise, but she says that she will never do so until he grants her request. Then Kay promises her to remain, provided the King and she will grant in advance a favour he is about to ask. "Kay," she says, "he will grant it, whatever it may be. Come now, and we shall tell him that upon this condition you will remain." So Kay goes away with the Queen to the King's presence. The Queen says: "I have had hard work to detain Kay; but I have brought him here to you with the understanding that you will do what he is going to ask." The King sighed with satisfaction, and said that he would perform whatever request he might make.

"Sire," says Kay, "hear now what I desire, and what is the gift you have promised me. I esteem myself very

fortunate to gain such a boon with your consent. Sire, you have pledged your word that you would entrust to me my lady here, and that we should go after the knight who awaits us in the forest." Though the King is grieved, he trusts him with the charge, for he never went back upon his word. But it made him so ill-humoured and displeased that it plainly showed in his countenance. The Queen, for her part, was sorry too, and all those of the household say that Kay had made a proud, outrageous, and mad request. Then the King took the Queen by the hand, and said: "My lady, you must accompany Kay without making objection." And Kay said: "Hand her over to me now, and have no fear, for I shall bring her back perfectly happy and safe." The King gives her into his charge, and he takes her off. After them all the rest go out, and there is not one who is not sad. You must know that the seneschal was fully armed, and his horse was led into the middle of the courtyard, together with a palfrey, as is fitting, for the Queen. The Queen walked up to the palfrey, which was neither restive nor hard-mouthed. Grieving and sad, with a sigh the Queen mounts, saying to herself in a low voice, so that no one could hear: "Alas, alas, if you only knew it, I am sure you would never allow me without interference to be led away a step." She thought she had spoken in a very low tone; but Count Guinable heard her, who was standing by when she mounted. When they started away, as great a lament was made by all the men and women present as if she already lay dead upon a bier. They do not believe that she will ever in her life come back. The seneschal in his impudence takes her where that other knight is awaiting her. But no one was so much concerned as to undertake to follow him; until at last my lord Gawain thus addressed the King his uncle: "Sire," he says, "you have done a very foolish thing, which causes me great surprise; but if you will take my advice, while they are still near by, I and you will ride after them, and all those who wish to accompany us. For my part, I cannot restrain myself from going in pursuit of them at once. It would not be proper for us not to go after them, at least far enough to learn what is to become of the Queen, and how Kay is going to comport himself." "Ah, fair nephew," the King replied, "you have spoken courteously. And since you have undertaken the affair, order our horses to be led out bridled and saddled that there may be no delay in setting out."

The horses are at once brought out, all ready and with the saddles on. First the King mounts, then my lord Gawain, and all the others rapidly. Each one, wishing to be of the party, follows his own will and starts away. Some were armed, but there were not a few without their arms. My lord Gawain was armed, and he bade two squires lead by the bridle two extra steeds. And as they thus approached the forest, they saw Kay's horse running out; and they recognised him, and saw that both reins of the bridle were broken. The horse was running wild, the stirrup-straps all stained with blood, and the saddle-bow was broken and damaged. Every one was chagrined at this, and they nudged each other and shook their heads. My lord Gawain was riding far in advance of the rest of the party, and it was not long before he saw coming slowly a knight on a horse that was sore, painfully tired, and covered with sweat. The knight first saluted my lord Gawain, and his greeting my lord Gawain returned. Then the knight, recognising my lord Gawain, stopped and thus spoke to him: "You see, sir, my horse is in a sweat and in such case as to be no longer serviceable. I suppose that those two horses belong to you now, with the understanding that I shall return the service and the favour, I beg you to let me have one or the other of them, either as a loan or outright as a gift." And he answers him: "Choose whichever you prefer." Then he who was in dire distress did not try to select the better or the fairer or the larger of the horses, but leaped quickly upon the one which was nearer to him, and rode him off. Then the one he had just left fell dead, for he had ridden him hard that day, so that he was used up and overworked. The knight without delay goes pricking through the forest, and my lord Gawain follows in pursuit of him with all speed, until he reaches the bottom of a hill. And when he had gone some distance, he found the horse dead which he had given to the knight, and noticed that the ground had been trampled by horses, and that broken shields and lances lay strewn about, so that it seemed that there had been a great combat between several knights, and he was very sorry and grieved not to have been there. However, he did not stay there long, but rapidly passed on until he saw again by chance the knight all alone on foot, completely armed, with helmet laced, shield hanging from his neck, and with his sword girt on. He had overtaken a cart. In those days such a cart served the same purpose as does a pillory now; and in each good town where there are more than three thousand such carts nowadays, in those times there was only one, and this, like our pillories, had to do service for all those who commit murder or treason, and those who are guilty of any delinquency, and for thieves who have stolen others' property or have forcibly seized it on the roads. Whoever was convicted of any crime was placed upon a cart and dragged through all the streets, and he lost henceforth all his legal rights, and was never afterward heard, honoured, or welcomed in any court. The carts were so dreadful in those days that the saying was then first used: "When thou dost see and meet a cart, cross thyself and call upon God, that no evil may befall thee." The knight on foot, and without a lance, walked behind the cart, and saw a dwarf sitting on the shafts, who held, as a driver does, a long goad in his hand. Then he cries out: "Dwarf, for God's sake, tell me now if thou hast seen my lady, the Queen, pass by here." The miserable, low-born dwarf would not give him any news of her, but replied: "If thou wilt get up into the cart I am driving thou shalt hear to-morrow what has happened to the Queen." Then he kept on his way without giving further heed. The knight hesitated only for a couple of steps before getting in. Yet, it was unlucky for him that he shrank from the disgrace, and did not jump in at once; for he will later rue his delay. But common sense, which is inconsistent with

love's dictates, bids him refrain from getting in, warning him and counselling him to do and undertake nothing for which he may reap shame and disgrace. Reason, which dares thus speak to him, reaches only his lips, but not his heart; but love is enclosed within his heart, bidding him and urging him to mount at once upon the cart. So he jumps in, since love will have it so, feeling no concern about the shame, since he is prompted by love's commands. And my lord Gawain presses on in haste after the cart, and when he finds the knight sitting in it, his surprise is great. "Tell me," he shouted to the dwarf, "if thou knowest anything of the Queen." And he replied: "If thou art so much thy own enemy as is this knight who is sitting here, get in with him, if it be thy pleasure, and I will drive thee along with him." When my lord Gawain heard that, he considered it great foolishness, and said that he would not get in, for it would be dishonourable to exchange a horse for a cart: "Go on, and wherever thy journey lies, I will follow after thee."

Thereupon they start ahead, one mounted on his horse, the other two riding in the cart, and thus they proceed in company. Late in the afternoon they arrive at a town, which, you must know, was very rich and beautiful. All three entered through the gate; the people are greatly amazed to see the knight borne upon the cart, and they take no pains to conceal their feelings, but small and great and old and young shout taunts at him in the streets, so that the knight hears many vile and scornful words at his expense. They all inquire: "To what punishment is this knight to be consigned? Is he to be rayed, or hanged, or drowned, or burned upon a fire of thorns? Tell us, thou dwarf, who art driving him, in what crime was he caught? Is he convicted of robbery? Is he a murderer, or a criminal?" And to all this the dwarf made no response, vouchsafing to them no reply. He conducts the knight to a lodging-place; and Gawain follows the dwarf closely to a tower, which stood on the same level over against the town. Beyond there stretched a meadow, and the tower was built close by, up on a lofty eminence of rock, whose face formed a sharp precipice. Following the horse and cart, Gawain entered the tower. In the hall they met a damsel elegantly attired, than whom there was none fairer in the land, and with her they saw coming two fair and charming maidens. As soon as they saw my lord Gawain, they received him joyously and saluted him, and then asked news about the other knight: "Dwarf, of what crime is this knight guilty, whom thou dost drive like a lame man?" He would not answer her question, but he made the knight get out of the cart, and then he withdrew, without their knowing whither he went. Then my lord Gawain dismounts, and valets come forward to relieve the two knights of their armour. The damsel ordered two green mantles to be brought, which they put on. When the hour for supper came, a sumptuous repast was set. The damsel sat at table beside my lord Gawain. They would not have changed their lodging-place to seek any other, for all that evening the damsel showed them great honour, and provided them with fair and pleasant company.

When they had sat up long enough, two long, high beds were prepared in the middle of the hall; and there was another bed alongside, fairer and more splendid than the rest; for, as the story testifies, it possessed all the excellence that one could think of in a bed. When the time came to retire, the damsel took both the guests to whom she had offered her hospitality; she shows them the two fine, long, wide beds, and says: "These two beds are set up here for the accommodation of your bodies; but in that one yonder no one ever lay who did not merit it: it was not set up to be used by you." The knight who came riding on the cart replies at once: "Tell me, he says, "for what cause this bed is inaccessible." Being thoroughly informed of this, she answers unhesitatingly: "It is not your place to ask or make such an inquiry. Any knight is disgraced in the land after being in a cart, and it is not fitting that he should concern himself with the matter upon which you have questioned me; and most of all it is not right that he should lie upon the bed, for he would soon pay dearly for his act. So rich a couch has not been prepared for you, and you would pay dearly for ever harbouring such a thought." He replies: "You will see about that presently." "Am I to see it?" "Yes." "It will soon appear." "By my head," the knight replies, "I know not who is to pay the penalty. But whoever may object or disapprove, I intend to lie upon this bed and repose there at my ease." Then he at once disrobed in the bed, which was long and raised half an ell above the other two, and was covered with a yellow cloth of silk and a coverlet with gilded stars. The furs were not of skinned vair but of sable; the covering he had on him would have been fitting for a king. The mattress was not made of straw or rushes or of old mats. At midnight there descended from the rafters suddenly a lance, as with the intention of pinning the knight through the flanks to the coverlet and the white sheets where he lay. To the lance there was attached a pennon all ablaze. The coverlet, the bedclothes, and the bed itself all caught fire at once. And the tip of the lance passed so close to the knight's side that it cut the skin a little, without seriously wounding him. Then the knight got up, put out the fire and, taking the lance, swung it in the middle of the hall, all this without leaving his bed; rather did he lie down again and slept as securely as at first.

In the morning, at daybreak, the damsel of the tower had Mass celebrated on their account, and had them rise and dress. When Mass had been celebrated for them, the knight who had ridden in the cart sat down pensively at a window, which looked out upon the meadow, and he gazed upon the fields below. The damsel came to another window close by, and there my lord Gawain conversed with her privately for a while about something, I know not what. I do not know what words were uttered, but while they were leaning on the window-sill they saw carried

along the river through the fields a bier, upon which there lay a knight, and alongside three damsels walked, mourning bitterly. Behind the bier they saw a crowd approaching, with a tall knight in front, leading a fair lady by the horse's rein. The knight at the window knew that it was the Queen. He continued to gaze at her attentively and with delight as long as she was visible. And when he could no longer see her, he was minded to throw himself out and break his body down below. And he would have let himself fall out had not my lord Gawain seen him, and drawn him back, saying: "I beg you, sire, be quiet now. For God's sake, never think again of committing such a mad deed. It is wrong for you to despise your life." "He is perfectly right," the damsel says; "for will not the news of his disgrace be known everywhere? Since he has been upon the cart, he has good reason to wish to die, for he would be better dead than alive. His life henceforth is sure to be one of shame, vexation, and unhappiness." Then the knights asked for their armour, and armed themselves, the damsel treating them courteously, with distinction and generosity; for when she had joked with the knight and ridiculed him enough, she presented him with a horse and lance as a token of her goodwill. The knights then courteously and politely took leave of the damsel, first saluting her, and then going off in the direction taken by the crowd they had seen. Thus they rode out from the town without addressing them. They proceeded quickly in the direction they had seen taken by the Queen, but they did not overtake the procession, which had advanced rapidly. After leaving the fields, the knights enter an enclosed place, and find a beaten road. They advanced through the woods until it might be six o'clock, and then at a crossroads they met a damsel, whom they both saluted, each asking and requesting her to tell them, if she knows, whither the Queen has been taken. Replying intelligently, she said to them: "If you would pledge me your word, I could set you on the right road and path, and I would tell you the name of the country and of the knight who is conducting her; but whoever would essay to enter that country must endure sore trials, for before he could reach there he must suffer much." Then my lord Gawain replies: "Damsel, so help me God, I promise to place all my strength at your disposal and service, whenever you please, if you will tell me now the truth." And he who had been on the cart did not say that he would pledge her all his strength; but he proclaims, like one whom love makes rich, powerful and bold for any enterprise, that at once and without hesitation he will promise her anything she desires, and he puts himself altogether at her disposal. "Then I will tell you the truth," says she. Then the damsel relates to them the following story: "In truth, my lords, Meleagant, a tall and powerful knight, son of the King of Gorre, has taken her off into the kingdom whence no foreigner returns, but where he must perforce remain in servitude and banishment." Then they ask her: "Damsel, where is this country? Where can we find the way thither?" She replies: "That you shall quickly learn; but you may be sure that you will meet with many obstacles and difficult passages, for it is not easy to enter there except with the permission of the king, whose name is Bademagu; however, it is possible to enter by two very perilous paths and by two very difficult passage-ways. One is called the water-bridge, because the bridge is under water, and there is the same amount of water beneath it as above it, so that the bridge is exactly in the middle; and it is only a foot and a half in width and in thickness. This choice is certainly to be avoided. and yet it is the less dangerous of the two. In addition there are a number of other obstacles of which I will say nothing. The other bridge is still more impracticable and much more perilous, never having been crossed by man. It is just like a sharp sword, and therefore all the people call it 'the sword-bridge'. Now I have told you all the truth I know." But they ask of her once again: "Damsel, deign to show us these two passages." To which the damsel makes reply: "This road here is the most direct to the water-bridge, and that one yonder leads straight to the sword-bridge." Then the knight, who had been on the cart, says: "Sire, I am ready to share with you without prejudice: take one of these two routes, and leave the other one to me; take whichever you prefer." "In truth," my lord Gawain replies, "both of them are hard and dangerous: I am not skilled in making such a choice, and hardly know which of them to take; but it is not right for me to hesitate when you have left the choice to me: I will choose the water-bridge." The other answers: "Then I must go uncomplainingly to the sword-bridge, which I agree to do." Thereupon, they all three part, each one commending the others very courteously to God. And when she sees them departing, she says: "Each one of you owes me a favour of my choosing, whenever I may choose to ask it. Take care not to forget that." "We shall surely not forget it, sweet friend," both the knights call out. Then each one goes his own way, and he of the cart is occupied with deep reflections, like one who has no strength or defence against love which holds him in its sway. His thoughts are such that he totally forgets himself, and he knows not whether he is alive or dead, forgetting even his own name, not knowing whether he is armed or not, or whither he is going or whence he came. Only one creature he has in mind, and for her his thought is so occupied that he neither sees nor hears aught else. And his horse bears him along rapidly, following no crooked road, but the best and the most direct; and thus proceeding unguided, he brings him into an open plain. In this plain there was a ford, on the other side of which a knight stood armed, who guarded it, and in his company there was a damsel who had come on a palfrey. By this time the afternoon was well advanced, and yet the knight, unchanged and unwearied, pursued his thoughts. The horse, being very thirsty, sees clearly the ford, and as soon as he sees it, hastens toward it. Then he on the other side cries out: "Knight, I am guarding the ford, and forbid you to cross." He neither gives him heed, nor hears his words, being still deep in thought. In the meantime, his horse advanced rapidly toward the water. The knight calls out to him that he will do wisely to keep at



IMAGE 5.25: IDYLLS OF THE KING | Sir Lancelot rides away down a forest path toward a distant castle.

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a distance from the ford, for there is no passage that way; and he swears by the heart within his breast that he will smite him if he enters the water. But his threats are not heard, and he calls out to him a third time: "Knight, do not enter the ford against my will and prohibition; for, by my head, I shall strike you as soon as I see you in the ford." But he is so deep in thought that he does not hear him. And the horse, quickly leaving the bank, leaps into the ford and greedily begins to drink. And the knight says he shall pay for this, that his shield and the hauberk he wears upon his back shall afford him no protection. First, he puts his horse at a gallop, and from a gallop he urges him to a run, and he strikes the knight so hard that he knocks him down flat in the ford which he had forbidden him to cross. His lance flew from his hand and the shield from his neck. When he feels the water, he shivers, and though stunned, he jumps to his feet, like one aroused from sleep, listening and looking about him with astonishment, to see who it can be who has struck him. Then face to face with the other knight, he said: "Vassal, tell me why you have struck me, when I was not aware of your presence, and when I had done you no harm." "Upon my word, you had wronged me," the other says: "did you not treat me disdainfully when I forbade you three times to cross the ford, shouting at you as loudly as I could? You surely heard me challenge you at least two or three times, and you entered in spite of me, though I told you I should strike you as soon as I saw you in the ford." Then the knight replies to him: "Whoever heard you or saw you, let him be damned, so far as I am concerned. I was probably deep in thought when you forbade me to cross the ford. But be assured that I would make you reset it, if I could just lay one of my hands on your bridle." And the other replies: "Why, what of that? If you dare, you may seize my bridle here and now. I do not esteem your proud threats so much as a handful of ashes." And he replies: "That suits me perfectly. However the affair may turn out, I should like to lay my hands on you." Then the other knight advances to the middle of the ford, where the other lays his left hand upon his bridle, and his right hand upon his leg, pulling, dragging, and pressing him so roughly that he remonstrates, thinking that he would pull his leg out of his body. Then he begs him to let go, saying: "Knight, if it please thee to fight me on even terms, take thy shield and horse and lance, and joust with me." He answers: "That will I not do, upon my word; for I suppose thou wouldst run away as soon as thou hadst escaped my grip." Hearing this, he was much ashamed, and said: "Knight, mount thy horse, in confidence for I will pledge thee loyally my word that I shall not flinch or run away." Then once again he answers him: "First, thou wilt have to swear to that, and I insist upon receiving thy oath that thou wilt neither run away nor flinch, nor touch me, nor come near me until thou shalt see me on my horse; I shall be treating thee very generously, if, when thou art in my hands, I let thee go." He can do nothing but give his oath; and when the other hears him swear, he gathers up his shield and lance which were floating in the ford and by this time had drifted well downstream; then he returns and takes his horse. After catching and mounting him, he seizes the shield by the shoulder-straps and lays his lance in rest. Then each spurs toward the other as fast as their horses can carry them. And he who had to defend the ford first attacks the other, striking him so hard that his lance is completely splintered. The other strikes him in return so that he throws him prostrate into the ford, and the water closes over him. Having accomplished that, he draws back and dismounts, thinking he could drive and chase away a hundred such. While he draws from the scabbard his sword of steel, the other jumps up and draws his excellent flashing blade. Then they clash again, advancing and covering themselves with the shields which gleam with gold. Ceaselessly and without repose they wield their swords; they have the courage to deal so many blows that the battle finally is so protracted that the Knight of the Cart is greatly ashamed in his heart, thinking that he is making a sorry start in the way he has undertaken, when he has spent so much time in defeating a single knight. If he had met yesterday a hundred such, he does not think or believe that they could have withstood him; so now he is much grieved and wroth to be in such an exhausted state that he is missing his strokes and losing time. Then he runs at him and presses him so hard that the other knight gives way and flees. However reluctant he may be, he leaves the ford and crossing free. But the other follows him in pursuit until he falls forward upon his hands; then he of the cart runs up to him, swearing by all he sees that he shall rue the day when he upset him in the ford and disturbed his revery. The damsel, whom the knight had with him, upon hearing the threats, is in great fear, and begs him for her sake to forbear from killing him; but he tells her that he must do so, and can show him no mercy for her sake, in view of the shameful wrong that he has done him. Then, with sword drawn, he approaches the knight who cries in sore dismay: "For God's sake and for my own, show me the mercy I ask of you." And he replies: "As God may save me, no one ever sinned so against me that I would not show him mercy once, for God's sake as is right, if he asked it of me in God's name. And so on thee I will have mercy; for I ought not to refuse thee when thou hast besought me. But first, thou shalt give me thy word to constitute thyself my prisoner whenever I may wish to summon thee." Though it was hard to do so, he promised him. At once the damsel said: "O knight, since thou hast granted the mercy he asked of thee, if ever thou hast broken any bonds, for my sake now be merciful and release this prisoner from his parole. Set him free at my request, upon condition that when the time comes, I shall do my utmost to repay thee in any way that thou shalt choose." Then he declares himself satisfied with the promise she has made, and sets the knight at liberty. Then she is ashamed and anxious, thinking that he will recognise her, which she did not wish. But he goes away at once, the knight and the damsel commending him to God, and taking leave of him. He grants them leave to go, while he

himself pursues his way, until late in the afternoon he met a damsel coming, who was very fair and charming, well attired and richly dressed. The damsel greets him prudently and courteously, and he replies: "Damsel, God grant you health and happiness." Then the damsel said to him: "Sire, my house is prepared for you, if you will accept my hospitality, but you shall find shelter there only on condition that you will lie with me; upon these terms I propose and make the offer." Not a few there are who would have thanked her five hundred times for such a gift; but he is much displeased, and made a very different answer: "Damsel, I thank you for the offer of your house, and esteem it highly, but, if you please, I should be very sorry to lie with you." "By my eyes," the damsel says, "then I retract my offer." And he, since it is unavoidable, lets her have her way, though his heart grieves to give consent. He feels only reluctance now; but greater distress will be his when it is time to go to bed. The damsel, too, who leads him away, will pass through sorrow and heaviness. For it is possible that she will love him so that she will not wish to part with him. As soon as he had granted her wish and desire, she escorts him to a fortified place, than which there was none fairer in Thessaly; for it was entirely enclosed by a high wall and a deep moat, and there was no man within except him whom she brought with her.

Here she had constructed for her residence a quantity of handsome rooms, and a large and roomy hall. Riding along a river bank, they approached their lodging-place, and a drawbridge was lowered to allow them to pass. Crossing the bridge, they entered in, and found the hall open with its roof of tiles. Through the open door they pass, and see a table laid with a broad white cloth, upon which the dishes were set, and the candles burning in their stands, and the gilded silver drinking-cups, and two pots of wine, one red and one white. Standing beside the table, at the end of a bench, they found two basins of warm water in which to wash their hands, with a richly embroidered towel, all white and clean, with which to dry their hands. No valets, servants, or squires were to be found or seen. The knight, removing his shield from about his neck, hangs it upon a hook, and, taking his lance, lays it above upon a rack. Then he dismounts from his horse, as does the damsel from hers. The knight, for his part, was pleased that she did not care to wait for him to help her to dismount. Having dismounted, she runs directly to a room and brings him a short mantle of scarlet cloth which she puts on him. The hall was by no means dark; for beside the light from the stars, there were many large twisted candles lighted there, so that the illumination was very bright. When she had thrown the mantle about his shoulders, she said to him: "Friend, here is the water and the towel; there is no one to present or offer it to you except me whom you see. Wash your hands, and then sit down, when you feel like doing so. The hour and the meal, as you can see, demand that you should do so." He washes, and then gladly and readily takes his seat, and she sits down beside him, and they eat and drink together, until the time comes to leave the table.

When they had risen from the table, the damsel said to the knight: "Sire, if you do not object, go outside and amuse yourself; but, if you please, do not stay after you think I must be in bed. Feel no concern or embarrassment; for then you may come to me at once, if you will keep the promise you have made." And he replies: "I will keep my word, and will return when I think the time has come." Then he went out, and stayed in the courtyard until he thought it was time to return and keep the promise he had made. Going back into the hall, he sees nothing of her who would be his mistress; for she was not there. Not finding or seeing her, he said: "Wherever she may be, I shall look for her until I find her." He makes no delay in his search, being bound by the promise he had made her. Entering one of the rooms, he hears a damsel cry aloud, and it was the very one with whom he was about to lie. At the same time, he sees the door of another room standing open, and stepping toward it, he sees right before his eyes a knight who had thrown her down, and was holding her naked and prostrate upon the bed. She, thinking that he had come of course to help her, cried aloud: "Help, help, thou knight, who art my guest. If thou dost not take this man away from me, I shall find no one to do so; if thou dost not succour me speedily, he will wrong me before thy eyes. Thou art the one to lie with me, in accordance with thy promise; and shall this man by force accomplish his wish before thy eyes? Gentle knight, exert thyself, and make haste to bear me aid." He sees that the other man held the damsel brutally uncovered to the waist, and he is ashamed and angered to see him assault her so; yet it is not jealousy he feels, nor will he be made a cuckold by him. At the door there stood as guards two knights completely armed and with swords drawn. Behind them there stood four men-at-arms, each armed with an axe the sort with which you could split a cow down the back as easily as a root of juniper or broom. The knight hesitated at the door, and thought: "God, what can I do? I am engaged in no less an affair than the quest of Queen Guinevere. I ought not to have the heart of a hare, when for her sake I have engaged in such a quest. If cowardice puts its heart in me, and if I follow its dictates, I shall never attain what I seek. I am disgraced, if I stand here; indeed, I am ashamed even to have thought of holding back. My heart is very sad and oppressed: now I am so ashamed and distressed that I would gladly die for having hesitated here so long. I say it not in pride: but may God have mercy on me if I do not prefer to die honourably rather than live a life of shame! If my path were unobstructed, and if these men gave me leave to pass through without restraint, what honour would I gain? Truly, in that case the greatest coward alive would pass through; and all the while I hear this poor creature calling for help constantly, and reminding me of my promise, and reproaching me with bitter taunts." Then he steps to the door, thrusting in his head and shoulders;

glancing up, he sees two swords descending. He draws back, and the knights could not check their strokes: they had wielded them with such force that the swords struck the floor, and both were broken in pieces. When he sees that the swords are broken, he pays less attention to the axes, fearing and dreading them much less. Rushing in among them, he strikes first one guard in the side and then another. The two who are nearest him he jostles and thrusts aside, throwing them both down flat; the third missed his stroke at him, but the fourth, who attacked him, strikes him so that he cuts his mantle and shirt, and slices the white flesh on his shoulder so that the blood trickles down from the wound. But he, without delay, and without complaining of his wound, presses on more rapidly, until he strikes between the temples him who was assaulting his hostess. Before he departs, he will try to keep his pledge to her. He makes him stand up reluctantly. Meanwhile, he who had missed striking him comes at him as fast as he can and, raising his arm again, expects to split his head to the teeth with the axe. But the other, alert to defend himself, thrusts the knight toward him in such a way that he receives the axe just where the shoulder joins the neck, so that they are cleaved apart. Then the knight seizes the axe, wresting it quickly from him who holds it; then he lets go the knight whom he still held, and looks to his own defence; for the knights from the door, and the three men with axes are all attacking him fiercely. So he leaped quickly between the bed and the wall, and called to them: "Come on now, all of you. If there were thirty-seven of you, you would have all the fight you wish, with me so favourably placed; I shall never be overcome by you." And the damsel watching him, exclaimed: "By my eyes, you need have no thought of that henceforth where I am." Then at once she dismisses the knights and the men-at-arms, who retire from there at once, without delay or objection. And the damsel continues: "Sire you have well defended me against the men of my household. Come now, and I'll lead you on." Hand in hand they enter the hall, but he was not at all pleased, and would have willingly dispensed with her.

In the midst of the hall a bed had been set up, the sheets of which were by no means soiled, but were white and wide and well spread out. The bed was not of shredded straw or of coarse spreads. But a covering of two silk cloths had been laid upon the couch. The damsel lay down first, but without removing her chemise. He had great trouble in removing his hose and in untying the knots. He sweated with the trouble of it all; yet, in the midst of all the trouble, his promise impels and drives him on. Is this then an actual force? Yes, virtually so; for he feels that he is in duty bound to take his place by the damsel's side. It is his promise that urges him and dictates his act. So he lies down at once, but like her, he does not remove his shirt. He takes good care not to touch her; and when he is in bed, he turns away from her as far as possible, and speaks not a word to her, like a monk to whom speech is forbidden. Not once does he look at her, nor show her any courtesy. Why not? Because his heart does not go out to her. She was certainly very fair and winsome, but not every one is pleased and touched by what is fair and winsome. The knight has only one heart, and this one is really no longer his, but has been entrusted to some one else, so that he cannot bestow it elsewhere. Love, which holds all hearts beneath its sway, requires it to be lodged in a single place. All hearts? No, only those which it esteems. And he whom love deigns to control ought to prize himself the more. Love prized his heart so highly that it constrained it in a special manner, and made him so proud of this distinction that I am not inclined to find fault with him, if he lets alone what love forbids, and remains fixed where it desires. The maiden clearly sees and knows that he dislikes her company and would gladly dispense with it, and that, having no desire to win her love, he would not attempt to woo her. So she said: "My lord, if you will not feel hurt, I will leave and return to bed in my own room, and you will be more comfortable. I do not believe that you are pleased with my company and society. Do not esteem me less if I tell you what I think. Now take your rest all night, for you have so well kept your promise that I have no right to make further request of you. So I commend you to God; and shall go away." Thereupon she arises: the knight does not object, but rather gladly lets her go, like one who is the devoted lover of some one else; the damsel clearly perceived this, and went to her room, where she undressed completely and retired, saying to herself: "Of all the knights I have ever known, I never knew a single knight whom I would value the third part of an angevin in comparison with this one. As I understand the case, he has on hand a more perilous and grave affair than any ever undertaken by a knight; and may God grant that he succeed in it." Then she fell asleep, and remained in bed until the next day's dawn appeared.

At daybreak she awakes and gets up. The knight awakes too, dressing, and putting on his arms, without waiting for any help. Then the damsel comes and sees that he is already dressed. Upon seeing him, she says: "May this day be a happy one for you." "And may it be the same to you, damsel," the knight replies, adding that he is waiting anxiously for some one to bring out his horse. The maiden has some one fetch the horse, and says: "Sire, I should like to accompany you for some distance along the road, if you would agree to escort and conduct me according to the customs and practices which were observed before we were made captive in the kingdom of Logres." In those days the customs and privileges were such that, if a knight found a damsel or lorn maid alone, and if he cared for his fair name, he would no more treat her with dishonour than he would cut his own throat. And if he assaulted her, he would be disgraced for ever in every court. But if, while she was under his escort, she should be won at arms by another who engaged him in battle, then this other knight might do with her what he pleased without receiving shame or blame. This is why the damsel said she would go with him, if he had the courage and willingness to safe

guard her in his company, so that no one should do her any harm. And he says to her: "No one shall harm you, I promise you, unless he harm me first." "Then," she says, "I will go with you." She orders her palfrey to be saddled, and her command is obeyed at once. Her palfrey was brought together with the knight's horse. Without the aid of any squire, they both mount, and rapidly ride away. She talks to him, but not caring for her words, he pays no attention to what she says. He likes to think, but dislikes to talk. Love very often inflicts afresh the wound it has given him. Yet, he applied no poultice to the wound to cure it and make it comfortable, having no intention or desire to secure a poultice or to seek a physician, unless the wound becomes more painful. Yet, there is one whose remedy he would gladly seek They follow the roads and paths in the right direction until they come to a spring, situated in the middle of a field, and bordered by a stone basin. Some one had forgotten upon the stone a comb of gilded ivory. Never since ancient times has wise man or fool seen such a comb. In its teeth there was almost a handful of hair belonging to her who had used the comb.

When the damsel notices the spring, and sees the stone, she does not wish her companion to see it; so she turns off in another direction. And he, agreeably occupied with his own thoughts, does not at once remark that she is leading him aside; but when at last he notices it, he is afraid of being beguiled, thinking that she is yielding and is going out of the way in order to avoid some danger. "See here, damsel," he cries, "you are not going right; come this way! No one, I think, ever went straight who left this road." "Sire, this is a better way for us," the damsel says, "I am sure of it." Then he replies to her: "I don't know, damsel, what you think; but you can plainly see that the beaten path lies this way; and since I have started to follow it, I shall not turn aside. So come now, if you will, for I shall continue along this way." Then they go forward until they come near the stone basin and see the comb. The knight says: "I surely never remember to have seen so beautiful a comb as this." "Let me have it," the damsel says. "Willingly, damsel," he replies. Then he stoops over and picks it up. While holding it, he looks at it steadfastly, gazing at the hair until the damsel begins to laugh. When he sees her doing so, he begs her to tell him why she laughs. And she says: "Never mind, for I will never tell you." "Why not?" he asks. "Because I don't wish to do so." And when he hears that, he implores her like one who holds that lovers ought to keep faith mutually: "Damsel, if you love anything passionately, by that I implore and conjure and beg you not to conceal from me the reason why you laugh." "Your appeal is so strong," she says, "that I will tell you and keep nothing back. I am sure, as I am of anything, that this comb belonged to the Queen. And you may take my word that those are strands of the Queen's hair which you see to be so fair and light and radiant, and which are clinging in the teeth of the comb; they surely never grew anywhere else." Then the knight replied: "Upon my word, there are plenty of queens and kings; what queen do you mean?" And she answered: "In truth, fair sire, it is of King Arthur's wife I speak." When he hears that, he has not strength to keep from bowing his head over his saddle-bow. And when the damsel sees him thus, she is amazed and terrified, thinking he is about to fall. Do not blame her for her fear, for she thought him in a faint. He might as well have swooned, so near was he to doing so; for in his heart he felt such grief that for a long time he lost his colour and power of speech. And the damsel dismounts, and runs as quickly as possible to support and succour him; for she would not have wished for anything to see him fall. When he saw her, he felt ashamed, and said: "Why do you need to bear me aid?" You must not suppose that the damsel told him why; for he would have been ashamed and distressed, and it would have annoyed and troubled him, if she had confessed to him the truth. So she took good care not to tell the truth, but tactfully answered him: "Sire, I dismounted to get the comb; for I was so anxious to hold it in my hand that I could not longer wait." Willing that she should have the comb, he gives it to her, first pulling out the hair so carefully that he tears none of it. Never will the eye of man see anything receive such honour as when he begins to adore these tresses. A hundred thousand times he raises them to his eyes and mouth, to his forehead and face: he manifests his joy in every way, considering himself rich and happy now. He lays them in his bosom near his heart, between the shirt and the flesh. He would not exchange them for a cartload of emeralds and carbuncles, nor does he think that any sore or illness can afflict him now; he holds in contempt essence of pearl, treacle, and the cure for pleurisy; even for St. Martin and St. James he has no need; for he has such confidence in this hair that he requires no other aid. But what was this hair like? If I tell the truth about it, you will think I am a mad teller of lies. When the mart is full at the yearly fair of St. Denis, and when the goods are most abundantly displayed, even then the knight would not take all this wealth, unless he had found these tresses too. And if you wish to know the truth, gold a hundred thousand times refined, and melted down as many times, would be darker than is night compared with the brightest summer day we have had this year, if one were to see the gold and set it beside this hair. But why should I make a long story of it? The damsel mounts again with the comb in her possession; while he revels and delights in the tresses in his bosom. Leaving the plain, they come to a forest and take a short cut through it until they come to a narrow place, where they have to go in single file; for it would have been impossible to ride two horses abreast. Just where the way was narrowest, they see a knight approach. As soon as she saw him, the damsel recognised him, and said: "Sir knight, do you see him who yonder comes against us all armed and ready for a battle? I know what his intention is: he thinks now that he cannot fail to take me off defenceless with him. He loves me, but he is very foolish to do so. In person, and by messenger, he has been long wooing me. But my love is not within his reach, for I would

not love him under any consideration, so help me God! I would kill myself rather than bestow my love on him. I do not doubt that he is delighted now, and is as satisfied as if he had me already in his power. But now I shall see what you can do, and I shall see how brave you are, and it will become apparent whether your escort can protect me. If you can protect me now, I shall not fail to proclaim that you are brave and very worthy." And he answered her: "Go on, go on!" which was as much as to say: "I am not concerned; there is no need of your being worried about what you have said."

While they were proceeding, talking thus, the knight, who was alone, rode rapidly toward them on the run. He was the more eager to make haste, because he felt more sure of success; he felt that he was lucky now to see her whom he most dearly loves. As soon as he approaches her, he greets her with words that come from his heart: "Welcome to her, whence-soever she comes, whom I most desire, but who has hitherto caused me least joy and most distress!" It is not fitting that she should be so stingy of her speech as not to return his greeting, at least by word of mouth. The knight is greatly elated when the damsel greets him; though she does not take the words seriously, and the effort costs her nothing. Yet, if he had at this moment been victor in a tournament, he would not have so highly esteemed himself, nor thought he had won such honour and renown. Being now more confident of his worth, he grasped the bridle rein, and said: "Now I shall lead you away: I have to-day sailed well on my course to have arrived at last at so good a port. Now my troubles are at an end: after dangers, I have reached a haven; after sorrow, I have attained happiness; after pain, I have perfect health; now I have accomplished my desire, when I find you in such case that I can without resistance lead you away with me at once." Then she says: "You have no advantage; for I am under this knight's escort." "Surely, the escort is not worth much," he says, "and I am going to lead you off at once. This knight would have time to eat a bushel of salt before he could defend you from me; I think I could never meet a knight from whom I should not win you. And since I find you here so opportunely, though he too may do his best to prevent it, yet I will take you before his very eyes, however disgruntled he may be." The other is not angered by all the pride he hears expressed, but without any impudence or boasting, he begins thus to challenge him for her: "Sire, don't be in a hurry, and don't waste your words, but speak a little reasonably. You shall not be deprived of as much of her as rightly belongs to you. You must know, however, that the damsel has come hither under my protection. Let her alone now, for you have detained her long enough!" The other gives them leave to burn him, if he does not take her away in spite of him. Then the other says: "It would not be right for me to let you take her away; I would sooner fight with you. But if we should wish to fight, we could not possibly do it in this narrow road. Let us go to some level place—a meadow or an open field." And he replies that that will suit him perfectly: "Certainly, I agree to that: you are quite right, this road is too narrow. My horse is so much hampered here that I am afraid he will crush his flank before I can turn him around." Then with great difficulty he turns, and his horse escapes without any wound or harm. Then he says: "To be sure, I am much chagrined that we have not met in a favourable spot and in the presence of other men, for I should have been glad to have them see which is the better of us two. Come on now, let us begin our search: we shall find in the vicinity some large, broad, and open space." Then they proceed to a meadow, where there were maids, knights, and damsels playing at divers games in this pleasant place. They were not all engaged in idle sport, but were playing backgammon and chess or dice, and were evidently agreeably employed. Most were engaged in such games as these; but the others there were engaged in sports, dancing, singing, tumbling, leaping, and wrestling with each other.

A knight somewhat advanced in years was on the other side of the meadow, seared upon a sorrel Spanish steed. His bridle and saddle were of gold, and his hair was turning grey. One hand hung at his side with easy grace. The weather being fine, he was in his shirt sleeves, with a short mantle of scarlet cloth and fur slung over his shoulders, and thus he watched the games and dances. On the other side of the field, close by a path, there were twenty-three knights mounted on good Irish steeds. As soon as the three new arrivals come into view, they all cease their play and shout across the fields: "See, yonder comes the knight who was driven in the cart! Let no one continue his sport while he is in our midst. A curse upon him who cares or deigns to play so long as he is here!" Meanwhile he who loved the damsel and claimed her as his own, approached the old knight, and said: "Sire, I have attained great happiness; let all who will now hear me say that God has granted me the thing that I have always most desired; His gift would not have been so great had He crowned me as king, nor would I have been so indebted to Him, nor would I have so profited; for what I have gained is fair and good." "I know not yet if it be thine," the knight replies to his son. But the latter answers him: "Don't you know? Can't you see it, then? For God's sake, sire, have no further doubt, when you see that I have her in my possession. In this forest, whence I come, I met her as she was on her way. I think God had fetched her there for me, and I have taken her for my own." "I do not know whether this will be allowed by him whom I see coming after thee; he looks as if he is coming to demand her of thee." During this conversation the dancing had ceased because of the knight whom they saw, nor were they gaily playing any more because of the disgust and scorn they felt for him. But the knight without delay came up quickly after the damsel, and said: "Let the damsel alone, knight, for you have no right to her! If you dare, I am willing at once to fight with you in her defence." Then the old knight remarked: "Did I not know it? Fair son, detain the damsel no longer, but let her go."

He does not relish this advice, and swears that he will not give her up: "May God never grant me joy if I give her up to him! I have her, and I shall hold on to her as something that is mine own. The shoulder-strap and all the armlets of my shield shall first be broken, and I shall have lost all confidence in my strength and arms, my sword and lance, before I will surrender my mistress to him." And his father says: "I shall not let thee fight for any reason thou mayest urge. Thou art too confident of thy bravery. So obey my command." But he in his pride replies: "What? Am I a child to be terrified? Rather will I make my boast that there is not within the sea-girt land any knight, wheresoever he may dwell, so excellent that I would let him have her, and whom I should not expect speedily to defeat." The father answers: "Fair son, I do not doubt that thou dost really think so, for thou art so confident of thy strength. But I do not wish to see thee enter a contest with this knight." Then he replies: "I shall be disgraced if I follow your advice. Curse me if I heed your counsel and turn recreant because of you, and do not do my utmost in the fight. It is true that a man fares ill among his relatives: I could drive a better bargain somewhere else, for you are trying to take me in. I am sure that where I am not known, I could act with better grace. No one, who did not know me, would try to thwart my will; whereas you are annoying and tormenting me. I am vexed by your finding fault with me. You know well enough that when any one is blamed, he breaks out still more passionately. But may God never give me joy if I renounce my purpose because of you; rather will I fight in spite of you!" "By the faith I bear the Apostle St. Peter," his father says, "now I see that my request is of no avail. I waste my time in rebuking thee; but I shall soon devise such means as shall compel thee against thy will to obey my commands and submit to them." Straightway summoning all the knights to approach, he bids them lay hands upon his son whom he cannot correct, saying: "I will have him bound rather than let him fight. You here are all my men, and you owe me your devotion and service: by all the fiefs you hold from me, I hold you responsible, and I add my prayer. It seems to me that he must be mad, and that he shows excessive pride, when he refuses to respect my will." Then they promise to take care of him, and say that never, while he is in their charge, shall he wish to fight, but that he must renounce the damsel in spite of himself. Then they all join and seize him by the arms and neck. "Dost thou not think thyself foolish now?" his father asks; "confess the truth: thou hast not the strength or power to fight or joust, however distasteful and hard it may be for thee to admit it. Thou wilt be wise to consent to my will and pleasure. Dost thou know what my intention is? In order somewhat to mitigate thy disappointment, I am willing to join thee, if thou wilt, in following the knight to-day and to-morrow, through wood and plain, each one mounted on his horse. Perhaps we shall soon find him to be of such a character and bearing that I might let thee have thy way and fight with him." To this proposal the other must perforce consent. Like the man who has no alternative, he says that he will give in, provided they both shall follow him. And when the people in the field see how this adventure has turned out, they all exclaim: "Did you see? He who was mounted on the cart has gained such honour here that he is leading away the mistress of the son of my lord, and he himself is allowing it. We may well suppose that he finds in him some merit, when he lets him take her off. Now cursed a hundred times be he who ceases longer his sport on his account! Come, let us go back to our games again." Then they resume their games and dances.

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Thereupon the knight turns away, without longer remaining in the field, and the damsel accompanies him. They leave in haste, while the father and his son ride after them through the mown fields until toward three o'clock, when in a very pleasant spot they come upon a church; beside the chancel there was a cemetery enclosed by a wall. The knight was both courteous and wise to enter the church on foot and make his prayer to God, while the damsel held his horse for him until he returned. When he had made his prayer, and while he was coming back, a very old monk suddenly presented himself; whereupon the knight politely requests him to tell him what this place is; for he does not know. And he tells him it is a cemetery. And the other says: "Take me in, so help you God!" "Gladly, sire," and he takes him in. Following the monk's lead, the knight beholds the most beautiful tombs that one could find as far as Dombes or Pampelune; and on each tomb there were letters cut, telling the names of those who were destined to be buried there. And he began in order to read the names, and came upon some which said: "Here Gawain is to lie, here Louis, and here Yvain." After these three, he read the names of many others among the most famed and cherished knights of this or any other land. Among the others, he finds one of marble, which appears to be new, and is more rich and handsome than all the rest. Calling the monk, the knight inquired: "Of what use are these tombs here?" And the monk replied: "You have already read the inscriptions; if you have understood, you must know what they say, and what is the meaning of the tombs." "Now tell me, what is this large one for?" And the hermit answered: "I will tell you. That is a very large sarcophagus, larger than any that ever was made; one so rich and well-carved was never seen. It is magnificent without, and still more so within. But you need not be concerned with that, for it can never do you any good; you will never see inside of it; for it would require seven strong men to raise the lid of stone, if any one wished to open it. And you may be sure that to raise it would require seven men stronger than you and I. There is an inscription on it which says that any one who can lift this stone of his own unaided strength will

set free all the men and women who are captives in the land, whence no slave or noble can issue forth, unless he is a native of that land. No one has ever come back from there, but they are detained in foreign prisons; whereas they of the country go and come in and out as they please." At once the knight goes to grasp the stone, and raises it without the slightest trouble, more easily than ten men would do who exerted all their strength. And the monk was amazed, and nearly fell down at the sight of this marvellous thing; for he thought he would never see the like again, and said: "Sire, I am very anxious to know your name. Will you tell me what it is?" "Not I," says the knight, "upon my word." "I am certainly sorry, for that," he says; "but if you would tell me, you would do me a great favour, and might benefit yourself. Who are you, and where do you come from?" "I am a knight, as you may see, and I was born in the kingdom of Logre. After so much information, I should prefer to be excused. Now please tell me, for your part, who is to lie within this tomb." "Sire, he who shall deliver all those who are held captive in the kingdom whence none escapes." And when he had told him all this, the knight commended him to God and all His saints. And then, for the first time, he felt free to return to the damsel. The old white-haired monk escorts him out of the church, and they resume their way. While the damsel is mounting, however, the hermit relates to her all that the knight had done inside, and then he begged her to tell him, if she knew, what his name was; but she assured him that she did not know, but that there was one sure thing she could say, namely, that there was not such a knight alive where the four winds of heaven blow.

Then the damsel takes leave of him, and rides swiftly after the knight. Then those who were following them come up and see the hermit standing alone before the church. The old knight in his shirt sleeves said: "Sire, tell us, have you seen a knight with a damsel in his company?" And he replies: "I shall not be loath to tell you all I know, for they have just passed on from here. The knight was inside yonder, and did a very marvellous thing in raising the stone from the huge marble tomb, quite unaided and without the least effort. He is bent upon the rescue of the Queen, and doubtless he will rescue her, as well as all the other people. You know well that this must be so, for you have often read the inscription upon the stone. No knight was ever born of man and woman, and no knight ever sat in a saddle, who was the equal of this man." Then the father turns to his son, and says: "Son, what dost thou think about him now? Is he not a man to be respected who has performed such a feat? Now thou knowest who was wrong, and whether it was thou or I. I would not have thee fight with him for all the town of Amiens; and yet thou didst struggle hard, before any one could dissuade thee from thy purpose. Now we may as well go back, for we should be very foolish to follow him any farther." And he replies: "I agree to that. It would be useless to follow him. Since it is your pleasure, let us return." They were very wise to retrace their steps. And all the time the damsel rides close beside the knight, wishing to compel him to give heed to her. She is anxious to learn his name, and she begs and beseeches him again and again to tell her, until in his annoyance he answers her: "Have I not already told you that I belong in King Arthur's realm? I swear by God and His goodness that you shall not learn my name." Then she bids him give her leave to go, and she will turn back, which request he gladly grants.

Thereupon the damsel departs, and he rides on alone until it grew very late. After vespers, about compline, as he pursued his way, he saw a knight returning from the wood where he had been hunting. With helmet unlaced, he rode along upon his big grey hunter, to which he had tied the game which God had permitted him to take. This gentleman came quickly to meet the knight, offering him hospitality. "Sire," he says, "night will soon be here. It is time for you to be reasonable and seek a place to spend the night. I have a house of mine near at hand, whither I shall take you. No one ever lodged you better than I shall do, to the extent of my resources: I shall be very glad, if you consent." "For my part, I gladly accept," he says. The gentleman at once sends his son ahead, to prepare the house and start the preparations for supper. The lad willingly executes his command forthwith, and goes off at a rapid pace, while the others, who are in no haste, follow the road leisurely until they arrive at the house. The gentleman's wife was a very accomplished lady; and he had five sons, whom he dearly loved, three of them mere lads, and two already knights; and he had two fair and charming daughters, who were still unmarried. They were not natives of the land, but were there in durance, having been long kept there as prisoners away from their native land of Logres. When the gentleman led the knight into his yard, the lady with her sons and daughters jumped up and ran to meet them, vying in their efforts to do him honour, as they greeted him and helped him to dismount. Neither the sisters nor the five brothers paid much attention to their father, for they knew well enough that he would have it so. They honoured the knight and welcomed him; and when they had relieved him of his armour, one of his host's two daughters threw her own mantle about him, taking it from her own shoulders and throwing it about his neck. I do not need to tell how well he was served at supper; but when the meal was finished, they felt no further hesitation in speaking of various matters. First, the host began to ask him who he was, and from what land, but he did not inquire about his name. The knight promptly answered him: "I am from the kingdom of Logres, and have never been in this land before." And when the gentleman heard that, he was greatly amazed, as were his wife and children too, and each one of them was sore distressed. Then they began to say to him: "Woe that you have come here, fair sire, for only trouble will come of it! For, like us, you will be reduced to servitude and exile." "Where do you come from, then?" he asked. "Sire, we belong in your country. Many men from your country are held in servitude in this land.

Cursed be the custom, together with those who keep it up! No stranger comes here who is not compelled to stay here in the land where he is detained. For whoever wishes may come in, but once in, he has to stay. About your own fate, you may be at rest, you will doubtless never escape from here." He replies: "Indeed, I shall do so, if possible." To this the gentleman replies: "How? Do you think you can escape?" "Yes, indeed, if it be God's will; and I shall do all within my power." "In that case, doubtless all the rest would be set free; for, as soon as one succeeds in fairly escaping from this durance, then all the rest may go forth unchallenged." Then the gentleman recalled that he had been told and informed that a knight of great excellence was making his way into the country to seek for the Queen, who was held by the king's son, Meleagant; and he said to himself: "Upon my word, I believe it is he, and I'll tell him so." So he said to him: "Sire, do not conceal from me your business, if I promise to give you the best advice I know. I too shall profit by any success you may attain. Reveal to me the truth about your errand, that it may be to your advantage as well as mine. I am persuaded that you have come in search of the Queen into this land and among these heathen people, who are worse than the Saracens." And the knight replies: "For no other purpose have I come. I know not where my lady is confined, but I am striving hard to rescue her, and am in dire need of advice. Give me any counsel you can." And he says: "Sire, you have undertaken a very grievous task. The road you are travelling will lead you straight to the sword-bridge. You surely need advice. If you would heed my counsel, you would proceed to the sword-bridge by a surer way, and I would have you escorted thither." Then he, whose mind is fixed upon the most direct way, asks him: "Is the road of which you speak as direct as the other way?" "No, it is not," he says; "it is longer, but more sure." Then he says: "I have no use for it; tell me about this road I am following!" "I am ready to do so," he replies; "but I am sure you will not fare well if you take any other than the road I recommend. To-morrow you will reach a place where you will have trouble: it is called 'the stony passage.' Shall I tell you how bad a place it is to pass? Only one horse can go through at a time; even two men could not pass abreast, and the passage is well guarded and defended. You will meet with resistance as soon as you arrive. You will sustain many a blow of sword and lance, and will have to return full measure before you succeed in passing through." And when he had completed the account, one of the gentleman's sons, who was a knight, stepped forward, saying: "Sire, if you do not object, I will go with this gentleman." Then one of the lads jumps up, and says: "I too will go." And the father gladly gives them both consent. Now the knight will not have to go alone, and he expresses his gratitude, being much pleased with the company.

Then the conversation ceases, and they take the knight to bed, where he was glad to fall asleep. As soon as daylight was visible he got up, and those who were to accompany him got up too. The two knights donned their armour and took their leave, while the young fellow started on ahead. Together they pursued their way until they came at the hour of prime to "the stony passage." In the middle of it they found a wooden tower, where there was always a man on guard. Before they drew near, he who was on the tower saw them and cried twice aloud: "Woe to this man who comes!" And then behold! A knight issued from the tower, mounted and armed with fresh armour, and escorted on either side by servants carrying sharp axes. Then, when the other draws near the passage, he who defends it begins to heap him with abuse about the cart, saying: "Vassal, thou art bold and foolish, indeed, to have entered this country. No man ought ever to come here who had ridden upon a cart, and may God withhold from him His blessing!" Then they spur toward each other at the top of their horses' speed. And he who was to guard the passage-way at once breaks his lance and lets the two pieces fall; the other strikes him in the neck, reaching him beneath the shield, and throws him over prostrate upon the stones. Then the servants come forward with the axes, but they intentionally fail to strike him, having no desire to harm or damage him; so he does not deign to draw his sword, and quickly passes on with his companions. One of them remarks to the other: "No one has ever seen so good a knight, nor has he any equal. Is not this a marvellous thing, that he has forced a passage here?" And the knight says to his brother: "Fair brother, for God's sake, make haste to go and tell our father of this adventure." But the lad asserts and swears that he will not go with the message, and will never leave the knight until he has dubbed and knighted him; let his brother go with the message, if he is so much concerned.

Then they go on together until about three o'clock, when they come upon a man, who asks them who they are. And they answer: "We are knights, busy about our own affairs." Then the man says to the knight: "Sire, I should be glad to offer hospitality to you and your companions here." This invitation he delivers to him whom he takes to be the lord and master of the others. And this one replies to him: "I could not seek shelter for the night at such an hour as this; for it is not well to tarry and seek one's ease when one has undertaken some great task. And I have such business on hand that I shall not stop for the night for some time yet." Then the man continues: "My house is not near here, but is some distance ahead. It will be late when you reach there, so you may proceed, assured that you will find a place to lodge just when it suits you." "In that case," he says, "I will go thither." Thereupon the man starts ahead as guide, and the knight follows along the path. And when they had proceeded some distance, they met a squire who was coming along at a gallop, mounted upon a nag that was as fat and round as an apple. And the squire calls out to the man: "Sire, sire, make haste! For the people of Logres have attacked in force the inhabitants of this land, and war and strife have already broken out; and they say that this country has been invaded by a knight

who has been in many battles, and that wherever he wishes to go, no one, however reluctantly, is able to deny him passage. And they further say that he will deliver those who are in this country, and will subdue our people. Now take my advice and make haste!" Then the man starts at a gallop, and the others are greatly delighted at the words they have heard, for they are eager to help their side. And the vavasor's son says: "Hear what this squire says! Come and let us aid our people who are fighting their enemies!" Meanwhile the man rides off, without waiting for them, and makes his way rapidly toward a fortress which stood upon a fortified hill; thither he hastens, till he comes to the gate, while the others spur after him. The castle was surrounded by a high wall and moat. As soon as they had got inside, a gate was lowered upon their heels, so that they could not get out again. Then they say: "Come on, come on! Let us not stop here!" and they rapidly pursue the man until they reach another gate which was not closed against them. But as soon as the man had passed through, a portcullis dropped behind him. Then the others were much dismayed to see themselves shut in, and they think they must be bewitched. But he, of whom I have more to tell, wore upon his finger a ring, whose stone was of such virtue that any one who gazed at it was freed from the power of enchantment. Holding the ring before his eyes, he gazed at it, and said: "Lady, lady, so help me God, now I have great need of your succour!" This lady was a fairy, who had given it to him, and who had cared for him in his infancy. And he had great confidence that, wherever he might be, she would aid and succour him. But after appealing to her and gazing upon the ring, he realises that there is no enchantment here, but that they are actually shut in and confined. Then they come to the barred door of a low and narrow postern gate. Drawing their swords, they all strike it with such violence that they cut the bar. As soon as they were outside the tower, they see that a fierce strife was already begun down in the meadows, and that there are at least a thousand knights engaged, beside the low-bred infantry. While they were descending to the plain, the wise and moderate son of the vavasor remarked: "Sire, before we arrive upon the field, it would be wise for us, it seems to me, to find out and learn on which side our people are. I do not know where they are placed, but I will go and find out, if you wish it so." "I wish you would do so," he replies, "go quickly, and do not fail to come back again at once." He goes and returns at once, saying: "It has turned out well for us, for I have plainly seen that these are our troops on this side of the field." Then the knight at once rode into the fight and jousted with a knight who was approaching him, striking him in the eye with such violence that he knocked him lifeless to the ground. Then the lad dismounts, and taking the dead knight's horse and arms, he arms himself with skill and cleverness. When he was armed, he straightway mounts, taking the shield and the lance, which was heavy, stiff, and decorated, and about his waist he girt a sharp, bright, and flashing sword. Then he followed his brother and lord into the fight. The latter demeaned himself bravely in the melee for some time, breaking, splitting, and crushing shields, helmets and hauberks. No wood or steel protected the man whom he struck; he either wounded him or knocked him lifeless from the horse. Unassisted, he did so well that he discomfited all whom he met, while his companions did their part as well. The people of Logres, not knowing him, are amazed at what they see, and ask the vavasor's sons about the stranger knight. This reply is made to them: "Gentlemen, this is he who is to deliver us all from durance and misery, in which we have so long been confined, and we ought to do him great honour when, to set us free, he has passed through so many perils and is ready to face many more. He has done much, and will do yet more." Every one is overjoyed at hearing this welcome news. The news travelled fast, and was noised about, until it was known by all. Their strength and courage rise, so that they slay many of those still alive, and apparently because of the example of a single knight they work greater havoc than because of all the rest combined. And if it had not been so near evening, all would have gone away defeated; but night came on so dark that they had to separate.

When the battle was over, all the captives pressed about the knight, grasping his rein on either side, and thus addressing him: "Welcome, fair sire," and each one adds: "Sire, for the name of God, do not fail to lodge with me!" What one says they all repeat, for young and old alike insist that he must lodge with them, saying: "You will be more comfortably lodged with me than with any one else." Thus each one addresses him to his face, and in the desire to capture him, each one drags him from the rest, until they almost come to blows. Then he tells them that they are very foolish and silly to struggle so. "Cease this wrangling among yourselves, for it does no good to me or you. Instead of quarrelling among ourselves, we ought rather to lend one another aid. You must not dispute about the privilege of lodging me, but rather consider how to lodge me in such a place that it may be to your general advantage, and that I may be advanced upon my way." Then each one exclaims at once: "That is my house, or, No, it is mine," until the knight replies: "Follow my advice and say nothing more; the wisest of you is foolish to contend this way. You ought to be concerned to further my affairs, and instead you are seeking to turn me aside. If you had each individually done me all the honour and service it is possible to do, and I had accepted your kindness, by all the saints of Rome I swear that I could not be more obliged to you than I am now for your good-will. So may God give me joy and health, your good intentions please me as much as if each one of you had already shown me great honour and kindness: so let the will stand for the deed!" Thus he persuades and appeases them all. Then they take him quickly along the road to a knight's residence, where they seek to serve him: all rejoice to honour and serve him throughout the evening until bedtime, for they hold him very dear. Next morning, when the time came to separate, each one

offers and presents himself, with the desire to accompany him; but it is not his will or pleasure that any one shall go with him except the two whom he had brought with him. Accompanied by them alone, he resumed his journey. That day they rode from morn till evening without encountering any adventure. When it was now very late, and while they were riding rapidly out of a forest, they saw a house belonging to a knight, and seated at the door they saw his wife, who had the bearing of a gentle lady. As soon as she espied them coming, she rose to her feet to meet them, and greeted them joyfully with a smile: "Welcome! I wish you to accept my house; this is your lodging; pray dismount" "Lady, since it is your will, we thank you, and will dismount; we accept your hospitality for the night." When they had dismounted, the lady had the horses taken by members of her well-ordered household. She calls her sons and daughters who come at once: the youths were courteous, handsome, and well-behaved, and the daughters were fair. She bids the lads remove the saddles and curry the horses well; no one refused to do this, but each carried out her instructions willingly. When she ordered the knights to be disarmed, her daughters step forward to perform this service. They remove their armour, and hand them three short mantles to put on. Then at once they take them into the house which was very handsome. The master was not at home, being out in the woods with two of his sons. But he presently returned, and his household, which was well-ordered, ran to meet him outside the door. Quickly they untie and unpack the game he brings, and tell him the news: "Sire, sire, you do not know that you have three knights for guests." "God be praised for that," he says. Then the knight and his two sons extend a glad welcome to their guests. The rest of the household were not backward, for even the least among them prepared to perform his special task. While some run to prepare the meal, others light the candles in profusion; still others get a towel and basins, and offer water for the hands: they are not niggardly in all this. When all had washed, they take their seats. Nothing that was done there seemed to be any trouble or burdensome. But at the first course there came a surprise in the form of a knight outside the door. As he sat on his charger, all armed from head to feet, he looked prouder than a bull, and a bull is a yew proud beast. One leg was fixed in the stirrup, but the other he had thrown over the mane of his horse's neck, to give himself a careless and jaunty air. Behold him advancing thus, though no one noticed him until he came forward with the words: "I wish to know which is the man who is so foolish and proud a numskull that he has come to this country and intends to cross the sword-bridge. All his pains will come to naught, and his expedition is in vain." Then he, who felt no fear at all, thus replies with confidence: "I am he who intends to cross the bridge." "Thou? Thou? How didst thou dare to think of such a thing? Before undertaking such a course, thou oughtest to have thought of the end that is in store for thee, and thou oughtest to have in mind the memory of the cart on which thou didst ride. I know not whether thou feelest shame for the ride thou hadst on it, but no sensible man would have embarked on such an enterprise as this if he had felt the reproach of his action."

Not a word does he deign to reply to what he hears the other say; but the master of the house and all the others express their surprise openly: "Ah, God, what a misfortune this is," each one of them says to himself; "cursed be the hour when first a cart was conceived or made! For it is a very vile and hateful thing. Ah, God, of what was he accused? Why was he carried in a cart? For what sin, or for what crime? He will always suffer the reproach. If he were only clear of this disgrace, no knight could be found in all the world, however his valour might be proved, who would equal the merit of this knight. If all good knights could be compared, and if the truth were to be known, you could find none so handsome or so expert." Thus they expressed their sentiments. Then he began his speech of impudence: "Listen, thou knight, who art bound for the sword-bridge! If thou wishest, thou shalt cross the water very easily and comfortably. I will quickly have thee ferried over in a skiff. But once on the other side, I will make thee pay me toll, and I will take thy head, if I please to do so, or if not, thou shalt be held at my discretion." And he replies that he is not seeking trouble, and that he will never risk his head in such an adventure for any consideration. To which the other answers at once: "Since thou wilt not do this, whosoever the shame and loss may be, thou must come outside with me and there engage me hand to hand." Then, to beguile him, the other says: "If I could refuse, I would very gladly excuse myself; but in truth I would rather fight than be compelled to do what is wrong." Before he arose from the table where they were sitting, he told the youths who were serving him, to saddle his horse at once, and fetch his arms and give them to him. This order they promptly execute: some devote themselves to arming him, while others go to fetch his horse. As he slowly rode along completely armed, holding his shield tight by the straps, you must know that he was evidently to be included in the list of the brave and fair. His horse became him so well that it is evident he must be his own, and as for the shield he held by the straps and the helmet laced upon his head, which fitted him so well, you would never for a moment have thought that he had borrowed it or received it as a loan; rather, you would be so pleased with him that you would maintain that he had been thus born and raised: for all this I should like you to take my word.

Outside the gate, where the battle was to be fought, there was a stretch of level ground well adapted for the encounter. When they catch sight of each other, they spur hotly to the attack and come together with such a shock, dealing such blows with their lances, that they first bend, then buckle up, and finally fly into splinters. With their swords they then hew away at their shields, helmets, and hauberks. The wood is cut and the steel gives way, so that they wound each other in several places. They pay each other such angry blows that it seems as if they had made

a bargain. The swords often descend upon the horses' croups, where they drink and feast upon their blood; their riders strike them upon the flanks until at last they kill them both. And when both have fallen to earth, they attack each other afoot; and if they had cherished a mortal hatred, they could not have assailed each other more fiercely with their swords. They deal their blows with greater frequency than the man who stakes his money at dice and never fails to double the stakes every time he loses; yet, this game of theirs was very different; for there were no losses here, but only fierce blows and cruel strife. All the people came out from the house: the master, his lady, his sons and daughters; no man or woman, friend or stranger, stayed behind, but all stood in line to see the fight in progress in the broad, level field. The Knight of the Cart blames and reproaches himself for faintheartedness when he sees his host watching him and notices all the others looking on. His heart is stirred with anger, for it seems to him that he ought long since to have beaten his adversary. Then he strikes him, rushing in like a storm and bringing his sword down close by his head; he pushes and presses him so hard that he drives him from his ground and reduces him to such a state of exhaustion that he has little strength to defend himself. Then the knight recalls how the other had basely reproached him about the cart; so he assails him and drubs him so soundly that not a string or strap remains unbroken about the neck-band of his hauberk, and he knocks the helmet and ventail from his head. His wounds and distress are so great that he has to cry for mercy. Just as the lark cannot withstand or protect itself against the hawk which outflies it and attacks it from above, so he in his helplessness and shame, must invoke him and sue for mercy. And when he hears him beg for mercy, he ceases his attack and says: "Dost thou wish for mercy?" He replies: "You have asked a very clever question; any fool could ask that. I never wished for anything so much as I now wish for mercy." Then he says to him: "Thou must mount, then, upon a cart. Nothing thou couldst say would have any influence with me, unless thou mountest the cart, to atone for the vile reproaches thou didst address to me with thy silly mouth." And the knight thus answers him: "May it never please God that I mount a cart!" "No?" he asks; "then you shall die." "Sire, you can easily put me to death; but I beg and beseech you for God's sake to show me mercy and not compel me to mount a cart. I will agree to anything, however grievous, excepting that. I would rather die a hundred times than undergo such a disgrace. In your goodness and mercy you can tell me nothing so distasteful that I will not do it."

While he is thus beseeching him, behold across the field a maiden riding on a tawny mule, her head uncovered and her dress disarranged. In her hand she held a whip with which she belaboured the mule; and in truth no horse could have galloped so fast as was the pace of the mule. The damsel called out to the Knight of the Cart: "May God bless thy heart, Sir Knight, with whatever delights thee most!" And he, who heard her gladly, says: "May God bless you, damsel, and give you joy and health!" Then she tells him of her desire. "Knight," she says, "in urgent need I have come from afar to thee to ask a favour, for which thou wilt deserve the best guerdon I can make to thee; and I believe that thou wilt yet have need of my assistance." And he replies: "Tell me what it is you wish; and if I have it, you shall have it at once, provided it be not something extravagant." Then she says: "It is the head of the knight whom thou hast just defeated; in truth, thou hast never dealt with such a wicked and faithless man. Thou wilt be committing no sin or wrong, but rather doing a deed of charity, for he is the basest creature that ever was or ever shall be." And when he who had been vanquished hears that she wishes him to be killed, he says to him: "Don't believe her, for she hates me; but by that God who was at once Father and Son, and who chose for His mother her who was His daughter and handmaiden, I beg you to have mercy upon me!" "Ah, knight!" the maid exclaims, "pay no attention to what this traitor says! May God give thee all the joy and honour to which thou dost aspire, and may He give thee good success in thy undertaking." Then the knight is in a predicament, as he thinks and ponders over the question: whether to present to her the head she asks him to cut off, or whether he shall allow himself to be touched by pity for him. He wishes to respect the wishes of both her and him. Generosity and pity each command him to do their will; for he was both generous and tender-hearted. But if she carries off the head, then will pity be defeated and put to death; whereas, if she does not carry off the head, generosity will be discomfited. Thus, pity and generosity hold him so confined and so distressed that he is tormented and spurred on by each of them in turn. The damsel asks him to give her the head, and on the other hand the knight makes his request, appealing to his pity and kindness. And, since he has implored him, shall he not receive mercy? Yes, for it never happened that, when he had put down an enemy and compelled him to sue for mercy, he would refuse such an one his mercy or longer bear him any grudge. Since this is his custom, he will not refuse his mercy to him who now begs and sues for it. And shall she have the head she covets? Yes, if it be possible. "Knight," he says, "it is necessary for thee to fight me again, and if thou dost care to defend thy head again, I will show thee such mercy as to allow thee to resume the helmet; and I will give thee time to arm thy body and thy head as well as possible. But, if I conquer thee again, know that thou shalt surely die." And he replies: "I desire nothing better than that, and ask for no further favour." "And I will give thee this advantage," he adds: "I will fight thee as I stand, without changing my present position." Then the other knight makes ready, and they begin the fight again eagerly. But this time the knight triumphed more quickly than he had done at first. And the damsel at once cries out: "Do not spare him, knight, for anything he may say to thee. Surely he would not have spared thee, had he once defeated thee. If thou heedest what he says, be sure that he will

again beguile thee. Fair knight, cut off the head of the most faithless man in the empire and kingdom, and give it to me! Thou shouldst present it to me, in view of the guerdon I intend for thee. For another day may well come when, if he can, he will beguile thee again with his words." He, thinking his end is near, cries aloud to him for mercy; but his cry is of no avail, nor anything that he can say. The other drags him by the helmet, tearing all the fastening, and he strikes from his head the ventail and the gleaming coif. Then he cries out more loudly still: "Mercy, for God's sake! Mercy, sir!" But the other answers: "So help me, I shall never again show thee pity, after having once let thee off." "Ah," he says, "thou wouldst do wrong to heed my enemy and kill me thus." While she, intent upon his death, admonishes him to cut off his head, and not to believe a word he says. He strikes: the head flies across the sword and the body fails. Then the damsel is pleased and satisfied. Grasping the head by the hair, the knight presents it to the damsel, who takes it joyfully with the words: "May thy heart receive such delight from whatever it most desires as my heart now receives from what I most coveted. I had only one grief in life, and that was that this man was still alive. I have a reward laid up for thee which thou shalt receive at the proper time. I promise thee that thou shalt have a worthy reward for the service thou hast rendered me. Now I will go away, with the prayer that God may guard thee from harm." Then the damsel leaves him, as each commends the other to God. But all those who had seen the battle in the plain are overjoyed, and in their joy they at once relieve the knight of his armour, and honour him in every way they can. Then they wash their hands again and take their places at the meal, which they eat with better cheer than is their wont. When they had been eating for some time, the gentleman turned to his guest at his side, and said: "Sire, a long while ago we came hither from the kingdom of Logres. We were born your countrymen, and we should like to see you win honour and fortune and joy in this country; for we should profit by it as well as you, and it would be to the advantage of many others, if you should gain honour and fortune in the enterprise you have undertaken in this land." And he makes answer: "May God hear your desire."

When the host had dropped his voice and ceased speaking, one of his sons followed him and said: "Sire, we ought to place all our resources at your service, and give them outright rather than promise them; if you have any need of our assistance, we ought not to wait until you ask for it. Sire, be not concerned over your horse which is dead. We have good strong horses here. I want you to take anything of ours which you need, and you shall choose the best of our horses in place of yours." And he replies: "I willingly accept." Thereupon, they have the beds prepared and retire for the night. The next morning they rise early, and dress, after which they prepare to start. Upon leaving, they fail in no act of courtesy, but take leave of the lady, her lord, and all the rest. But in order to omit nothing, I must remark that the knight was unwilling to mount the borrowed steed which was standing ready at the door; rather, he caused him to be ridden by one of the two knights who had come with him, while he took the latter's horse instead, for thus it pleased him best to do. When each was seated on his horse, they all asked for leave to depart from their host who had served them so honourably. Then they ride along the road until the day draws to a close, and late in the afternoon they reach the sword-bridge.

At the end of this very difficult bridge they dismount from their steeds and gaze at the wicked-looking stream, which is as swift and raging, as black and turgid, as fierce and terrible as if it were the devil's stream; and it is so dangerous and bottomless that anything falling into it would be as completely lost as if it fell into the salt sea. And the bridge, which spans it, is different from any other bridge; for there never was such a one as this. If any one asks of me the truth, there never was such a bad bridge, nor one whose flooring was so bad. The bridge across the cold stream consisted of a polished, gleaming sword; but the sword was stout and stiff, and was as long as two lances. At each end there was a tree-trunk in which the sword was firmly fixed. No one need fear to fall because of its breaking or bending, for its excellence was such that it could support a great weight. But the two knights who were with the third were much discouraged; for they surmised that two lions or two leopards would be found tied to a great rock at the other end of the bridge. The water and the bridge and the lions combine so to terrify them that they both tremble with fear, and say: "Fair sire, consider well what confronts you; for it is necessary and needful to do so. This bridge is badly made and built, and the construction of it is bad. If you do not change your mind in time, it will be too late to repent. You must consider which of several alternatives you will choose. Suppose that you once get across (but that cannot possibly come to pass, any more than one could hold in the winds and forbid them to blow, or keep the birds from singing, or re-enter one's mother's womb and be born again—all of which is as impossible as to empty the sea of its water); but even supposing that you got across, can you think and suppose that those two fierce lions that are chained on the other side will not kill you, and suck the blood from your veins, and eat your flesh and then gnaw your bones? For my part, I am bold enough, when I even dare to look and gaze at them. If you do not take care, they will certainly devour you. Your body will soon be torn and rent apart, for they will show you no mercy. So take pity on us now, and stay here in our company! It would be wrong for you to expose yourself intentionally to such mortal peril." And he, laughing, replies to them: "Gentlemen, receive my thanks and gratitude for the concern you feel for me: it comes from your love and kind hearts. I know full well that you would not like to see any mishap come to me; but I have faith and confidence in God, that He will protect me to the end. I fear the bridge and stream no more than I fear this dry land; so I intend to prepare and make the dangerous attempt to cross. I would

rather die than turn back now." The others have nothing more to say; but each weeps with pity and heaves a sigh. Meanwhile he prepares, as best he may, to cross the stream, and he does a very marvellous thing in removing the armour from his feet and hands. He will be in a sorry state when he reaches the other side. He is going to support himself with his bare hands and feet upon the sword, which was sharper than a scythe, for he had not kept on his feet either sole or upper or hose. But he felt no fear of wounds upon his hands or feet; he preferred to maim himself rather than to fall from the bridge and be plunged in the water from which he could never escape. In accordance with this determination, he passes over with great pain and agony, being wounded in the hands, knees, and feet. But even this suffering is sweet to him: for Love, who conducts and leads him on, assuages and relieves the pain. Creeping on his hands, feet, and knees, he proceeds until he reaches the other side. Then he recalls and recollects the two lions which he thought he had seen from the other side; but, on looking about, he does not see so much as a lizard or anything else to do him harm. He raises his hand before his face and looks at his ring, and by this test he proves that neither of the lions is there which he thought he had seen, and that he had been enchanted and deceived; for there was not a living creature there. When those who had remained behind upon the bank saw that he had safely crossed, their joy was natural; but they do not know of his injuries. He, however, considers himself fortunate not to have suffered anything worse. The blood from his wounds drips on his shirt on all sides. Then he sees before him a tower, which was so strong that never had he seen such a strong one before: indeed, it could not have been a better tower. At the window there sat King Bademagu, who was very scrupulous and precise about matters of honour and what was right, and who was careful to observe and practise loyalty above all else; and beside him stood his son, who always did precisely the opposite so far as possible, for he found his pleasure in disloyalty, and never wearied of villainy, treason, and felony. From their point of vantage they had seen the knight cross the bridge with trouble and pain. Meleagant's colour changed with the rage and displeasure he felt; for he knows now that he will be challenged for the Queen; but his character was such that he feared no man, however strong or formidable. If he were not base and disloyal, there could no better knight be found; but he had a heart of wood, without gentleness and pity. What enraged his son and roused his ire, made the king happy and glad. The king knew of a truth that he who had crossed the bridge was much better than any one else. For no one would dare to pass over it in whom there dwelt any of that evil nature which brings more shame upon those who possess it than prowess brings of honour to the virtuous. For prowess cannot accomplish so much as wickedness and sloth can do: it is true beyond a doubt that it is possible to do more evil than good.

I could say more on these two heads, if it did not cause me to delay. But I must turn to something else and resume my subject, and you shall hear how the king speaks profitably to his son: "Son," he says, "it was fortunate that thou and I came to look out this window; our reward has been to witness the boldest deed that ever entered the mind of man. Tell me now if thou art not well disposed toward him who has performed such a marvellous feat. Make peace and be reconciled with him, and deliver the Queen into his hands. Thou shalt gain no glory in battle with him, but rather mayst thou incur great loss. Show thyself to be courteous and sensible, and send the Queen to meet him before he sees thee. Show him honour in this land of thine, and before he asks it, present to him what he has come to seek. Thou knowest well enough that he has come for the Queen Guinevere. Do not act so that people will take thee to be obstinate, foolish, or proud. If this man has entered thy land alone, thou shouldst bear him company, for one gentleman ought not to avoid another, but rather attract him and honour him with courtesy. One receives honour by himself showing it; be sure that the honour will be thine, if thou doest honour and service to him who is plainly the best knight in the world." And he replies: "May God confound me, if there is not as good a knight, or even a better one than he!" It was too bad that he did not mention himself, of whom he entertains no mean opinion. And he adds: "I suppose you wish me to clasp my hands and kneel before him as his liegeman, and to hold my lands from him? So help me God, I would rather become his man than surrender to him the Queen! God forbid that in such a fashion I should deliver her to him! She shall never be given up by me, but rather contested and defended against all who are so foolish as to dare to come in quest of her." Then again the king says to him: "Son, thou wouldst act very courteously to renounce this pretension. I advise thee and beg thee to keep the peace. Thou knowest well that the honour will belong to the knight, if he wins the Queen from thee in battle. He would doubtless rather win her in battle than as a gift, for it will thus enhance his fame. It is my opinion that he is seeking her, not to receive her peaceably, but because he wishes to win her by force of arms. So it would be wise on thy part to deprive him of the satisfaction of fighting thee. I am sorry to see thee so foolish; but if thou dost not heed my advice, evil will come of it, and the ensuing misfortune will be worse for thee. For the knight need fear no hostility from any one here save thee. On behalf of myself and all my men, I will grant him a truce and security. I have never yet done a disloyal deed or practised treason and felony, and I shall not begin to do so now on thy account any more than I would for any stranger. I do not wish to flatter thee, for I promise that the knight shall not lack any arms, or horse or anything else he needs, in view of the boldness he has displayed in coming thus far. He shall be securely guarded and well defended against all men here excepting thee. I wish him clearly to understand that, if he can maintain himself against thee, he need have no fear of any one else." "I have listened to you in silence long

enough," says Meleagant, "and you may say what you please. But little do I care for all you say. I am not a hermit, nor so compassionate and charitable, and I have no desire to be so honourable as to give him what I most love. His task will not be performed so quickly or so lightly; rather will it turn out otherwise than as you and he expect. You and I need not quarrel because you aid him against me. Even if he enjoys peace and a truce with you and all your men, what matters that to me? My heart does not quail on that account; rather, so help me God, I am glad that he need not feel concern for any one here but me; I do not wish you to do on my account anything which might be construed as disloyalty or treachery. Be as compassionate as you please, but let me be cruel." "What? Wilt thou not change thy mind?" "No," he says. "Then I will say nothing more. I will leave thee alone to do thy best and will go now to speak with the knight. I wish to offer and present to him my aid and counsel in all respects; for I am altogether on his side."

Then the king goes down and orders them to bring his horse. A large steed is brought to him, upon which he springs by the stirrup, and he rides off with some of his men: three knights and two squires he bade to go with him. They did not stop their ride downhill until they came to the bridge, where they see him stanching his wounds and wiping the blood from them. The king expects to keep him as his guest for a long time while his wounds are healing; but he might as well expect to drain the sea. The king hastens to dismount, and he who was grievously wounded, stood up at once to meet him, though he did not know him, and he gave no more evidence of the pain he felt in his feet and hands than if he had been actually sound. The king sees that he is exerting himself, and quickly runs to greet him with the words: "Sire, I am greatly amazed that you have fallen upon us in this land. But be welcome, for no one will ever repeat the attempt: it never happened in the past, and it will never happen in the future that any one should perform such a hardy feat or expose himself to such peril. And know that I admire you greatly for having executed what no one before ever dared to conceive. You will find me very kindly disposed, and loyal and courteous toward you. I am the king of this land, and offer you freely all my counsel and service; and I think I know pretty well what you have come here to seek. You come, I am sure, to seek the Queen." "Sire," he replies, "your surmise is correct; no other cause brings me here." "Friend, you must suffer hardship to obtain her," he replies; "and you are sorely wounded, as I see by the wounds and the flowing blood. You will not find him who brought her hither so generous as to give her up without a struggle; but you must tarry, and have your wounds cared for until they are completely healed. I will give you some of 'the three Marys' ointment, and something still better, if it can be found, for I am very solicitous about your comfort and your recovery. And the Queen is so confined that no mortal man has access to her—not even my son, who brought her here with him and who resents such treatment, for never was a man so beside himself and so desperate as he. But I am well disposed toward you, and will gladly give you, so help me God, all of which you stand in need. My son himself will not have such good arms but that I will give you some that are just as good, and a horse, too, such as you will need, though my son will be angry with me. Despite the feelings of any one, I will protect you against all men. You will have no cause to fear any one excepting him who brought the Queen here. No man ever menaced another as I have menaced him, and I came near driving him from my land, in my displeasure because he will not surrender her to you. To be sure, he is my son; but feel no concern, for unless he defeats you in battle, he can never do you the slightest harm against my will." "Sire," he says, "I thank you. But I am losing time here which I do not wish to waste. I have no cause to complain, and have no wound which is paining me. Take me where I can find him; for with such arms as I have, I am ready to divert myself by giving and receiving blows." "Friend, you had better wait two or three weeks until your wounds are healed, for it would be well for you to tarry here at least two weeks, and not on any account could I allow it, or look on, while you fought in my presence with such arms and with such an outfit." And he replies: "With your permission, no other arms would be used than these, for I should prefer to fight with them, and I should not ask for the slightest postponement, adjournment or delay. However, in deference to you, I will consent to wait until to-morrow; but despite what any one may say, longer I will not wait." Then the king assured him that all would be done as he wished; then he has the lodging-place prepared, and insistently requests his men, who are in the company, to serve him, which they do devotedly. And the king, who would gladly have made peace, had it been possible, went at once to his son and spoke to him like one who desires peace and harmony, saying: "Fair son, be reconciled now with this knight without a fight! He has not come here to disport himself or to hunt or chase, but he comes in search of honour and to increase his fame and renown, and I have seen that he stands in great need of rest. If he had taken my advice, he would not have rashly undertaken, either this month or the next, the battle which he so greatly desires. If thou mak-est over the Queen to him, dost thou fear any dishonour in the deed? Have no fear of that, for no blame can attach to thee; rather is it wrong to keep that to which one has no rightful claim. He would gladly have entered the battle at once, though his hands and feet are not sound, but cut and wounded." Meleagant answers his father thus: "You are foolish to be concerned. By the faith I owe St. Peter, I will not take your advice in this matter. I should deserve to be drawn apart with horses, if I heeded your advice. If he is seeking his honour, so do I seek mine; if he is in search of glory, so am I; if he is anxious for the battle, so am I a hundred times more so than he." "I see plainly," says the king, "that thou art intent upon thy mad enterprise, and thou shalt have thy fill of it. Since such is thy pleasure,

to-morrow thou shalt try thy strength with the knight." "May no greater hardship ever visit me than that!" Meleagant replies; "I would much rather it were to-day than to-morrow. Just see how much more downcast I am than is usual! My eyes are wild, and my face is pale! I shall have no joy or satisfaction or any cause for happiness until I am actually engaged with him."

The king understands that further advice and prayers are of no avail, so reluctantly he leaves his son and, taking a good, strong horse and handsome arms, he sends them to him who well deserves them, together with a surgeon who was a loyal and Christian man. There was in the world no more trusty man, and he was more skilled in the cure of wounds than all the doctors of Montpeilier. That night he treated the knight as best he could, in accordance with the king's command. Already the news was known by the knights and damsels, the ladies and barons of all the country-side, and all through the night until daybreak strangers and friends were making long journeys from all the country round. When morning came, there was such a press before the castle that there was not room to move one's foot. And the king, rising early in his distress about the battle, goes directly to his son, who had already laced upon his head the helmet which was of Poitiers make. No delay or peace is possible, for though the king did his best, his efforts are of no effect. In the middle of the castle-square, where all the people are assembled, the battle will be fought in compliance with the king's wish and command. The king sends at once for the stranger knight, and he is conducted to the grounds which were filled with people from the kingdom of Logres. For just as people are accustomed to go to church to hear the organ on the annual feast-days of Pentecost or Christmas, so they had all assembled now. All the foreign maidens from King Arthur's realm had fasted three days and gone barefoot in their shifts, in order that God might endow with strength and courage the knight who was to fight his adversary on behalf of the captives. Very early, before prime had yet been sounded, both of the knights fully armed were led to the place, mounted upon two horses equally protected. Meleagant was very graceful, alert, and shapely; the hauberk with its fine meshes, the helmet, and the shield hanging from his neck—all these became him well. All the spectators, however, favoured the other knight, even those who wished him ill, and they say that Meleagant is worth nothing compared with him. As soon as they were both on the ground, the king comes and detains them as long as possible in an effort to make peace between them, but he is unable to persuade his son. Then he says to them: "Hold in your horses until I reach the top of the tower. It will be only a slight favour, if you will wait so long for me." Then in sorrowful mood he leaves them and goes directly to the place where he knew he would find the Queen. She had begged him the evening before to place her where she might have an unobstructed view of the battle; he had granted her the boon, and went now to seek and fetch her, for he was very anxious to show her honour and courtesy. He placed her at one window, and took his place at another window on her right. Beside them, there were gathered there many knights and prudent dames and damsels, who were natives of that land; and there were many others, who were captives, and who were intent upon their orisons and prayers. Those who were prisoners were praying for their lord, for to God and to him they entrusted their succour and deliverance. Then the combatants without delay make all the people stand aside; then they clash the shields with their elbows, and thrust their arms into the straps, and spur at each other so violently that each sends his lance two arms' length through his opponent's shield, causing the lance to split and splinter like a flying spark. And the horses meet head on, clashing breast to breast, and the shields and helmets crash with such a noise that it seems like a mighty thunder-clap; not a breast-strap, girth, rein or surcingle remains unbroken, and the saddle-bows, though strong, are broken to pieces. The combatants felt no shame in falling to earth, in view of their mishaps, but they quickly spring to their feet, and without waste of threatening words rush at each other more fiercely than two wild boars, and deal great blows with their swords of steel like men whose hate is violent. Repeatedly they trim the helmets and shining hauberks so fiercely that after the sword the blood spurts out. They furnished an excellent battle, indeed, as they stunned and wounded each other with their heavy, wicked blows. Many fierce, hard, long bouts they sustained with equal honour, so that the onlookers could discern no advantage on either side. But it was inevitable that he who had crossed the bridge should be much weakened by his wounded hands. The people who sided with him were much dismayed, for they notice that his strokes are growing weaker, and they fear he will get the worst of it; it seemed to them that he was weakening, while Meleagant was triumphing, and they began to murmur all around. But up at the window of the tower there was a wise maiden who thought within herself that the knight had not undertaken the battle either on her account or for the sake of the common herd who had gathered about the list, but that his only incentive had been the Queen; and she thought that, if he knew that she was at the window seeing and watching him, his strength and courage would increase. And if she had known his name, she would gladly have called to him to look about him. Then she came to the Queen and said: "Lady, for God's sake and your own as well as ours, I beseech you to tell me, if you know, the name of yonder knight, to the end that it may be of some help to him." "Damsel," the Queen replies, "you have asked me a question in which I see no hate or evil, but rather good intent; the name of the knight, I know, is Lancelot of the Lake." "God, how happy and glad at heart I am!" the damsel says. Then she leans forward and calls to him by name so loudly that all the people hear: "Lancelot, turn about and see who is here taking note of thee!"

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When Lancelot heard his name, he was not slow to turn around: he turns and sees seated up there at the window of the tower her whom he desired most in the world to see. From the moment he caught sight of her, he did not turn or take his eyes and face from her, defending himself with backhand blows. And Meleagant meanwhile attacked him as fiercely as he could, delighted to think that the other cannot withstand him now; and they of the country are well pleased too, while the foreigners are so distressed that they can no longer support themselves, and many of them fall to earth either upon their knees or stretched out prone; thus some are glad, and some distressed. Then the damsel cried again from the window: "Ah, Lancelot, how is it that thou dost now conduct thyself so foolishly? Once thou wert the embodiment of prowess and of all that is good, and I do not think God ever made a knight who could equal thee in valour and in worth. But now we see thee so distressed that thou dealest back-hand blows and fightest thy adversary, behind thy back. Turn, so as to be on the other side, and so that thou canst face toward this tower, for it will help thee to keep it in view." Then Lancelot is so ashamed and mortified that he hates himself, for he knows full well that all have seen how, for some time past, he has had the worst of the fight. Thereupon he leaps backward and so manoeuvres as to force Meleagant into a position between him and the tower. Meleagant makes every effort to regain his former position. But Lancelot rushes upon him, and strikes him so violently upon his body and shield whenever he tries to get around him, that he compels him to whirl about two or three times in spite of himself. Lancelot's strength and courage grow, partly because he has love's aid, and partly because he never hated any one so much as him with whom he is engaged. Love and mortal hate, so fierce that never before was such hate seen, make him so fiery and bold that Meleagant ceases to treat it as a jest and begins to stand in awe of him, for he had never met or known so doughty a knight, nor had any knight ever wounded or injured him as this one does. He is glad to get away from him, and he winces and sidesteps, fearing his blows and avoiding them. And Lancelot does not idly threaten him, but drives him rapidly toward the tower where the Queen was stationed on the watch. There upon the tower he did her the homage of his blows until he came so close that, if he advanced another step, he would lose sight of her. Thus Lancelot drove him back and forth repeatedly in whatever direction he pleased, always stopping before the Queen, his lady, who had kindled the flame which compels him to fix his gaze upon her. And this same flame so stirred him against Meleagant that he was enabled to lead and drive him wherever he pleased. In spite of himself he drives him on like a blind man or a man with a wooden leg. The king sees his son so hard pressed that he is sorry for him and he pities him, and he will not deny him aid and assistance if possible; but if he wishes to proceed courteously, he must first beg the Queen's permission. So he began to say to her: "Lady, since I have had you in my power, I have loved you and faithfully served and honoured you. I never consciously left anything undone in which I saw your honour involved; now repay me for what I have done. For I am about to ask you a favour which you should not grant unless you do so willingly. I plainly see that my son is getting the worst of this battle; I do not speak so because of the chagrin I feel, but in order that Lancelot, who has him in his power, may not kill him. Nor ought you to wish to see him killed; not because he has not wronged both you and him, but because I make the request of you: so tell him, please, to stop beating him. If you will, you can thus repay me for what I have done for you." "Fair sire, I am willing to do so at your request," the Queen replies; "had I mortal hatred for your son, whom it is true I do not love, yet you have served me so well that, to please you, I am quite willing that he should desist." These words were not spoken privately, but Lancelot and Meleagant heard what was said. The man who is a perfect lover is always obedient and quickly and gladly does his mistress' pleasure. So Lancelot was constrained to do his Lady's will, for he loved more than Pyramus, if that were possible for any man to do. Lancelot heard what was said, and as soon as the last word had issued from her mouth, "since you wish him to desist, I am willing that he should do so," Lancelot would not have touched him or made a movement for anything, even if the other had killed him. He does not touch him or raise his hand. But Meleagant, beside himself with rage and shame when he hears that it has been necessary to intercede in his behalf, strikes him with all the strength he can muster. And the king went down from the tower to upbraid his son, and entering the list he addressed him thus: "How now? Is this becoming, to strike him when he is not touching thee? Thou art too cruel and savage, and thy prowess is now out of place! For we all know beyond a doubt that he is thy superior." Then Meleagant, choking with shame, says to the king: "I think you must be blind! I do not believe you see a thing. Any one must indeed be blind to think I am not better than he." "Seek some one to believe thy words!" the king replies, "for all the people know whether thou speakest the truth or a lie. All of us know full well the truth." Then the king bids his barons lead his son away, which they do at once in execution of his command: they led away Meleagant. But it was not necessary to use force to induce Lancelot to withdraw, for Meleagant might have harmed him grievously, before he would have sought to defend himself. Then the king says to his son: "So help me God, now thou must make peace and surrender the Queen. Thou must cease this quarrel once for all and withdraw thy claim." "That is great nonsense you have uttered! I hear you speak foolishly. Stand aside! Let us fight, and do not mix in our affairs!" But the king says he will take a hand, for he knows well that, were the fight to continue, Lancelot would kill his son. "He kill me! Rather would I soon defeat and kill him, if you would leave us alone and let us fight." Then the king says: "So help

me God, all that thou sayest is of no avail." "Why is that?" he asks. "Because I will not consent. I will not so trust in thy folly and pride as to allow thee to be killed. A man is a fool to court death, as thou dost in thy ignorance. I know well that thou hatest me because I wish to save thy life. God will not let me see and witness thy death, if I can help it, for it would cause me too much grief." He talks to him and reproves him until finally peace and good-will are restored. The terms of the peace are these: he will surrender the Queen to Lancelot, provided that the latter without reluctance will fight them again within a year of such time as he shall choose to summon him: this is no trial to Lancelot. When peace is made, all the people press about, and it is decided that the battle shall be fought at the court of King Arthur, who holds Britain and Cornwall in his sway: there they decide that it shall be. And the Queen has to consent, and Lancelot has to promise, that if Meleagant can prove him recreant, she shall come back with him again without the interference of any one. When the Queen and Lancelot had both agreed to this, the arrangement was concluded, and they both retired and removed their arms. Now the custom in the country was that when one issued forth, all the others might do so too. All called down blessings upon Lancelot: and you may know that he must have felt great joy, as in truth he did. All the strangers assemble and rejoice over Lancelot, speaking so as to be heard by him: "Sire, in truth we were joyful as soon as we heard your name, for we felt sure at once that we should all be set free." There was a great crowd present at this glad scene, as each one strives and presses forward to touch him if possible. Any one who succeeded in touching him was more delighted than he could tell. There was plenty of joy, and of sorrow too; those who were now set free rejoiced unrestrainedly; but Meleagant and his followers have not anything they want, but are pensive, gloomy, and downcast. The king turns away from the list, taking with him Lancelot, who begs him to take him to the Queen. "I shall not fail to do so," the king replies; "for it seems to me the proper thing to do. And if you like, I will show you Kay the seneschal." At this Lancelot is so glad that he almost falls at his feet. Then the king took him at once into the hall, where the Queen had come to wait for him.

When the Queen saw the king holding Lancelot by the hand, she rose before the king, but she looked displeased with clouded brow, and she spoke not a word. "Lady, here is Lancelot come to see you," says the king; "you ought to be pleased and satisfied." "I, sire? He cannot please me. I care nothing about seeing him." "Come now, lady," says the king who was very frank and courteous, "what induces you to act like this? You are too scornful toward a man who has served you so faithfully that he has repeatedly exposed his life to mortal danger on this journey for your sake, and who has defended and rescued you from my son Meleagant who had deeply wronged you." "Sire, truly he has made poor use of his time. I shall never deny that I feel no gratitude toward him." Now Lancelot is dumbfounded; but he replies very humbly like a polished lover: "Lady, certainly I am grieved at this, but I dare not ask your reason." The Queen listened as Lancelot voiced his disappointment, but in order to grieve and confound him, she would not answer a single word, but returned to her room. And Lancelot followed her with his eyes and heart until she reached the door; but she was not long in sight, for the room was close by. His eyes would gladly have followed her, had that been possible; but the heart, which is more lordly and masterful in its strength, went through the door after her, while the eyes remained behind weeping with the body. And the king said privily to him: "Lancelot, I am amazed at what this means: and how it comes about that the Queen cannot endure the sight of you, and that she is so unwilling to speak with you. If she is ever accustomed to speak with you, she ought not to be niggardly now or avoid conversation with you, after what you have done for her. Now tell me, if you know, why and for what misdeed she has shown you such a countenance." "Sire, I did not notice that just now; but she will not look at me or hear my words, and that distresses and grieves me much." "Surely," says the king, "she is in the wrong, for you have risked your life for her. Come away now, fair sweet friend, and we shall go to speak with the seneschal." "I shall be glad to do so," he replies. Then they both go to the seneschal. As soon as Lancelot came where he was, the seneschal's first exclamation was: "How thou hast shamed me!" "I? How so?" Lancelot inquires; "tell me what disgrace have I brought upon you?" "A very great disgrace, for thou hast carried out what I could not accomplish, and thou hast done what I could not do."

Then the king left them together in the room, and went out alone. And Lancelot inquires of the seneschal if he has been badly off. "Yes," he answers, "and I still am so. I was never more wretched than I am now. And I should have died a long time ago, had it not been for the king, who in his compassion has shown me so much gentleness and kindness that he willingly let me lack nothing of which I stood in need; but I was furnished at once with everything that I desired. But opposed to the kindness which he showed me, was Meleagant his son, who is full of wickedness, and who summoned the physicians to him and bade them apply such ointments as would kill me. Such a father and stepfather have I had! For when the king had a good plaster applied to my wounds in his desire that I should soon be cured, his treacherous son, wishing to put me to death, had it promptly taken off and some harmful salve applied. But I am very sure that the king was ignorant of this; he would not tolerate such base and murderous tricks. But you do not know how courteous he has been to my lady: no frontier tower since the time that Noah built the ark was ever so carefully guarded, for he has guarded her so vigilantly that, though his son chafed under the restraint, he would not let him see her except in the presence of the king himself. Up to the present time the king in his mercy has shown her all the marks of consideration which she herself proposed. She alone had the disposition of her affairs. And the king esteemed her all the more for the loyalty she showed. But is it true, as I am told, that she

is so angry with you that she has publicly refused to speak with you?" "You have been told the exact truth," Lancelot replies, "but for God's sake, can you tell me why she is so displeased with me?" He replies that he does not know, and that he is greatly surprised at it. "Well, let it be as she pleases," says Lancelot, feeling his helplessness; "I must now take my leave, and I shall go to seek my lord Gawain who has entered this land, and who arranged with me that he would proceed directly to the waterbridge." Then, leaving the room, he appeared before the king and asked for leave to proceed in that direction. And the king willingly grants him leave to go. Then those whom Lancelot had set free and delivered from prison ask him what they are to do. And he replies: "All those who desire may come with me, and those who wish to stay with the Queen may do so: there is no reason why they should accompany me." Then all those, who so desire, accompany him, more glad and joyous than is their wont. With the Queen remain her damsels who are light of heart, and many knights and ladies too. But there is not one of those who stay behind, who would not have preferred to return to his own country to staying there. But on my lord Gawain's account, whose arrival is expected, the Queen keeps them, saying that she will never stir until she has news of him.

The news spreads everywhere that the Queen is free to go, and that all the other prisoners have been set at liberty and are free to go whenever it suits and pleases them. Wherever the people of the land gather together, they ask each other about the truth of this report, and never talk of anything else. They are very much enraged that all the dangerous passes have been overcome, and that any one may come and go as he pleases. But when the natives of the country, who had not been present at the battle, learned how Lancelot had been the victor, they all betook themselves to the place where they knew he must pass by, thinking that the king would be well pleased if they should seize Lancelot and hale him back to him. All of his own men were without their arms, and therefore they were at a disadvantage when they saw the natives of the country coming under arms. It was not strange that they seized Lancelot, who was without his arms. They lead him back prisoner, his feet lashed together beneath his horse. Then his own men say: "Gentlemen, this is an evil deed; for the king has given us his safe-conduct, and we are under his protection." But the others reply: "We do not know how that may be; but as we have taken you, you must return with us to court." The rumour, which swiftly flies and runs, reaches the king, that his men have seized Lancelot and put him to death. When the king hears it, he is sorely grieved and swears angrily by his head that they who have killed him shall surely die for the deed; and that, if he can seize or catch them, it shall be their fate to be hanged, burned, or drowned. And if they attempt to deny their deed, he will not believe what they say, for they have brought him such grief and shame that he would be disgraced were vengeance not to be exacted from them; but he will be avenged without a doubt. The news of this spread until it reached the Queen, who was sitting at meat. She almost killed herself on hearing the false report about Lancelot, but she supposes it to be true, and therefore she is in such dismay that she almost loses the power to speak; but, because of those present, she forces herself to say: "In truth, I am sorry for his death, and it is no wonder that I grieve, for he came into this country for my sake, and therefore I should mourn for him." Then she says to herself, so that the others should not hear, that no one need ask her to drink or eat, if it is true that he is dead, in whose life she found her own. Then grieving she rises from the table, and makes her lament, but so that no one hears or notices her. She is so beside herself that she repeatedly grasps her throat with the desire to kill herself; but first she confesses to herself, and repents with self-reproach, blaming and censuring herself for the wrong she had done him, who, as she knew, had always been hers, and would still be hers, if he were alive. She is so distressed at the thought of her cruelty, that her beauty is seriously impaired. Her cruelty and meanness affected her and marred her beauty more than all the vigils and fastings with which she afflicted herself. When all her sins rise up before her, she gathers them together, and as she reviews them, she repeatedly exclaims: "Alas! of what was I thinking when my lover stood before me and I should have welcomed him, that I would not listen to his words? Was I not a fool, when I refused to look at or speak to him? Foolish indeed? Rather was I base and cruel, so help me God. I intended it as a jest, but he did not take it so, and has not pardoned me. I am sure it was no one but me who gave him his death-blow. When he came before me smiling and expecting that I would be glad to see him and would welcome him, and when I would not look at him, was not that a mortal blow? When I refused to speak with him, then doubtless at one blow I deprived him of his heart and life. These two strokes have killed him, I am sure; no other bandits have caused his death. God! can I ever make amends for this murder and this crime? No, indeed; sooner will the rivers and the sea dry up. Alas! how much better I should feel, and how much comfort I should take, if only once before he died I had held him in my arms! What? Yes, certainly, quite unclad, in order the better to enjoy him. If he is dead, I am very wicked not to destroy myself. Why? Can it harm my lover for me to live on after he is dead, if I take no pleasure in anything but in the woe I bear for him? In giving myself up to grief after his death, the very woes I court would be sweet to me, if he were only still alive. It is wrong for a woman to wish to die rather than to suffer for her lover's sake. It is certainly sweet for me to mourn him long. I would rather be beaten alive than die and be at rest."

For two days the Queen thus mourned for him without eating or drinking, until they thought she too would die. There are plenty of people ready to carry bad news rather than good. The news reaches Lancelot that his lady and sweetheart is dead. You need have no doubt of the grief he felt; every one may feel sure that he was afflicted and

overcome with grief. Indeed, if you would know the truth, he was so downcast that he held his life in slight esteem. He wished to kill himself at once, but first he uttered a brief lament. He makes a running noose at one end of the belt he wore, and then tearfully communes thus with himself: "Ah, death, how hast thou spied me out and undone me, when in the bloom of health! I am undone, and yet I feel no pain except the grief within my heart. This is a terrible mortal grief. I am willing that it should be so, and if God will, I shall die of it. Then can I not die some other way, without God's consent? Yes, if he will let me tie this noose around my neck. I think I can compel death, even against her will, to take my life. Death, who covets only those who fear her, will not come to me; but my belt will bring her within my power, and as soon as she is mine, she will execute my desire. But, in truth, she will come too tardily for me, for I yearn to have her now!" Then he delays and hesitates no longer, but adjusts his head within the noose until it rests about his neck; and in order that he may not fail to harm himself, he fastens the end of the belt tightly about the saddle-bow, without attracting the attention of any one. Then he let himself slide to earth, intending his horse to drag him until he was lifeless, for he disdains to live another hour. When those who ride with him see him fallen to earth, they suppose him to be in a faint, for no one sees the noose which he had attached about his neck. At once they caught him in their arms and, on raising him, they found the noose which he had put around his neck and with which he sought to kill himself. They quickly cut the noose; but the noose had so hurt his throat that for some time he could not speak; the veins of his neck and throat are almost broken. Now he could not harm himself, even had he wished to do so; however, he is grieved that they have laid hands on him, and he almost burns up with rage, for willingly would he have killed himself had no one chanced to notice him. And now when he cannot harm himself, he cries: "Ah, vile and shameless death! For God's sake, why hadst thou not the power and might to kill me before my lady died? I suppose it was because thou wouldst not deign to do what might be a kindly deed. If thou didst spare me, it must be attributed to thy wickedness. Ah, what kind of service and kindness is that! How well hast thou employed them here! A curse upon him who thanks thee or feels gratitude for such a service! I know not which is more my enemy: life, which detains me, or death, which will not slay me. Each one torments me mortally; and it serves me right, so help me God, that in spite of myself I should still live on. For I ought to have killed myself as soon as my lady the Queen showed her hate for me; she did not do it without cause, but she had some good reason, though I know not what it is. And if I had known what it was before her soul went to God, I should have made her such rich amends as would have pleased her and gained her mercy. God! what could my crime have been? I think she must have known that I mounted upon the cart. I do not know what other cause she can have to blame me. This has been my undoing. If this is the reason of her hate, God! what harm could this crime do? Any one who would reproach me for such an act never knew what love is, for no one could mention anything which, if prompted by love, ought to be turned into a reproach. Rather, everything that one can do for his lady-love is to be regarded as a token of his love and courtesy. Yet, I did not do it for my 'lady-love'. I know not by what name to call her, whether 'lady-love', or not. I do not dare to call her by this name. But I think I know this much of love: that if she loved me, she ought not to esteem me less for this crime, but rather call me her true lover, inasmuch as I regarded it as an honour to do all love bade me do, even to mount upon a cart. She ought to ascribe this to love; and this is a certain proof that love thus tries his devotees and thus learns who is really his. But this service did not please my lady, as I discovered by her countenance. And yet her lover did for her that for which many have shamefully reproached and blamed him, though she was the cause of it; and many blame me for the part I have played, and have turned my sweetness into bitterness. In truth, such is the custom of those who know so little of love, that even honour they wash in shame. But whoever dips honour into shame, does not wash it, but rather sullies it. But they, who maltreat him so, are quite ignorant of love; and he, who fears not his commands, boasts himself very superior to him. For unquestionably he fares well who obeys the commands of love, and whatever he does is pardonable, but he is the coward who does not dare."

Thus Lancelot makes his lament, and his men stand grieving by his side, keeping hold of him and guarding him. Then the news comes that the Queen is not dead. Thereupon Lancelot at once takes comfort, and if his grief for her death had before been intense and deep, now his joy for her life was a hundred thousand times as great. And when they arrived within six or seven leagues of the castle where King Bademagu was, grateful news of Lancelot was told him, how he was alive and was coming hale and hearty, and this news the king was glad to hear. He did a very courteous thing in going at once to appraise the Queen. And she replies: "Fair sire, since you say so, I believe it is true, but I assure you that, if he were dead, I should never be happy again. All my joy would be cut off, if a knight had been killed in my service."

Then the king leaves her, and the Queen yearns ardently for the arrival of her lover and her joy. She has no desire this time to bear him any grudge. But rumour, which never rests but runs always unceasingly, again reaches the Queen to the effect that Lancelot would have killed himself for her sake, if he had had the chance. She is happy at the thought that this is true, but she would not have had it happen so for anything, for her sorrow would have been too great. Thereupon Lancelot arrived in haste. As soon as the king sees him, he runs to kiss and embrace him. He feels as if he ought to fly, borne along by the buoyancy of his joy. But his satisfaction is cut short by those who

had taken and bound his guest, and the king tells them they have come in an evil hour, for they shall all be killed and confounded. Then they made answer that they thought he would have it so. "It is I whom you have insulted in doing your pleasure. He has no reason to complain," the king replies; "you have not shamed him at all, but only me who was protecting him. However you look at it, the shame is mine. But if you escape me now, you will see no joke in this." When Lancelot hears his wrath, he puts forth every effort to make peace and adjust matters; when his efforts have met with success, the king takes him away to see the Queen. This time the Queen did not lower her eyes to the ground, but she went to meet him cheerfully, honouring him all she could, and making him sit down by her side. Then they talked together at length of all that was upon their hearts, and love furnished them with so much to say that topics did not lack. And when Lancelot sees how well he stands, and that all he says finds favour with the Queen, he says to her in confidence: "Lady, I marvel greatly why you received me with such a countenance when you saw me the day before yesterday, and why you would not speak a word to me: I almost died of the blow you gave me, and I had not the courage to dare to question you about it, as I now venture to do. I am ready now, lady, to make amends, when you have told me what has been the crime which has caused me such distress." Then the Queen replies: "What? Did you not hesitate for shame to mount the cart? You showed you were loath to get in, when you hesitated for two whole steps. That is the reason why I would neither address nor look at you." "May God save me from such a crime again," Lancelot replies, "and may God show me no mercy, if you were not quite right! For God's sake, lady, receive my amends at once, and tell me, for God's sake, if you can ever pardon me." "Friend, you are quite forgiven," the Queen replies; "I pardon you willingly." "Thank you for that, lady," he then says; "but I cannot tell you here all that I should like to say; I should like to talk with you more at leisure, if possible." Then the Queen indicates a window by her glance rather than with her finger, and says: "Come through the garden to-night and speak with me at yonder window, when every one inside has gone to sleep. You will not be able to get in: I shall be inside and you outside: to gain entrance will be impossible. I shall be able to touch you only with my lips or hand, but, if you please, I will stay there until morning for love of you. Our bodies cannot be joined, for close beside me in my room lies Kay the seneschal, who is still suffering from his wounds. And the door is not open, but is tightly closed and guarded well. When you come, take care to let no spy catch sight of you." "Lady," says he, "if I can help it, no spy shall see me who might think or speak evil of us." Then, having agreed upon this plan, they separate very joyfully.

Lancelot leaves the room in such a happy frame that all his past troubles are forgotten. But he was so impatient for the night to come that his restlessness made the day seem longer than a hundred ordinary days or than an entire year. If night had only come, he would gladly have gone to the trysting place. Dark and sombre night at last won its struggle with the day, and wrapped it up in its covering, and laid it away beneath its cloak. When he saw the light of day obscured, he pretended to be tired and worn, and said that, in view of his protracted vigils, he needed rest. You, who have ever done the same, may well understand and guess that he pretends to be tired and goes to bed in order to deceive the people of the house; but he cared nothing about his bed, nor would he have sought rest there for anything, for he could not have done so and would not have dared, and furthermore he would not have cared to possess the courage or the power to do so. Soon he softly rose, and was pleased to find that no moon or star was shining, and that in the house there was no candle, lamp, or lantern burning. Thus he went out and looked about, but there was no one on the watch for him, for all thought that he would sleep in his bed all night. Without escort or company he quickly went out into the garden, meeting no one on the way, and he was so fortunate as to find that a part of the garden-wall had recently fallen down. Through this break he passes quickly and proceeds to the window, where he stands, taking good care not to cough or sneeze, until the Queen arrives clad in a very white chemise. She wore no cloak or coat, but had thrown over her a short cape of scarlet cloth and shrew-mouse fur. As soon as Lancelot saw the Queen leaning on the window-sill behind the great iron bars, he honoured her with a gentle salute. She promptly returned his greeting, for he was desirous of her, and she of him. Their talk and conversation are not of vulgar, tiresome affairs. They draw close to one another, until each holds the other's hand. But they are so distressed at not being able to come together more completely, that they curse the iron bars. Then Lancelot asserts that, with the Queen's consent, he will come inside to be with her, and that the bars cannot keep him out. And the Queen replies: "Do you not see how the bars are stiff to bend and hard to break? You could never so twist, pull or drag at them as to dislodge one of them." "Lady," says he, "have no fear of that. It would take more than these bars to keep me out. Nothing but your command could thwart my power to come to you. If you will but grant me your permission, the way will open before me. But if it is not your pleasure, then the way is so obstructed that I could not possibly pass through." "Certainly," she says, "I consent. My will need not stand in your way; but you must wait until I retire to my bed again, so that no harm may come to you, for it would be no joke or jest if the seneschal, who is sleeping here, should wake up on hearing you. So it is best for me to withdraw, for no good could come of it, if he should see me standing here." "Go then, lady," he replies; "but have no fear that I shall make any noise. I think I can draw out the bars so softly and with so little effort that no one shall be aroused."

Then the Queen retires, and he prepares to loosen the window. Seizing the bars, he pulls and wrenches them until he makes them bend and drags them from their places. But the iron was so sharp that the end of his little

finger was cut to the nerve, and the first joint of the next finger was torn; but he who is intent upon something else paid no heed to any of his wounds or to the blood which trickled down. Though the window is not low, Lancelot gets through it quickly and easily. First he finds Kay asleep in his bed, then he comes to the bed of the Queen, whom he adores and before whom he kneels, holding her more dear than the relic of any saint. And the Queen extends her arms to him and, embracing him, presses him tightly against her bosom, drawing him into the bed beside her and showing him every possible satisfaction; her love and her heart go out to him. It is love that prompts her to treat him so; and if she feels great love for him, he feels a hundred thousand times as much for her. For there is no love at all in other hearts compared with what there is in his; in his heart love was so completely embodied that it was niggardly toward all other hearts. Now Lancelot possesses all he wants, when the Queen voluntarily seeks his company and love, and when he holds her in his arms, and she holds him in hers. Their sport is so agreeable and sweet, as they kiss and fondle each other, that in truth such a marvellous joy comes over them as was never heard or known. But their joy will not be revealed by me, for in a story, it has no place. Yet, the most choice and delightful satisfaction was precisely that of which our story must not speak. That night Lancelot's joy and pleasure were very great. But, to his sorrow, day comes when he must leave his mistress' side. It cost him such pain to leave her that he suffered a real martyr's agony. His heart now stays where the Queen remains; he has not the power to lead it away, for it finds such pleasure in the Queen that it has no desire to leave her: so his body goes, and his heart remains. But enough of his body stays behind to spot and stain the sheets with the blood which has fallen from his fingers. Full of sighs and tears, Lancelot leaves in great distress. He grieves that no time is fixed for another meeting, but it cannot be. Regretfully he leaves by the window through which he had entered so happily. He was so badly wounded in the fingers that they were in sorry state; yet he straightened the bars and set them in their place again, so that from neither side, either before or behind, was it evident that any one had drawn out or bent any of the bars. When he leaves the room, he bows and acts precisely as if he were before a shrine; then he goes with a heavy heart, and reaches his lodgings without being recognised by any one. He throws himself naked upon his bed without awaking any one, and then for the first time he is surprised to notice the cuts in his fingers; but he is not at all concerned, for he is very sure that the wound was caused by dragging the window bars from the wall. Therefore he was not at all worried, for he would rather have had both arms dragged from his body than not enter through the window. But he would have been very angry and distressed, if he had thus injured and wounded himself under any other circumstances.

In the morning, within her curtained room, the Queen had fallen into a gentle sleep; she had not noticed that her sheets were spotted with blood, but she supposed them to be perfectly white and clean and presentable. Now Meleagant, as soon as he was dressed and ready, went to the room where the Queen lay. He finds her awake, and he sees the sheets spotted with fresh drops of blood, whereupon he nudges his companions and, suspicious of some mischief, looks at the bed of Kay the seneschal, and sees that his sheets are blood-stained too, for you must know that in the night his wounds had begun to bleed afresh. Then he said: "Lady, now I have found the evidence that I desired. It is very true that any man is a fool to try to confine a woman: he wastes his efforts and his pains. He who tries to keep her under guard loses her sooner than the man who takes no thought of her. A fine watch, indeed, has been kept by my father, who is guarding you on my behalf! He has succeeded in keeping you from me, but, in spite of him, Kay the seneschal has looked upon you last night, and has done what he pleased with you, as can readily be proved." "What is that?" she asks. "Since I must speak, I find blood on your sheets, which proves the fact. I know it and can prove it, because I find on both your sheets and his the blood which issued from his wounds: the evidence is very strong." Then the Queen saw on both beds the bloody sheets, and marvelling, she blushed with shame and said: "So help me God, this blood which I see upon my sheets was never brought here by Kay, but my nose bled during the night, and I suppose it must be from my nose." In saying so, she thinks she tells the truth. "By my head," says Meleagant, "there is nothing in what you say. Swearing is of no avail, for you are taken in your guilt, and the truth will soon be proved." Then he said to the guards who were present: "Gentlemen, do not move, and see to it that the sheets are not taken from the bed until I return. I wish the king to do me justice, as soon as he has seen the truth." Then he searched until he found him, and failing at his feet, he said: "Sire, come to see what you have failed to guard. Come to see the Queen, and you shall see the certain marvels which I have already seen and tested. But, before you go, I beg you not to fail to be just and upright toward me. You know well to what danger I have exposed myself for the Queen; yet, you are no friend of mine and keep her from me under guard. This morning I went to see her in her bed, and I remarked that Kay lies with her every night. Sire, for God's sake, be not angry, if I am disgruntled and if I complain. For it is very humiliating for me to be hated and despised by one with whom Kay is allowed to lie." "Silence!" says the king; "I don't believe it." "Then come, my lord, and see the sheets and the state in which Kay has left them. Since you will not believe my words, and since you think I am lying, I will show you the sheets and the quilt covered with blood from Kay's wounds." "Come now," says the king, "I wish to see for myself, and my eyes will judge of the truth." Then the king goes directly to the room, where the Queen got up at his approach. He sees that the sheets are blood-stained on her bed and on Kay's alike and he says: "Lady, it is going badly now, if what

my son has said is true." Then she replies: "So help me God, never even in a dream was uttered such a monstrous lie. I think Kay the seneschal is courteous and loyal enough not to commit such a deed, and besides, I do not expose my body in the market-place, nor offer it of my own free will. Surely, Kay is not the man to make an insulting proposal to me, and I have never desired and shall never desire to do such a thing myself." "Sire, I shall be much obliged to you," says Meleagant to his father, "if Kay shall be made to atone for this outrage, and the Queen's shame thus be exposed. It devolves upon you to see that justice is done, and this justice I now request and claim. Kay has betrayed King Arthur, his lord, who had such confidence in him that he entrusted to him what he loved most in the world." "Let me answer, sire," says Kay, "and I shall exonerate myself. May God have no mercy upon my soul when I leave this world, if I ever lay with my lady! Indeed, I should rather be dead than ever do my lord such an ugly wrong, and may God never grant me better health than I have now but rather kill me on the spot, if such a thought ever entered my mind! But I know that my wounds bled profusely last night, and that is the reason why my sheets are stained with blood. That is why your son suspects me, but surely he has no right to do so." And Meleagant answers him: "So help me God, the devils and demons have betrayed you. You grew too heated last night and, as a result of your exertions, your wounds have doubtless bled afresh. There is no use in your denying it; we can see it, and it is perfectly evident. It is right that he should atone for his crime, who is so plainly taken in his guilt. Never did a knight with so fair a name commit such iniquities as this, and yours is the shame for it." "Sire, sire," says Kay to the king, "I will defend the Queen and myself against the accusation of your son. He harasses and distresses me, though he has no ground to treat me so." "You cannot fight," the king replies, "you are too ill." "Sire, if you will allow it, I will fight with him, ill as I am, and will show him that I am not guilty of the crime which he imputes to me." But the Queen, having secretly sent word to Lancelot, tells the king that she will present a knight who will defend the seneschal, if Meleagant dares to urge this charge. Then Meleagant said at once: "There is no knight without exception, even were he a giant, whom I will not fight until one of us is defeated." Then Lancelot came in, and with him such a rout of knights that the whole hall was filled with them. As soon as he had entered, in the hearing of all, both young and old, the Queen told what had happened, and said: "Lancelot, this insult has been done me by Meleagant. In the presence of all who hear his words he says I have lied, if you do not make him take it back. Last night, he asserted, Kay lay with me, because he found my sheets, like his, all stained with blood; and he says that he stands convicted, unless he will undertake his own defence, or unless some one else will fight the battle on his behalf." Lancelot says: "You need never use arguments with me. May it not please God that either you or he should be thus discredited! I am ready to fight and to prove to the extent of my power that he never was guilty of such a thought. I am ready to employ my strength in his behalf, and to defend him against this charge." Then Meleagant jumped up and said: "So help me God, I am pleased and well satisfied with that: no one need think that I object." And Lancelot said: "My lord king, I am well acquainted with suits and laws, with trials and verdicts: in a question of veracity an oath should be taken before the fight." Meleagant at once replies: "I agree to take an oath; so let the relics be brought at once, for I know well that I am right." And Lancelot answers him: "So help me God, no one who ever knew Kay the seneschal would doubt his word on such a point." Then they call for their horses, and ask that their arms be brought. This is promptly done, and when the valets had armed them, they were ready for the fight. Then the holy relics are brought forth: Meleagant steps forward, with Lancelot by his side, and both fall on their knees. Then Meleagant, laying his hands upon the relics, swears unreservedly: "So help me God and this holy relic, Kay the seneschal lay with the Queen in her bed last night and, had his pleasure with her." "And I swear that thou liest," says Lancelot, "and furthermore I swear that he neither lay with her nor touched her. And may it please God to take vengeance upon him who has lied, and may He bring the truth to light! Moreover, I will take another oath and swear, whoever may dislike it or be displeased, that if I am permitted to vanquish Meleagant to-day, I will show him no mercy, so help me God and these relics here!" The king felt no joy when he heard this oath.

When the oaths had been taken, their horses were brought forward, which were fair and good in every way. Each man mounts his own horse, and they ride at once at each other as fast as the steeds can carry them; and when the horses are in mid-career, the knights strike each other so fiercely that there is nothing left of the lances in their hands. Each brings the other to earth; however, they are not dismayed, but they rise at once and attack each other with their sharp drawn swords. The burning sparks fly in the air from their helmets. They assail each other so bitterly with the drawn swords in their hands that, as they thrust and draw, they encounter each other with their blows and will not pause even to catch their breath. The king in his grief and anxiety called the Queen, who had gone up in the tower to look out from the balcony: he begged her for God's sake, the Creator, to let them be separated. "Whatever is your pleasure is agreeable to me," the Queen says honestly: "I shall not object to anything you do." Lancelot plainly heard what reply the Queen made to the king's request, and from that time he ceased to fight and renounced the struggle at once. But Meleagant does not wish to stop, and continues to strike and hew at him. But the king rushes between them and stops his son, who declares with an oath that he has no desire for peace. He wants to fight, and cares not for peace. Then the king says to him: "Be quiet, and take my advice, and be sensible. No shame or harm shall come to thee, if thou wilt do what is right and heed my words. Dost thou not remember

that thou hast agreed to fight him at King Arthur's court? And dost thou not suppose that it would be a much greater honour for thee to defeat him there than anywhere else?" The king says this to see if he can so influence him as to appease him and separate them. And Lancelot, who was impatient to go in search of my lord Gawain, requests leave of the king and Queen to depart. With their permission he goes away toward the water-bridge, and after him there followed a great company of knights. But it would have suited him very well, if many of those who went had stayed behind. They make long days' journeys until they approach the water-bridge, but are still about a league from it. Before they came in sight of the bridge, a dwarf came to meet them on a mighty hunter, holding a scourge with which to urge on and incite his steed. In accordance with his instructions, he at once inquired: "Which of you is Lancelot? Don't conceal him from me; I am of your party; tell me confidently, for I ask the question for your good." Lancelot replies in his own behalf, and says: "I am he whom thou seekest and askest for." "Ah," says the dwarf, "frank knight, leave these people, and trust in me. Come along with me alone, for I will take thee to a goodly place. Let no one follow thee for anything, but let them wait here; for we shall return presently." He, suspecting no harm in this, bids all his men stay there, and follows the dwarf who has betrayed him. Meanwhile his men who wait for him may continue to expect him long in vain, for they, who have taken and seized him, have no desire to give him up. And his men are in such a state of grief at his failure to return that they do not know what steps to take. They all say sorrowfully that the dwarf has betrayed them. It would be useless to inquire for him: with heavy hearts they begin to search, but they know not where to look for him with any hope of finding him. So they all take counsel, and the most reasonable and sensible agree on this, it seems: to go to the passage of the water-bridge, which is close by, to see if they can find my lord Gawain in wood or plain, and then with his advice search for Lancelot. Upon this plan they all agree without dissension. Toward the water-bridge they go, and as soon as they reach the bridge, they see my lord Gawain overturned and fallen from the bridge into the stream which is very deep. One moment he rises, and the next he sinks; one moment they see him, and the next they lose him from sight. They make such efforts that they succeed in raising him with branches, poles and hooks. He had nothing but his hauberk on his back, and on his head was fixed his helmet, which was worth ten of the common sort, and he wore his iron greaves, which were all rusty with his sweat, for he had endured great trials, and had passed victoriously through many perils and assaults. His lance, his shield, and horse were all behind on the other bank. Those who have rescued him do not believe he is alive. For his body was full of water, and until he got rid of it, they did not hear him speak a word. But when his speech and voice and the passageway to his heart are free, and as soon, as what he said could be heard and understood, he tried to speak he inquired at once for the Queen, whether those present had any news of her. And they replied that she is still with King Bademagu, who serves her well and honourably. "Has no one come to seek her in this land?" my lord Gawain then inquires of them. And they answer him: "Yes, indeed." "Who?" "Lancelot of the Lake," they say, "who crossed the sword-bridge, and rescued and delivered her as well as all the rest of us. But we have been betrayed by a pot-bellied, humpbacked, and crabbed dwarf. He has deceived us shamefully in seducing Lancelot from us, and we do not know what he has done with him." "When was that?" my lord Gawain inquires. "Sire, near here this very day this trick was played on us, while he was coming with us to meet you." "And how has Lancelot been occupied since he entered this land?" Then they begin to tell him all about him in detail, and then they tell him about the Queen, how she is waiting for him and asserting that nothing could induce her to leave the country, until she sees him or hears some credible news of him. To them my lord Gawain replies: "When we leave this bridge, we shall go to search for Lancelot." There is not one who does not advise rather that they go to the Queen at once, and have the king seek Lancelot, for it is their opinion that his son Meleagant has shown his enmity by having him cast into prison. But if the king can learn where he is, he will certainly make him surrender him: they can rely upon this with confidence.

They all agreed upon this plan, and started at once upon their way until they drew near the court where the Queen and king were. There, too, was Kay the seneschal, and that disloyal man, full to overflowing of treachery, who has aroused the greatest anxiety for Lancelot on the part of the party which now arrives. They feel they have been discomfited and betrayed, and they make great lament in their misery. It is not a gracious message which reports this mourning to the Queen. Nevertheless, she deports herself with as good a grace as possible. She resolves to endure it, as she must, for the sake of my lord Gawain. However, she does not so conceal her grief that it does not somewhat appear. She has to show both joy and grief at once: her heart is empty for Lancelot, and to my lord Gawain she shows excessive joy. Every one who hears of the loss of Lancelot is grief-stricken and distracted. The king would have rejoiced at the coming of my lord Gawain and would have been delighted with his acquaintance; but he is so sorrowful and distressed over the betrayal of Lancelot that he is prostrated and full of grief. And the Queen beseeches him insisently to have him searched for, up and down throughout the land, without postponement or delay. My lord Gawain and Kay and all the others join in this prayer and request. "Leave this care to me, and speak no more of it," the king replies, "for I have been ready to do so for some time. Without need of request or prayer this search shall be made with thoroughness." Everyone bows in sign of gratitude, and the king at once sends messengers through his realm, sagacious and prudent men-at-arms, who inquired for him throughout the land. They made

inquiry for him everywhere, but gained no certain news of him. Not finding any, they come back to the place where the knights remain; then Gawain and Kay and all the others say that they will go in search of him, fully armed and lance in rest; they will not trust to sending some one else.

One day after dinner they were all in the hall putting on their arms, and the point had been reached where there was nothing to do but start, when a valet entered and passed by them all until he came before the Queen, whose cheeks were by no means rosy! For she was in such mourning for Lancelot, of whom she had no news, that she had lost all her colour. The valet greeted her as well as the king, who was by her side, and then all the others and Kay and my lord Gawain. He held a letter in his hand which he gave to the king, who took it. The king had it read in the hearing of all by one who made no mistake in reading it. The reader knew full well how to communicate to them what was written in the parchment: he says that Lancelot sends greetings to the king as his kind lord, and thanks him for the honour and kindness he has shown him, and that he now places himself at the king's orders. And know that he is now hale and hearty at King Arthur's court, and he bids him tell the Queen to come thither, if she will consent, in company with my lord Gawain and Kay. In proof of which, he affixed his signature which they should recognise, as indeed they did. At this they were very happy and glad; the whole court resounds with their jubilation, and they say they will start next day as soon as it is light. So, when the day broke, they make ready and prepare: they rise and mount and start. With great joy and jubilee the king escorts them for a long distance on their way. When he has conducted them to the frontier and has seen them safely across the border, he takes leave of the Queen, and likewise of all the rest. And when he comes to take his leave, the Queen is careful to express her gratitude for all the kindness he has shown to her, and throwing her arms about his neck, she offers and promises him



IMAGE 5.26: CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES | An etching of the French poet Chrétien working in his studio.

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her own service and that of her lord: no greater promise can she make. And my lord Gawain promises his service to him, as to his lord and friend, and then Kay does likewise, and all the rest. Then the king commends them to God as they start upon their way. After these three, he bids the rest farewell, and then turns his face toward home. The Queen and her company do not tarry a single day until news of them reaches the court. King Arthur was delighted at the news of the Queen's approach, and he is happy and pleased at the thought that his nephew had brought about the Queen's return, as well as that of Kay and of the lesser folk. But the truth is quite different from what he thinks. All the town is cleared as they go to meet them, and knights and vassals join in shouting as they approach: "Welcome to my lord Gawain, who has brought back the Queen and many another captive lady, and has freed for us many prisoners!" Then Gawain answered them: "Gentlemen, I do not deserve your praise. Do not trouble ever to say this again, for the compliment does not apply to me. This honour causes me only shame, for I did not reach the Queen in time; my detention made me late. But Lancelot reached there in time, and won such honour as was never won by any other knight." "Where is he, then, fair dear sire, for we do not see him here?" "Where?" echoes my lord Gawain; "at the court of my lord the King, to be sure. Is he not?" "No, he is not here, or anywhere else in this country. Since my lady was taken away, we have had no news of him." Then for the first time my lord Gawain realised that the letter had been forged, and that they had been betrayed and deceived: by the letter they had been misled. Then they all begin to lament, and they come thus weeping to the court, where the King at once asks

for information about the affair. There were plenty who could tell him how much Lancelot had done, how the Queen and all the captives were delivered from duance by him, and by what treachery the dwarf had stolen him

and drawn him away from them. This news is not pleasing to the King, and he is very sorry and full of grief; but his heart is so lightened by the pleasure he takes in the Queen's return, that his grief concludes in joy. When he has what he most desires, he cares little for the rest.

While the Queen was out of the country, I believe, the ladies and the damsels who were disconsolate, decided among themselves that they would marry, soon, and they organised a contest and a tournament. The lady of Noauz was patroness of it, with the lady of Pomelegloi. They will have nothing to do with those who fare ill, but they assert that they will accept those who comport themselves well in the tournament. And they had the date of the contest proclaimed so long while in advance in all the countries near and far, in order that there might be more participants. Now the Queen arrived before the date they had set, and as soon as the ladies heard of the Queen's return, most of them came at once to the King and besought him to grant them a favour and boon, which he did. He promised to do whatever they wished, before he knew what their desire might be. Then they told him that they wished him to let the Queen come to be present at their contest. And he who was not accustomed to forbid, said he was willing, if she wished it so. In happy mood they go to the Queen and say to her: "Lady, do not deprive us of the boon which the King has granted us." Then she asks them: "What is that? Don't fail to tell!" Then they say to her: "If you will come to our tournament, he will not gainsay you nor stand in the way." Then she said that she would come, since he was willing that she should. Promptly the dames send word throughout the realm that they are going to bring the Queen on the day set for the tournament. The news spread far and near, here and there, until it reached the kingdom whence no one used to return—but now whoever wished might enter or pass out unopposed. The news travelled in this kingdom until it came to a seneschal of the faithless Meleagant may an evil fire burn him! This seneschal had Lancelot in his keeping, for to him he had been entrusted by his enemy Meleagant, who hated him with deadly hate. Lancelot learned the hour and date of the tournament, and as soon as he heard of it, his eyes were not tearless nor was his heart glad. The lady of the house, seeing Lancelot sad and pensive, thus spoke to him: "Sire, for God's sake and for your own soul's good, tell me truly," the lady said, "why you are so changed. You won't eat or drink anything, and I see that you do not make merry or laugh. You can tell me with confidence why you are so sad and troubled." "Ah, lady, for God's sake, do not be surprised that I am sad! Truly, I am very much downcast, since I cannot be present where all that is good in the world will be assembled: that is, at the tournament where there will be a gathering of the people who make the earth tremble. Nevertheless, if it pleased you, and if God should incline your heart to let me go thither, you might rest assured that I should be careful to return to my captivity here." "I would gladly do it," she replied, "if I did not see that my death and destruction would result. But I am in such terror of my lord, the despicable Meleagant, that I would not dare to do it, for he would kill my husband at once. It is not strange that I am afraid of him, for, as you know, he is very bad." "Lady, if you are afraid that I may not return to you at once after the tournament, I will take an oath which I will never break, that nothing will detain me from returning at once to my prison here immediately after the tournament." Upon my word," said she, "I will allow it upon one condition." "Lady, what condition is that?" Then she replies: "Sire, upon condition that you wilt swear to return to me, and promise that I shall have your love." "Lady, I give you all the love I have, and swear to come back." Then the lady laughs and says: "I have no cause to boast of such a gift, for I know you have bestowed upon some one else the love for which I have just made request. However, I do not disdain to take so much of it as I can get. I shall be satisfied with what I can have, and will accept your oath that you will be so considerate of me as to return hither a prisoner."

In accordance with her wish, Lancelot swears by Holy Church that he will return without fail. And the lady at once gives him the vermilion arms of her lord, and his horse which was marvellously good and strong and brave. He mounts and leaves, armed with handsome, new arms, and proceeds until he comes to Noauz. He espoused this side in the tournament, and took his lodging outside the town. Never did such a noble man choose such a small and lowly lodging-place; but he did not wish to lodge where he might be recognised. There were many good and excellent knights gathered within the town. But there were many more outside, for so many had come on account of the presence of the Queen that the fifth part could not be accommodated inside. For every one who would have been there under ordinary circumstances, there were seven who would not have come excepting on the Queen's account. The barons were quartered in tents, lodges, and pavilions for five leagues around. Moreover, it was wonderful how many gentle ladies and damsels were there. Lancelot placed his shield outside the door of his lodging-place, and then, to make himself more comfortable, he took off his arms and lay down upon a bed which he held in slight esteem; for it was narrow and had a thin mattress, and was covered with a coarse hempen cloth. Lancelot had thrown himself upon the bed all disarmed, and as he lay there in such poor estate, behold! a fellow came in in his shirt-sleeves; he was a herald-at-arms, and had left his coat and shoes in the tavern as a pledge; so he came running barefoot and exposed to the wind. He saw the shield hanging outside the door, and looked at it: but naturally he did not recognise it or know to whom it belonged, or who was the bearer of it. He sees the door of the house standing open, and upon entering, he sees Lancelot upon the bed, and as soon as he saw him, he recognised him and crossed himself. And Lancelot made a sign to him, and ordered him not to speak of him wherever he might go, for

if he should tell that he knew him, it would be better for him to have his eyes put out or his neck broken. "Sire," the herald says, "I have always held you in high esteem, and so long as I live, I shall never do anything to cause you displeasure." Then he runs from the house and cries aloud: "Now there has come one who will take the measure! Now there has come one who will take the measure!" The fellow shouts this everywhere, and the people come from every side and ask him what is the meaning of his cry. He is not so rash as to answer them, but goes on shouting the same words: "Now there has come one who will take the measure!" This herald was the master of us all, when he taught us to use the phrase, for he was the first to make use of it.

Part IV: Vv. 5595 Vv. 7134

Now the crowd was assembled, including the Queen and all the ladies, the knights and the other people, and there were many men-at-arms everywhere, to the right and left. At the place where the tournament was to be, there were some large wooden stands for the use of the Queen with her ladies and damsels. Such fine stands were never seen before they were so long and well constructed. Thither the ladies betook themselves with the Queen, wishing to see who would fare better or worse in the combat. Knights arrive by tens, twenties, and thirties, here eighty and there ninety, here a hundred, there still more, and yonder twice as many yet; so that the press is so great in front of the stands and all around that they decide to begin the joust. As they assemble, armed and unarmed, their lances suggest the appearance of a wood, for those who have come to the sport brought so many lances that there is nothing in sight but lances, banners, and standards. Those who are going to take part begin to joust, and they find plenty of their companions who had come with similar intent. Still others prepare to perform other feats of chivalry. The fields, meadows, and fallow lands are so full of knights that it is impossible to estimate how many of them are there. But there was no sign of Lancelot at this first gathering of the knights; but later, when he entered the middle of the field, the herald saw him and could not refrain from crying out: "Behold him who will take the measure! Behold him who will take the measure!" And the people ask him who he is, but he will not tell them anything.

When Lancelot entered the tournament, he was as good as twenty of the best, and he began to fight so doughtily that no one could take his eyes from him, wherever he was. On the Pomelegloi side there was a brave and valorous knight, and his horse was spirited and swifter than a wild stag. He was the son of the Irish king, and fought well and handsomely. But the unknown knight pleased them all more a hundred times. In wonder they all make haste to ask: "Who is this knight who fights so well?" And the Queen privily called a clever and wise damsel to her and said: "Damsel, you must carry a message, and do it quickly and with few words. Go down from the stand, and approach yonder knight with the vermilion shield, and tell him privately that I bid him do his 'worst.'" She goes quickly, and with intelligence executes the Queen's command. She sought the knight until she came up close to him; then she said to him prudently and in a voice so low that no one standing by might hear: "Sire, my lady the Queen sends you word by me that you shall do your 'worst.'" When he heard this, he replied: "Very willingly," like one who is altogether hers. Then he rides at another knight as hard as his horse can carry him, and misses his thrust which should have struck him. From that time till evening fell he continued to do as badly as possible in accordance with the Queen's desire. But the other, who fought with him, did not miss his thrust, but struck him with such violence that he was roughly handled. Thereupon he took to flight, and after that he never turned his horse's head toward any knight, and were he to die for it, he would never do anything unless he saw in it his shame, disgrace, and dishonour; he even pretends to be afraid of all the knights who pass to and fro. And the very knights who formerly esteemed him now hurled jests and jibes at him. And the herald who had been saying: "He will beat them all in turn!" is greatly dejected and discomfited when he hears the scornful jokes of those who shout: "Friend, say no more! This fellow will not take any one's measure again. He has measured so much that his yardstick is broken, of which thou hast boasted to us so much." Many say: "What is he going to do? He was so brave just now; but now he is so cowardly that there is not a knight whom he dares to face. The cause of his first success must have been that he never engaged at arms before, and he was so brave at his first attack that the most skilled knight dared not withstand him, for he fought like a wild man. But now he has learned so much of arms that he will never wish to bear them again his whole life long. His heart cannot longer endure the thought, for there is nothing more cowardly than his heart." And the Queen, as she watches him, is happy and well-pleased, for she knows full well, though she does not say it, that this is surely Lancelot. Thus all day long till evening he played his coward's part, and late in the afternoon they separated. At parting there was a great discussion as to who had done the best. The son of the Irish king thinks that without doubt or contradiction he has all the glory and renown. But he is grievously mistaken, for there were plenty of others as good as he. Even the vermilion knight so pleased the fairest and gentlest of the ladies and damsels that they had gazed at him more than at any other knight, for they had remarked how well he fought at first, and how excellent and brave he was; then he had become so cowardly that he dared not face a single knight, and even the worst of them could defeat and capture him at will. But knights and ladies all agreed that on the morrow they should return to the list, and the damsels should choose as their lords those who should win honour in that day's

fight: on this arrangement they all agree. Then they turn toward their lodgings, and when they had returned, here and there men began to say: "What has become of the worst, the most craven and despised of knights? Whither did he go? Where is he concealed? Where is he to be found? Where shall we search for him? We shall probably never see him again. For he has been driven off by cowardice, with which he is so filled that there is no greater craven in the world than he. And he is not wrong, for a coward is a hundred times more at ease than a valorous fighting man. Cowardice is easy of entreaty, and that is the reason he has given her the kiss of peace and has taken from her all she has to give. Courage never so debased herself as to lodge in his breast or take quarters near him. But cowardice is altogether lodged with him, and she has found a host who will honour her and serve her so faithfully that he is willing to resign his own fair name for hers." Thus they wrangle all night, vying with each other in slander. But often one man maligns another, and yet is much worse himself than the object of his blame and scorn. Thus, every one said what he pleased about him. And when the next day dawned, all the people prepared and came again to the jousting place. The Queen was in the stand again, accompanied by her ladies and damsels and many knights without their arms, who had been captured or defeated, and these explained to them the armorial bearings of the knights whom they most esteem. Thus they talk among themselves: "Do you see that knight yonder with a golden band across the middle of his red shield? That is Governauz of Roberdic. And do you see that other one, who has an eagle and a dragon painted side by side upon his shield? That is the son of the King of Aragon, who has come to this land in search of glory and renown. And do you see that one beside him, who thrusts and jousts so well, bearing a shield with a leopard painted on a green ground on one part, and the other half is azure blue? That is Ignaures the well-beloved, a lover himself and jovial. And he who bears the shield with the pheasants portrayed beak to beak is Coguillanz of Mautirec. Do you see those two side by side, with their dappled steeds, and golden shields showing black lions? One is named Semiramis, and the other is his companion; their shields are painted alike. And do you see the one who has a shield with a gate painted on it, through which a stag appears to be passing out? That is King Ider, in truth." Thus they talk up in the stand. "That shield was made at Limoges, whence it was brought by Pilades, who is very ardent and keen to be always in the fight. That shield, bridle, and breast-strap were made at Toulouse, and were brought here by Kay of Estraus. The other came from Lyons on the Rhone, and there is no better under heaven; for his great merit it was presented to Taulas of the Desert, who bears it well and protects himself with it skilfully. Yonder shield is of English workmanship and was made at London; you see on it two swallows which appear as if about to fly; yet they do not move, but receive many blows from the Poitevin lances of steel; he who has it is poor Thoas." Thus they point out and describe the arms of those they know; but they see nothing of him whom they had held in such contempt, and, not remarking him in the fray, they suppose that he has slipped away. When the Queen sees that he is not there, she feels inclined to send some one to search for him in the crowd until he be found. She knows of no one better to send in search of him than she who yesterday performed her errand. So, straightway calling her, she said to her: "Damsel, go and mount your palfrey! I send you to the same knight as I sent you yesterday, and do you seek him until you find him. Do not delay for any cause, and tell him again to do his 'worst'. And when you have given him this message, mark well what reply he makes." The damsel makes no delay, for she had carefully noticed the direction he took the night before, knowing well that she would be sent to him again. She made her way through the ranks until she saw the knight, whom she instructs at once to do his "worst" again, if he desires the love and favour of the Queen which she sends him. And he makes answer: "My thanks to her, since such is her will." Then the damsel went away, and the valets, sergeants, and squires begin to shout: "See this marvellous thing! He of yesterday with the vermilion arms is back again. What can he want? Never in the world was there such a vile, despicable, and craven wretch! He is so in the power of cowardice that resistance is useless on his part." And the damsel returns to the Queen, who detained her and would not let her go until she heard what his response had been; then she heartily rejoiced, feeling no longer any doubt that this is he to whom she altogether belongs, and he is hers in like manner. Then she bids the damsel quickly return and tell him that it is her command and prayer that he shall do his "best"; and she says she will go at once without delay. She came down from the stand to where her valet with the palfrey was awaiting her. She mounted and rode until she found the knight, to whom she said at once: "Sire, my lady now sends word that you shall do the 'best' you can!" And he replies: "Tell her now that it is never a hardship to do her will, for whatever pleases her is my delight." The maiden was not slow in bearing back this message, for she thinks it will greatly please and delight the Queen. She made her way as directly as possible to the stand, where the Queen rose and started to meet her, however, she did not go down, but waited for her at the top of the steps. And the damsel came happy in the message she had to bear. When she had climbed the steps and reached her side, she said: "Lady, I never saw so courteous a knight, for he is more than ready to obey every command you send to him, for, if the truth be known, he accepts good and evil with the same countenance. "Indeed," says the Queen, "that may well be so." Then she returns to the balcony to watch the knights. And Lancelot without delay seizes his shield by the leather straps, for he is kindled and consumed by the desire to show his prowess. Guiding his horse's head, he lets him run between two lines. All those mistaken and deluded men, who have spent a large part of the day and night in heaping him with ridicule, will soon be disconcerted. For a long time

they have had their sport and joke and fun. The son of the King of Ireland held his shield closely gripped by the leather straps, as he spurs fiercely to meet him from the opposite direction. They come together with such violence that the son of the Irish king having broken and splintered his lance, wishes no more of the tournament; for it was not moss he struck, but hard, dry boards. In this encounter Lancelot taught him one of his thrusts, when he pinned his shield to his arm, and his arm to his side, and brought him down from his horse to earth. Like arrows the knights at once fly out, spurring and pricking from either side, some to relieve this knight, others to add to his distress. While some thus try to aid their lords, many a saddle is left empty in the strife and fray. But all that day Gawain took no hand at arms, though he was with the others there, for he took such pleasure in watching the deeds of him with the red painted arms that what the others did seemed to him pale in comparison. And the herald cheered up again, as he shouted aloud so that all could hear: “Here there has one come who will take the measure! To-day you shall see what he can do. To-day his prowess shall appear.” Then the knight directs his steed and makes a very skilful thrust against a certain knight, whom he strikes so hard that he carries him a hundred feet or more from his horse. His feats with sword and lance are so well performed that there is none of the onlookers who does not find pleasure in watching him. Many even of those who bear arms find pleasure and satisfaction in what he does, for it is great sport to see how he makes horses and knights tumble and fall. He encounters hardly a single knight who is able to keep his seat, and he gives the horses he wins to those who want them. Then those who had been making game of him said: “Now we are disgraced and mortified. It was a great mistake for us to deride and vilify this man, for he is surely worth a thousand such as we are on this field; for he has defeated and outdone all the knights in the world, so that there is no one now that opposes him.” And the damsels, who amazed were watching him, all said that he might take them to wife; but they did not dare to trust in their beauty or wealth, or power or highness, for not for her beauty or wealth would this peerless knight deign to choose any one of them. Yet, most of them are so enamoured of him that they say that, unless they marry him, they will not be bestowed upon any man this year. And the Queen, who hears them boast, laughs to herself and enjoy the fun, for well she knows

that if all the gold of Arabia should be set before him, yet he who is beloved by them all would not select the best, the fairest, or the most charming of the group. One wish is common to them all—each wishes to have him as her spouse. One is jealous of another, as if she were already his wife; and all this is because they see him so adroit that in their opinion no mortal man could perform such deeds as he had done. He did so well that when the time came to leave the list, they admitted freely on both sides that no one had equalled the knight with the vermilion shield. All said this, and it was true. But when he left, he allowed his shield and lance and trappings to fall where he saw the thickest press, then he rode off hastily with such secrecy that no one of all the host noticed that he had disappeared. But he went straight back to the place whence he had come, to keep his oath. When the tournament broke up, they all searched and asked for him, but without success, for he fled away, having no desire to be recognised. The knights are disappointed and distressed, for they would have rejoiced to have him there. But if the knights were grieved to have been deserted thus, still greater was the damsels’ grief when they learned the truth, and they asserted by St. John that they would not marry at all that year. If they can’t have him whom they truly love, then all the others may be dismissed. Thus the tourney was adjourned without any of them choosing a husband. Meanwhile Lancelot without delay repairs to his prison. But the seneschal arrived two or three days before Lancelot, and inquired where



IMAGE 5.27: KNIGHTS’ TOURNAMENT | Two knights fight while the audience looks on from the background.

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he was. And his wife, who had given to Lancelot his fair and well-equipped vermilion arms, as well as his harness and his horse, told the truth to the seneschal—how she had sent him where there had been jousting at the tourney of Noauz. “Lady,” the seneschal replies, “you could truly have done nothing worse than that. Doubtless, I shall smart for this, for my lord Meleagant will treat me worse than the beach-combers’ law would treat me were I a mariner in distress. I shall be killed or banished the moment he hears the news, and he will have no pity for me.” “Fair sire, be not now dismayed,” the lady said; “there is no occasion for the fear you feel. There is no possibility of his detention, for he swore to me by the saints that he would return as soon as possible.”

Then the seneschal mounts, and coming to his lord, tells him the whole story of the episode; but at the same time, he emphatically reassures him, telling how his wife had received his oath that he would return to his prison. “He will not break his word, I know,” says Meleagant: “and yet I am very much displeased at what your wife has done. Not for any consideration would I have had him present at that tournament. But return now, and see to it that, when he comes back, he be so strictly guarded that he shall not escape from his prison or have any freedom of body: and send me word at once.” “Your orders shall be obeyed,” says the seneschal. Then he goes away and finds Lancelot returned as prisoner in his yard. A messenger, sent by the seneschal, runs back at once to Meleagant, appraising him of Lancelot’s return. When he heard this news, he took masons and carpenters who unwillingly or of their own free-will executed his commands. He summoned the best artisans in the land, and commanded them to build a tower, and exert themselves to build it well. The stone was quarried by the seaside; for near Gorre on this side there runs a big broad arm of the sea, in the midst of which an island stood, as Meleagant well knew. He ordered the stone to be carried thither and the material for the construction of the tower. In less than fifty-seven days the tower was completely built, high and thick and well-founded. When it was completed, he had Lancelot brought thither by night, and after putting him in the tower, he ordered the doors to be walled up, and made all the masons swear that they would never utter a word about this tower. It was his will that it should be thus sealed up, and that no door or opening should remain, except one small window. Here Lancelot was compelled to stay, and they gave him poor and meagre fare through this little window at certain hours, as the disloyal wretch had ordered and commanded them.

Now Meleagant has carried out all his purpose, and he betakes himself to King Arthur’s court: behold him now arrived! And when he was before the King, he thus spoke with pride and arrogance: “King, I have scheduled a battle to take place in thy presence and in thy court. But I see nothing of Lancelot who agreed to be my antagonist. Nevertheless, as my duty is, in the hearing of all who are present here, I offer myself to fight this battle. And if he is here, let him now step forth and agree to meet me in your court a year from now. I know not if any one has told you how this battle was agreed upon. But I see knights here who were present at our conference, and who, if they would, could tell you the truth. If he should try to deny the truth, I should employ no hireling to take my place, but would prove it to him hand to hand.” The Queen, who was seated beside the King, draws him to her as she says: “Sire, do you know who that knight is? It is Meleagant who carried me away while escorted by Kay the seneschal; he caused him plenty of shame and mischief too.” And the King answered her: “Lady, I understand; I know full well that it is he who held my people in distress.” The Queen says no more, but the King addresses Meleagant: “Friend,” he says, “so help me God, we are very sad because we know nothing of Lancelot.” “My lord King,” says Meleagant, “Lancelot told me that I should surely find him here. Nowhere but in your court must I issue the call to this battle, and I desire all your knights here to bear me witness that I summon him to fight a year from to-day, as stipulated when we agreed to fight.”

At this my lord Gawain gets up, much distressed at what he hears: “Sire, there is nothing known of Lancelot in all this land,” he says; “but we shall send in search of him and, if God will, we shall find him yet, before the end of the year is reached, unless he be dead or in prison. And if he does not appear, then grant me the battle, and I will fight for him: I will arm myself in place of Lancelot, if he does not return before that day.” “Ah,” says Meleagant, “for God’s sake, my fair lord King, grant him the boon. I join my request to his desire, for I know no knight in all the world with whom I would more gladly try my strength, excepting only Lancelot. But bear in mind that, if I do not fight with one of them, I will accept no exchange or substitution for either one.” And the King says that this is understood, if Lancelot does not return within the time. Then Meleagant left the royal court and journeyed until he found his father, King Bademagu. In order to appear brave and of consideration in his presence, he began by making a great pretence and by assuming an expression of marvellous cheer. That day the king was holding a joyous court at his city of Bade; it was his birthday, which he celebrated with splendour and generosity, and there were many people of divers sorts gathered with him. All the palace was filled with knights and damsels, and among them was the sister of Meleagant, of whom I shall tell you, farther on, what is my thought and reason for mentioning her here. But it is not fitting that I should explain it here, for I do not wish to confuse or entangle my material, but rather to treat it straight forwardly. Now I must tell you that Meleagant in the hearing of all, both great and small, spoke thus to his father boastfully: “Father,” he says, “so help me God, please tell me truly now whether he ought not to be well-content, and whether he is not truly brave, who can cause his arms to be feared at King Arthur’s court?” To this question his father replies at once: “Son,” he says, “all good men ought to honour and serve and seek

the company of one whose deserts are such." Then he flattered him with the request that he should not conceal why he has alluded to this, what he wishes, and whence he comes. "Sire, I know not whether you remember," Meleagant begins, "the agreements and stipulations which were recorded when Lancelot and I made peace. It was then agreed, I believe, and in the presence of many we were told, that we should present ourselves at the end of a year at Arthur's court. I went thither at the appointed time, ready equipped for my business there. I did everything that had been prescribed: I called and searched for Lancelot, with whom I was to fight, but I could not gain a sight of him: he had fled and run away. When I came away, Gawain pledged his word that, if Lancelot is not alive and does not return within the time agreed upon, no further postponement will be asked, but that he himself will fight the battle against me in place of Lancelot. Arthur has no knight, as is well known, whose fame equals his, but before the flowers bloom again, I shall see, when we come to blows, whether his fame and his deeds are in accord: I only wish it could be settled now!" "Son," says his father, "thou art acting exactly like a fool. Any one, who knew it not before, may learn of thy madness from thy own lips. A good heart truly humbles itself, but the fool and the boastful never lose their folly. Son, to thee I direct my words, for the traits of thy character are so hard and dry, that there is no place for sweetness or friendship. Thy heart is altogether pitiless: thou art altogether in folly's grasp. This accounts for my slight respect for thee, and this is what will cast thee down. If thou art brave, there will be plenty of men to say so in time of need. A virtuous man need not praise his heart in order to enhance his deed; the deed itself will speak in its own praise. Thy self-praise does not aid thee a whit to increase in any one's esteem; indeed, I hold thee in less esteem. Son, I chasten thee; but to what end? It is of little use to advise a fool. He only wastes his strength in vain who tries to cure the madness of a fool, and the wisdom that one teaches and expounds is worthless, wasted and unemployed, unless it is expressed in works." Then Meleagant was sorely enraged and furious. I may truly say that never could you see a mortal man so full of anger as he was; the last bond between them was broken then, as he spoke to his father these ungracious words: "Are you in a dream or trance, when you say that I am mad to tell you how my matters stand? I thought I had come to you as to my lord and my father; but that does not seem to be the case, for you insult me more outrageously than I think you have any right to do; moreover, you can give no reason for having addressed me thus." "Indeed, I can." "What is it, then?" "Because I see nothing in thee but folly and wrath. I know very well what thy courage is like, and that it will cause thee great trouble yet. A curse upon him who supposes that the elegant Lancelot, who is esteemed by all but thee, has ever fled from thee through fear. I am sure that he is buried or confined in some prison whose door is barred so tight that he cannot escape without leave. I should surely be sorely grieved if he were dead or in distress. It would surely be too bad, were a creature so splendidly equipped, so fair, so bold, yet so serene, to perish thus before his time. But, may it please God, this is not true." Then Bademagu said no more; but a daughter of his had listened attentively to all his words, and you must know that it was she whom I mentioned earlier in my tale, and who is not happy now to hear such news of Lancelot. It is quite clear to her that he is shut up, since no one knows any news of him or his wanderings. "May God never look upon me, if I rest until I have some sure and certain news of him!" Straightway, without making any noise or disturbance, she runs and mounts a fair and easy-stepping mule. But I must say that when she leaves the court, she knows not which way to turn. However, she asks no advice in her predicament, but takes the first road she finds, and rides along at random rapidly, unaccompanied by knight or squire. In her eagerness she makes haste to attain the object of her search. Keenly she presses forward in her quest, but it will not soon terminate. She may not rest or delay long in any single place, if she wishes to carry out her plan, to release Lancelot from his prison, if she can find him and if it is possible. But in my opinion, before she finds him she will have searched in many a land, after many a journey and many a quest, before she has any news of him. But what would be the use of my telling you of her lodgings and her journeyings? Finally, she travelled so far through hill and dale, up and down, that more than a month had passed, and as yet she had learned only so much as she knew before—that is, absolutely nothing. One day she was crossing a field in a sad and pensive mood, when she saw a tower in the distance standing by the shore of an arm of the sea. Not within a league around about was there any house, cottage, or dwelling-place. Meleagant had had it built, and had confined Lancelot within. But of all this she still was unaware. As soon as she espied the tower, she fixed her attention upon it to the exclusion of all else. And her heart gives her assurance that here is the object of her quest; now at last she has reached her goal, to which Fortune through many trials has at last directed her.

The damsel draws so near to the tower that she can touch it with her hands. She walks about, listening attentively, I suppose, if perchance she may hear some welcome sound. She looks down and she gazes up, and she sees that the tower is strong and high and thick. She is amazed to see no door or window, except one little narrow opening. Moreover, there was no ladder or steps about this high, sheer tower. For this reason she surmises that it was made so intentionally, and that Lancelot is confined inside. But she resolves that before she tastes of food, she will learn whether this is so or not. She thinks she will call Lancelot by name, and is about to do so when she is deterred by hearing from the tower a voice which was making a marvellously sad moan as it called on death. It implores death to come, and complains of misery unbearable. In contempt of the body and life, it weakly piped in a low, hoarse tone: "Ah, fortune, how disastrously thy wheel has turned for me! Thou hast mocked me shamefully: a while ago

I was up, but now I am down; I was well off of late, but now I am in a sorry state; not long since thou didst smile on me, but now thy eyes are filled with tears. Alas, poor wretch, why didst thou trust in her, when so soon she has deserted thee! Behold, in a very little while she has cast thee down from thy high estate! Fortune, it was wrong of thee to mock me thus; but what carest thou! Thou carest not how it may turn out. Ah, sacred Cross! All, Holy Ghost! How am I wretched and undone! How completely has my career been closed! Ah, Gawain, you who possess such worth, and whose goodness is unparalleled, surely I may well be amazed that you do not come to succour me. Surely you delay too long and are not showing courtesy. He ought indeed to receive your aid whom you used to love so devotedly! For my part I may truly say that there is no lodging place or retreat on either side of the sea, where I would not have searched for you at least seven or ten years before finding you, if I knew you to be in prison. But why do I thus torment myself? You do not care for me even enough to take this trouble. The rustic is right when he says that it is hard nowadays to find a friend! It is easy to rest the true friend in time of need. Alas! more than a year has passed since first I was put inside this tower. I feel hurt, Gawain, that you have so long deserted me! But doubtless you know nothing of all this, and I have no ground for blaming you. Yes, when I think of it, this must be the case, and I was very wrong to imagine such a thing; for I am confident that not for all the world contains would you and your men have failed to come to release me from this trouble and distress, if you were aware of it. If for no other reason, you would be bound to do this out of love for me, your companion. But it is idle to talk about it—it cannot be. Ah, may the curse and the damnation of God and St. Sylvester rest upon him who has shut me up so shamefully! He is the vilest man alive, this envious Meleagant, to treat me as evilly as possible!” Then he, who is wearing out his life in grief, ceases speaking and holds his peace. But when she, who was lingering at the base of the tower, heard what he said, she did not delay, but acted wisely and called him thus: “Lancelot,” as loudly as she could; “friend, up there, speak to one who is your friend!” But inside he did not hear her words. Then she called out louder yet, until he in his weakness faintly heard her, and wondered who could be calling him. He heard the voice and heard his name pronounced, but he did not know who was calling him: he thinks it must be a spirit. He looks all about him to see, I suppose, if he could espy any one; but there is nothing to be seen but the tower and himself. “God,” says he, “what is that I heard? I heard some one speak, but see nothing! Indeed, this is passing marvellous, for I am not asleep, but wide awake. Of course, if this happened in a dream, I should consider it an illusion; but I am awake, and therefore I am distressed.” Then with some trouble he gets up, and with slow and feeble steps he moves toward the little opening. Once there, he peers through it, up and down and to either side. When he had looked out as best he might, he caught sight of her who had hailed him. He did not recognise her by sight. But she knew him at once and said: “Lancelot, I have come from afar in search of you. Now, thank God, at last I have found you. I am she who asked of you a boon as you were on your way to the sword-bridge, and you very gladly granted it at my request; it was the head I bade you cut from the conquered knight whom I hated so. Because of this boon and this service you did me, I have gone to this trouble. As a guerdon I shall deliver you from here.” “Damsel, many thanks to you,” the prisoner then replied; “the service I did you will be well repaid if I am set at liberty. If you can get me out of here, I promise and engage to be henceforth always yours, so help me the holy Apostle Paul! And as I may see God face to face, I shall never fail to obey your commands in accordance with your will. You may ask for anything I have, and receive it without delay.” “Friend, have no fear that you will not be released from here. You shall be loosed and set free this very day. Not for a thousand pounds would I renounce the expectation of seeing you free before the datum of another day. Then I shall take you to a pleasant place, where you may rest and take your ease. There you shall have everything you desire, whatever it be. So have no fear. But first I must see if I can find some tool anywhere hereabouts with which you might enlarge this hole, at least enough to let you pass.” “God grant that you find something,” he said, agreeing to this plan; “I have plenty of rope in here, which the rascals gave me to pull up my food—hard barley bread and dirty water, which sicken my stomach and heart.” Then the daughter of Bademagu sought and found a strong, stout, sharp pick, which she handed to him. He pounded, and hammered and struck and dug, notwithstanding the pain it caused him, until he could get out comfortably. Now he is greatly relieved and glad, you may be sure, to be out of prison and to get away from the place where he has been so long confined. Now he is at large in the open air. You may be sure that he would not go back again, were some one to gather in a pile and give to him all the gold there is scattered in the world.

Behold Lancelot now released, but so feeble that he staggered from his weakness and disability. Gently, without hurting him, she sets him before her on her mule, and then they ride off rapidly. But the damsel purposely avoids the beaten track, that they may not be seen, and proceeds by a hidden path; for if she had travelled openly, doubtless some one would have recognised them and done them harm, and she would not have wished that to happen. So she avoided the dangerous places and came to a mansion where she often makes her sojourn because of its beauty and charm. The entire estate and the people on it belonged to her, and the place was well furnished, safe, and private. There Lancelot arrived. And as soon as he had come, and had laid aside his clothes, the damsel gently laid him on a lofty, handsome couch, then bathed and rubbed him so carefully that I could not describe half the care she took. She handled and treated him as gently as if he had been her father. Her treatment makes a new man of

him, as she revives him with her cares. Now he is no less fair than an angel and is more nimble and more spry than anything you ever saw. When he arose, he was no longer mangy and haggard, but strong and handsome. And the damsel sought out for him the finest robe she could find, with which she clothed him when he arose. And he was glad to put it on, quicker than a bird in flight. He kissed and embraced the maid, and then said to her graciously: "My dear, I have only God and you to thank for being restored to health again. Since I owe my liberty to you, you may take and command at will my heart and body, my service and estate. I belong to you in return for what you have done for me; but it is long since I have been at the court of my lord Arthur, who has shown me great honour; and there is plenty there for me to do. Now, my sweet gentle friend, I beg you affectionately for leave to go; then, with your consent, I should feel free to go." "Lancelot, fair, sweet dear friend, I am quite willing," the damsel says; "I desire your honour and welfare above everything everywhere." Then she gives him a wonderful horse she has, the best horse that ever was seen, and he leaps up without so much as saying to the stirrups "by your leave": he was up without considering them. Then to God, who never lies, they commend each other with good intent.

Lancelot was so glad to be on the road that, if I should take an oath, I could not possibly describe the joy he felt at having escaped from his trap. But he said to himself repeatedly that woe was the traitor, the reprobate, whom now he has tricked and ridiculed, "for in spite of him I have escaped." Then he swears by the heart and body of Him who made the world that not for all the riches and wealth from Babylon to Ghent would he let Meleagant escape, if he once got him in his power: for he has him to thank for too much harm and shame! But events will soon turn out so as to make this possible; for this very Meleagant, whom he threatens and presses hard, had already come to court that day without being summoned by any one; and the first thing he did was to search until he found my lord Gawain. Then the rascally proven traitor asks him about Lancelot, whether he had been seen or found, as if he himself did not know the truth. As a matter of fact, he did not know the truth, although he thought he knew it well enough. And Gawain told him, as was true, that he had not been seen, and that he had not come. "Well, since I don't find him," says Meleagant, "do you come and keep the promise you made me: I shall not longer wait for you." Then Gawain makes answer: "I will keep presently my word with you, if it please God in whom I place my trust. I expect to discharge my debt to you. But if it comes to throwing dice for points, and I should throw a higher number than you, so help me God and the holy faith, I'll not withdraw, but will keep on until I pocket all the stakes." Then without delay Gawain orders a rug to be thrown down and spread before him. There was no snivelling or attempt to run away when the squires heard this command, but without grumbling or complaint they execute what he commands. They bring the rug and spread it out in the place indicated; then he who had sent for it takes his seat upon it and gives orders to be armed by the young men who were standing unarmed before him. There were two of them, his cousins or nephews, I know not which, but they were accomplished and knew what to do. They arm him so skilfully and well that no one could find any fault in the world with them for any mistake in what they did. When they finished arming him, one of them went to fetch a Spanish steed able to cross the fields, woods, hills, and valleys more swiftly than the good Bucephalus. Upon a horse such as you have heard Gawain took his seat—the admired and most accomplished knight upon whom the sign of the Cross was ever made. Already he was about to seize his shield, when he saw Lancelot dismount before him, whom he was not expecting to see. He looked at him in amazement, because he had come so unexpectedly; and, if I am not wrong, he was as much surprised as if he had fallen from the clouds. However, no business of his own can detain him, as soon as he sees Lancelot, from dismounting and extending his arms to him, as he embraces, salutes and kisses him. Now he is happy and at ease, when he has found his companion. Now I will tell you the truth, and you must not think I lie, that Gawain would not wish to be chosen king, unless he had Lancelot with him. The King and all the rest now learn that, in spite of all, Lancelot, for whom they so long have watched, has come back quite safe and sound. Therefore they all rejoice, and the court, which so long has looked for him, comes together to honour him. Their happiness dispels and drives away the sorrow which formerly was theirs. Grief takes flight and is replaced by an awakening joy. And how about the Queen? Does she not share in the general jubilee? Yes, verily, she first of all. How so? For God's sake, where, then, could she be keeping herself? She was never so glad in her life as she was for his return. And did she not even go to him? Certainly she did; she is so close to him that her body came near following her heart. Where is her heart, then? It was kissing and welcoming Lancelot. And why did the body conceal itself? Why is not her joy complete? Is it mingled with anger or hate? No, certainly, not at all; but it may be that the King or some of the others who are there, and who are watching what takes place, would have taken the whole situation in, if, while all were looking on, she had followed the dictates of her heart. If common-sense had not banished this mad impulse and rash desire, her heart would have been revealed and her folly would have been complete. Therefore reason closes up and binds her fond heart and her rash intent, and made it more reasonable, postponing the greeting until it shall see and espy a suitable and more private place where they would fare better than here and now. The King highly honoured Lancelot, and after welcoming him, thus spoke: "I have not heard for a long time news of any man which were so welcome as news of you; yet I am much concerned to learn in what region and in what land you have tarried so long a time. I have had search made for you up and down, all the winter and summer through, but no one could find a

trace of you." "Indeed, fair sire," says Lancelot, "I can inform you in a few words exactly how it has fared with me. The miserable traitor Meleagant has kept me in prison ever since the hour of the deliverance of the prisoners in his land, and has condemned me to a life of shame in a tower of his beside the sea. There he put me and shut me in, and there I should still be dragging out my weary life, if it were not for a friend of mine, a damsel for whom I once performed a slight service. In return for the little favour I did her, she has repaid me liberally: she has bestowed upon me great honour and blessing. But I wish to repay without delay him for whom I have no love, who has sought out and devised for me this shame and injury. He need not wait, for the sum is all ready, principal and interest; but God forbid that he find in it cause to rejoice!" Then Gawain said to Lancelot: "Friend, it will be only a slight favour for me, who am in your debt, to make this payment for you. Moreover, I am all ready and mounted, as you see. Fair, sweet friend, do not deny me the boon I desire and request." But Lancelot replies that he would rather have his eye plucked out, or even both of them, than be persuaded to do this: he swears it shall never be so. He owes the debt and he will pay it himself: for with his own hand he promised it. Gawain plainly sees that nothing he can say is of any avail, so he loosens and takes off his hauberk from his back, and completely disarms himself. Lancelot at once arms himself without delay; for he is impatient to settle and discharge his debt. Meleagant, who is amazed beyond measure at what he sees, has reached the end of his good fortunes, and is about to receive what is owing him. He is almost beside himself and comes near fainting. "Surely I was a fool," he says, "not to go, before coming here, to see if I still held imprisoned in my tower him who now has played this trick on me. But, God, why should I have gone? What cause had I to think that he could possibly escape? Is not the wall built strong enough, and is not the tower sufficiently strong and high? There was no hole or crevice in it, through which he could pass, unless he was aided from outside. I am sure his hiding-place was revealed. If the wall were worn away and had fallen into decay, would he not have been caught and injured or killed at the same time? Yes, so help me God, if it had fallen down, he would certainly have been killed. But I guess, before that wall gives away without being torn down, that all the water in the sea will dry up without leaving a drop and the world will come to an end. No, that is not it: it happened otherwise: he was helped to escape, and could not have got out otherwise: I have been outwitted through some trickery. At any rate, he has escaped; but if I had been on my guard, all this would never have happened, and he would never have come to court. But it's too late now to repent. The rustic, who seldom errs, pertinently remarks that it is too late to close the stable when the horse is out. I know I shall now be exposed to great shame and humiliation, if indeed I do not suffer and endure something worse. What shall I suffer and endure? Rather, so long as I live, I will give him full measure, if it please God, in whom I trust." Thus he consoles himself, and has no other desire than to meet his antagonist on the field. And he will not have long to wait, I think, for Lancelot goes in search of him, expecting soon to conquer him. But before the assault begins, the King bids them go down into the plain where the tower stands, the prettiest place this side of Ireland for a fight. So they did, and soon found themselves on the plain below. The King goes down too, and all the rest, men and women in crowds. No one stays behind; but many go up to the windows of the tower, among them the Queen, her ladies and damsels, of whom she had many with her who were fair.

In the field there stood a sycamore as fair as any tree could be; it was wide-spread and covered a large area, and around it grew a fine border of thick fresh grass which was green at all seasons of the year. Under this fair and stately sycamore, which was planted back in Abel's time, there rises a clear spring of water which flows away hurriedly. The bed of the spring is beautiful and as bright as silver, and the channel through which the water flows is formed, I think, of refined and tested gold, and it stretches away across the field down into a valley between the woods. There it pleases the King to take his seat where nothing unpleasant is in sight. After the crowd has drawn back at the King's command, Lancelot rushes furiously at Meleagant as at one whom he hates cordially, but before striking him, he shouted with a loud and commanding voice: "Take your stand, I defy you! And take my word, this time you shall not be spared." Then he spurs his steed and draws back the distance of a bow-shot. Then they drive their horses toward each other at top speed, and strike each other so fiercely upon their resisting shields that they pierced and punctured them. But neither one is wounded, nor is the flesh touched in this first assault. They pass each other without delay, and come back at the top of their horses: speed to renew their blows on the strong, stout shields. Both of the knights are strong and brave, and both of the horses are stout and fast. So mighty are the blows they deal on the shields about their necks that the lances passed clean through, without breaking or splintering, until the cold steel reached their flesh. Each strikes the other with such force that both are borne to earth, and no breast-strap, girth, or stirrup could save them from falling backward over their saddle-bow, leaving the saddle without an occupant. The horses run riderless over hill and dale, but they kick and bite each other, thus showing their mortal hatred. As for the knights who fell to earth, they leaped up as quickly as possible and drew their swords, which were engraved with chiselled lettering. Holding their shields before the face, they strive to wound each other with their swords of steel. Lancelot stands in no fear of him, for he knew half as much again about fencing as did his antagonist, having learned it in his youth. Both dealt such blows on the shield slung from their necks, and upon their helmets barred with gold, that they crushed and damaged them. But Lancelot presses him hard and gives him a mighty blow upon his right arm which, though encased in mail, was unprotected by the shield, severing it with

one clean stroke. And when he felt the loss of his right arm, he said that it should be dearly sold. If it is at all possible, he will not fail to exact the price; he is in such pain and wrath and rage that he is well-nigh beside himself, and he has a poor opinion of himself, if he cannot score on his rival now. He rushes at him with the intent to seize him, but Lancelot forestalls his plan, for with his trenchant sword he deals his body such a cut as he will not recover from until April and May be passed. He smashes his nose-guard against his teeth, breaking three of them in his mouth. And Meleagant's rage is such that he cannot speak or say a word; nor does he deign to cry for mercy, for his foolish heart holds tight in such constraint that even now it deludes him still. Lancelot approaches and, unlacing his helmet, cuts off his head. Never more will this man trouble him; it is all over with him as he falls dead. Not a soul who was present there felt any pity at the sight. The King and all the others there are jubilant and express their joy. Happier than they ever were before, they relieve Lancelot of his arms, and lead him away exultingly.

My lords, if I should prolong my tale, it would be beside the purpose, and so I will conclude. Godefroi de Leigni, the clerk, has written the conclusion of "the Cart"; but let no one find fault with him for having embroidered on Chretien's theme, for it was done with the consent of Chretien who started it. Godefroi has finished it from the point where Lancelot was imprisoned in the tower. So much he wrote; but he would fain add nothing more, for fear of disfiguring the tale.

THE SONG OF THE CID

Anonymous

Composed ca. 1195-1207 C.E.

Spain

The Song of the Cid (called both *El Cantar de Mio Cid* and *El Poema de Mio Cid* in Spanish) is based on real people and events. The hero of the story is Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar (1043-1099 C.E.), called *Mío Cid* (my Lord) by the narrator, *El Cid* by Moors, and *El Campeador* (the Champion) by Christians. In the Cid's lifetime, Spain was a collection of kingdoms, with various Muslim rulers in south and central Spain, and several Christian rulers in the north. Muslim and Christian rulers often formed alliances, and the historical Cid led a combined army of Christian and Muslim troops, working alternately for rulers of both religions. In the story, his fame as a military leader does not protect him or his family from betrayal. Before the story begins, the Cid has been exiled by a Christian ruler based on slander by jealous courtiers. The Cid's sense of honor drives the plot, and his fame lives on to the present day, where he is celebrated as a hero of Spain.

Written by Laura J. Getty



IMAGE 5.28: STATUE OF THE CID | The Cid sits on his horse with his sword pointed forward.

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THE LAY OF THE CID

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Cid, Translated by R. Seldon Rose and Leonard Bacon

Cantar I

The Banishment of the Cid

I

He turned and looked upon them, and he wept very sore
As he saw the yawning gateway and the hasps wrenched off the door,
And the pegs whereon no mantle nor coat of vair there hung.
There perched no moulting goshawk, and there no falcon swung.
My lord the Cid sighed deeply such grief was in his heart
And he spake well and wisely:
"Oh Thou, in Heaven that art

5

Our Father and our Master, now I give thanks to Thee.
Of their wickedness my foemen have done this thing to me.”

II

Then they shook out the bridle rein further to ride afar. 10
They had the crow on their right hand as they issued from Bivár;
And as they entered Burgos upon their left it sped.
And the Cid shrugged his shoulders, and the Cid shook his head:
“Good tidings, Alvar Fañez. We are banished from our weal,
But on a day with honor shall we come unto Castile.” 15

III

Roy Diaz entered Burgos with sixty pennons strong,
And forth to look upon him did the men and women throng.
And with their wives the townsmen at the windows stood hard by,
And they wept in lamentation, their grief was risen so high.
As with one mouth, together they spake with one accord: 20
“God, what a noble vassal, an he had a worthy lord.

IV

Fain had they made him welcome, but none dared do the thing
For fear of Don Alfonso, and the fury of the King.
His mandate unto Burgos came ere the evening fell. 25
With utmost care they brought it, and it was sealed well
“That no man to Roy Diaz give shelter now, take heed
And if one give him shelter, let him know in very deed
He shall lose his whole possession, nay! the eyes within his head
Nor shall his soul and body be found in better stead.”
Great sorrow had the Christians, and from his face they hid. 30
Was none dared aught to utter unto my lord the Cid.
Then the Campeador departed unto his lodging straight.
But when he was come thither, they had locked and barred the gate.
In their fear of King Alfonso had they done even so.
An the Cid forced not his entrance, neither for weal nor woe 35
Durst they open it unto him. Loudly his men did call.
Nothing thereto in answer said the folk within the hall.
My lord the Cid spurred onward, to the doorway did he go.
He drew his foot from the stirrup, he smote the door one blow.
Yet the door would not open, for they had barred it fast. 40
But a maiden of nine summers came unto him at last:
“Campeador, in happy hour thou girdedst on the sword.
“This the King’s will. Yestereven came the mandate of our lord.
With utmost care they brought it, and it was sealed with care:
None to ope to you or greet you for any cause shall dare. 45
And if we do, we forfeit houses and lands instead.
Nay we shall lose, moreover, the eyes within the head
And, Cid, with our misfortune, naught whatever dost thou gain.
But may God with all his power support thee in thy pain.”
So spake the child and turned away. Unto her home went she. 50
That he lacked the King’s favor now well the Cid might see.
He left the door; forth onward he spurred through Burgos town.
When he had reached Saint Mary’s, then he got swiftly down
He fell upon his knee and prayed with a true heart indeed:
and when the prayer was over, he mounted on the steed. 55
North from the gate and over the Arlanzon he went.
Here in the sand by Burgos, the Cid let pitch his tent.

Roy Diaz, who in happy hour had girded on the brand,
 Since none at home would greet him, encamped there on the sand.
 With a good squadron, camping as if within the wood. 60
 They will not let him in Burgos buy any kind of food.
 Provender for a single day they dared not to him sell.

V

Good Martin Antolínez in Burgos that did dwell
 To the Cid and to his henchmen much wine and bread gave o'er,
 That he bought not, but brought with him--of everything good store. 65
 Content was the great Campeador, and his men were of good cheer.
 Spake Martin Antolínez. His counsel you shall hear.
 "In happy hour, Cid Campeador, most surely wast thou born.
 Tonight here let us tarry, but let us flee at morn,
 For someone will denounce me, that thy service I have done. 70
 In the danger of Alfonso I certainly shall run.
 Late or soon, if I 'scape with thee the King must seek me forth
 For friendship's sake; if not, my wealth, a fig it is not worth.

VI

Then said the Cid, who in good hour had girded on the steel:
 "Oh Martin Antolínez, thou art a good lance and leal. 75
 And if I live, hereafter I shall pay thee double rent,
 But gone is all my silver, and all my gold is spent.
 And well enough thou seest that I bring naught with me
 And many things are needful for my good company.
 Since by favor I win nothing by might then must I gain. 80
 I desire by thy counsel to get ready coffers twain.
 With the sand let us fill them, to lift a burden sore,
 And cover them with stamped leather with nails well studded o'er.

VII

Ruddy shall be the leather, well gilded every nail.
 In my behalf do thou hasten to Vidas and Raqué. 85
 Since in Burgos they forbade me aught to purchase, and the King
 Withdraws his favor, unto them my goods I cannot bring.
 They are heavy, and I must pawn them for whatso'er is right.
 That Christians may not see it, let them come for them by night.
 May the Creator judge it and of all the Saints the choir. 90
 I can no more, and I do it against my own desire."

VIII

Martin stayed not. Through Burgos he hastened forth, and came
 To the Castle. Vidas and Raqué, he demanded them by name.

IX

Raquél and Vidas sate to count their goods and profits through,
 When up came Antolínez, the prudent man and true. 95
 "How now Raqué and Vidas, am I dear unto your heart,
 I would speak close." They tarried not. All three they went apart.
 "Give me, Raqué and Vidas, your hands for promise sure
 That you will not betray me to Christian or to Moor.
 I shall make you rich forever. You shall ne'er be needy more. 100
 When to gather in the taxes went forth the Campeador,
 Many rich goods he garnered, but he only kept the best.

Therefore this accusation against him was addressed.
 And now two mighty coffers full of pure gold hath he.
 Why he lost the King's favor a man may lightly see. 105
 He has left his halls and houses, his meadow and his field,
 And the chests he cannot bring you lest he should stand revealed.
 The Campeador those coffers will deliver to your trust.
 And do you lend unto him whatsoever may be just.
 Do you take the chests and keep them, but swear a great oath here 110
 That you will not look within them for the space of all this year.”

The two took counsel:
 “Something to our profit must inure
 In all barter. He gained something in the country of the Moor
 When he marched there, for many goods he brought with him away. 115
 But he sleeps not unsuspected, who brings coined gold to pay.
 Let the two of us together take now the coffers twain.
 In some place let us put them where unseen they shall remain.

“What the lord Cid demandeth, we prithee let us hear,
 And what will be our usury for the space of all this year?” 120

Said Martin Antolínez like a prudent man and true:
 “Whatever you deem right and just the Cid desires of you.
 He will ask little since his goods are left in a safe place.
 But needy men on all sides beseech the Cid for grace.
 For six hundred marks of money, the Cid is sore bested.” 125

“We shall give them to him gladly,” Raquéel and Vidas said.
 “’Tis night. The Cid is sorely pressed. So give the marks to us.
 Answered Raquéel and Vidas: “Men do not traffic thus.
 But first they take their surety and thereafter give the fee.”
 Said Martin Antolínez: 130
 “So be it as for me.
 Come ye to the great Campeador for ‘tis but just and fair
 That we should help you with the chests, and put them in your care,
 So that neither Moor nor Christian thereof shall hear the tale.”

“Therewith are we right well content,” said Vidas and Raquéel, 135
 “You shall have marks six hundred when we bring the chests again.”

And Martin Antolínez rode forth swiftly with the twain.
 And they were glad exceeding. O'er the bridge he did not go,
 But through the stream, that never a Burgalese should know
 Through him thereof. And now behold the Campeador his tent. 140
 When they therein had entered to kiss his hands they bent.
 My lord the Cid smiled on them and unto them said he:
 “Ha, don Raquéel and Vidas, you have forgotten me!
 And now must I get hence away who am banished in disgrace,
 For the king from me in anger hath turned away his face. 145
 I deem that from my chattels you shall gain somewhat of worth.
 And you shall lack for nothing while you dwell upon the earth.’

A-kissing of his hands forthwith Raquéel and Vidas fell.
 Good Martin Antolínez had made the bargain well,
 That to him on the coffers marks six hundred they should lend. 150
 And keep them safe, moreover, till the year had made an end.
 For so their word was given and sworn to him again,
 If they looked ere that within them, forsworn should be the twain,
 The Cid would never give them one groat of usury.

Said Martin, “Let the chests be ta'en as swiftly as may be, 155
 Take them, Raquéel and Vidas, and keep them in your care.
 And we shall even go with you that the money we may bear,
 For ere the first cock croweth must my lord the Cid depart.”

At the loading of the coffers you had seen great joy of heart.
 For they could not heave the great chests up though they were
 stark and hale. 160
 Dear was the minted metal to Vidas and Raqué!;
 And they would be rich forever till their two lives it were o'er

X

The hand of my good lord the Cid, Raqué! had kissed once more:
 "Ha! Campeador, in happy hour thou girdedst on the brand. 165
 Forth from Castile thou goest to the men of a strange land.
 Such is become thy fortune and great thy gain shall be
 Ah Cid, I kiss thine hands again--but make a gift to me
 Bring me a Moorish mantle splendidly wrought and red."
 "So be it. It is granted," the Cid in answer said, 170
 "If from abroad I bring it, well doth the matter stand;
 If not, take it from the coffers I leave here in your hand."
 And then Raqué! and Vidas bore the two chests away.
 With Martin Antolínez into Burgos entered they.
 And with fitting care, and caution unto their dwelling sped. 175
 And in the midmost of the hall a plaited quilt they spread.
 And a milk-white cloth of linen thereon did they unfold.
 Three hundred marks of silver before them Martin told.
 And forthwith Martin took them, no whit the coins he weighed.
 Then other marks three hundred in gold to him they paid. 180
 Martin had five esquires. He loaded all and one.
 You shall hear what said don Martin when all this gear was done:
 "Ha! don Raqué! and Vidas, ye have the coffers two.
 Well I deserve a guerdon, who obtained this prize for you."

XI

Together Vidas and Raqué! stepped forth apart thereon: 185
 "Let us give him a fair present for our profit he has won.
 Good Martin Antolínez in Burgos that dost dwell,
 We would give thee a fair present for thou deserves well.
 Therewith get breeches and a cloak and mantle rich and fine.
 Thou hast earned it. For a present these thirty marks are thine. 190
 For it is but just and honest, and, moreover, thou wilt stand
 Our warrant in this bargain whereto we set our hand."
 Don Martin thanked them duly and took the marks again.
 He yearned to leave the dwelling and well he wished the twain.
 He is gone out from Burgos. O'er the Arlanzon he went. 195
 And him who in good hour was born he found within his tent.
 The Cid arose and welcomed him, with arms held wide apart:
 "Thou art come, Antolínez, good vassal that thou art!
 May you live until the season when you reap some gain of me."
 "Here have I come, my Campeador, with as good heed as might be. 200
 Thou hast won marks six hundred, and thirty more have I.
 Ho! order that they strike the tents and let us swiftly fly.
 In San Pedro de Cardañas let us hear the cock ere day.
 We shall see your prudent lady, but short shall be our stay.
 And it is needful for us from the kingdom forth to wend, 205
 For the season of our suffrance draws onward to its end."

XII

They spake these words and straightaway the tent upgathered then,
 My lord the Cid rode swiftly with all his host of men.

And forth unto Saint Mary's the horse's head turned he,
 And with his right hand crossed himself: "God, I give thanks to thee 210
 Heaven and Earth that rulest. And thy favor be my weal
 Holy Saint Mary, for forthright must I now quit Castile.
 For I look on the King with anger, and I know not if once more
 I shall dwell there in my life-days. But may thy grace watch o'er
 My parting, Blessed Virgin, and guard me night and day. 215
 If thou do so and good fortune come once more in my way,
 I will offer rich oblations at thine altar, and I swear
 Most solemnly that I will chant a thousand masses there."

XIII

And the lord Cid departed fondly as a good man may.
 Forthwith they loosed the horses, and out they spurred away. 220
 Said good Martin Antolínez in Burgos that did dwell:
 "I would see my lady gladly and advise my people well
 What they shall do hereafter. It matters not to me
 Though the King take all. Ere sunrise I shall come unto thee."

XIV

Martin went back to Burgos but my lord the Cid spurred on 225
 To San Pedro of Cardañas as hard as horse could run,
 With all his men about him who served him as is due.
 And it was nigh to morning, and the cocks full oft they crew,
 When at last my lord the Campeador unto San Pedro came.
 God's Christian was the Abbot. Don Sancho was his name; 230
 And he was saying matins at the breaking of the day.
 With her five good dames in waiting Xiména there did pray.
 They prayed unto Saint Peter and God they did implore:
 "O thou who guidest all mankind, succor the Campeador."

XV

One knocked at the doorway, and they heard the tidings then. 235
 God wot the Abbot Sancho was the happiest of men.
 With the lights and with the candles to the court they ran forth right,
 And him who in good hour was born they welcomed in delight.
 "My lord Cid," quoth the Abbot, "Now God be praised of grace!
 Do thou accept my welcome, since I see thee in this place." 240
 And the Cid who in good hour was born, hereunto answered he:
 "My thanks to thee, don Sancho, I am content with thee.
 For myself and for my vassals provision will I make.
 Since I depart to exile, these fifty marks now take.
 If I may live my life-span, they shall be doubled you. 245
 To the Abbey not a groatsworth of damage will I do.
 For my lady do I give you an hundred marks again,
 Herself, her dames and daughters for this year do you maintain.
 I leave two daughters with you, but little girls they be.
 In thine arms keep them kindly. I commend them here to thee. 250
 Don Sancho do thou guard them, and of my wife take care.
 If thou wantest yet and lackest for anything whate'er,
 Look well to their provision, thee I conjure once more,
 And for one mark that thou spendest the Abbey shall have four."
 And with glad heart the Abbot his full assent made plain. 255
 And lo! the Dame Xiména came with her daughters twain.
 Each had her dame-in-waiting who the little maiden bore.
 And Dame Xiména bent the knee before the Campeador.

And fain she was to kiss his hand, and, oh, she wept forlorn!
 “A boon! A boon! my Campeador. In a good hour wert thou born. 260
 And because of wicked slanderers art thou banished from the land.

XVI

“Oh Campeador fair-bearded, a favor at thy hand!
 Behold I kneel before thee, and thy daughters are here with me,
 That have seen of days not many, for children yet they be,
 And these who are my ladies to serve my need that know. 265
 Now well do I behold it, thou art about to go.
 Now from thee our lives a season must sunder and remove,
 But unto us give succor for sweet Saint Mary’s love.”
 The Cid, the nobly bearded, reached down unto the twain,
 And in his arms his daughters has lifted up again, 270
 And to his heart he pressed them, so great his love was grown,
 And his tears fell fast and bitter, and sorely did he moan:
 “Xiména as mine own spirit I loved thee, gentle wife;
 But o’er well dost thou behold it, we must sunder in our life.
 I must flee and thou behind me here in the land must stay. 275
 Please God and sweet Saint Mary that yet upon a day
 I shall give my girls in marriage with mine own hand rich and well,
 And thereafter in good fortune be suffered yet to dwell,
 May they grant me, wife, much honored, to serve thee then once more.”

XVII

A mighty feast they had prepared for the Great Campeador 280
 The bells within San Pedro they clamor and they peal.
 That my lord the Cid is banished men cry throughout Castile.
 And some have left their houses, from their lands some fled away.
 Of knights an hundred and fifteen were seen upon that day,
 By the bridge across the Arlanzon together they came o’er. 285
 One and all were they calling on the Cid Campeador.
 And Martin Antolínez has joined him with their power.
 They sought him in San Pedro, who was born in a good hour.

XVIII

When that his host was growing, heard the great Cid of Bivár,
 Swift he rode forth to meet them, for his fame would spread afar. 290
 When they were come before him, he smiled on them again.
 And one and all drew near him and to kiss his hand were fain.
 My lord the Cid spake gladly: “Now to our God on high
 I make my supplication that ere I come to die I
 may repay your service that house and land has cost, 295
 And return unto you double the possession that ye lost.”
 My lord the Cid was merry that so great his commons grew,
 And they that were come to him they all were merry too.
 Six days of grace are over, and there are left but three,
 Three and no more. The Cid was warned upon his guard to be, 300
 For the King said, if thereafter he should find him in the land,
 Then neither gold nor silver should redeem him from his hand.
 And now the day was over and night began to fall
 His cavaliers unto him he summoned one and all:
 “Hearken, my noble gentlemen. And grieve not in your care. 305
 Few goods are mine, yet I desire that each should have his share.
 As good men ought, be prudent. When the cocks crow at day,
 See that the steeds are saddled, nor tarry nor delay.

In San Pedro to say matins the Abbot good will be;
 He will say mass in our behalf to the Holy Trinity. 310
 And when the mass is over, from the abbey let us wend,
 For the season of our sufferance draws onward to an end.
 And it is sure, moreover, that we have far to go.”
 Since so the Cid had ordered, they must do even so.
 Night passed, and came the morning. The second cock he crew; 315
 Forthwith upon the horses the caparisons they threw.
 And the bells are rung for matins with all the haste they may.
 My lord Cid and his lady to church they went their way.
 On the steps Xiména cast herself, that stood the shrine before,
 And to God passionately she prayed to guard the Campeador: 320
 “Our Father who art in Heaven, such glory is in Thee!
 Thou madest firmament and earth, on the third day the sea.
 The stars and moon Thou madest, and the great sun to warm.
 In the womb of Mary Mother, Thou tookest human form. 325
 Thou didst appear in Bethlehem as was Thy will and choice.
 And in Thy praise and glory shepherds lifted up their voice.
 And thither to adore Thee from Arabia afar
 Came forth the three kings, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar.
 And gold and myrrh and frankincense they proffered eagerly. 330
 Thou didst spare the prophet Jonah when he fell into the sea.
 And Thou didst rescue Daniel from the lions in the cave.
 And, moreover, in Rome city Saint Sebastian didst Thou save.
 From the sinful lying witness Saint Susanna didst Thou ward.
 And years two and thirty didst Thou walk the Earth, our Lord, 335
 Showing, the which all men take heed, Thy miracles divine.
 Of the stone, bread Thou madest, and of the water, wine.
 Thou didst raise up Saint Lazarus according to Thy will.
 Thou didst let the Hebrews take Thee. On Calvary the hill,
 In the place Golgotha by name, Thee, Lord, they crucified. 340
 And the two thieves were with Thee, whom they hanged on either side,
 One is in heaven, the other he came not thereunto.
 A miracle most mighty on the cross there didst Thou do.
 Blind was Longinus never had seen from his birth-year.
 The side of our Lord Jesus he pierced it with the spear. 345
 Forth the blood issued swiftly, and ran down the shaft apace.
 It stained his hands. He raised them and put them to his face.
 Forthwith his eyes were opened and in every way might see.
 He is ransomed from destruction for he straight believed on Thee.
 From the sepulchre Thou rosest, and into Hell didst go, 350
 According to Thy purpose, and its gates didst overthrow,
 To bring forth the Holy Fathers. And King of Kings Thou art,
 And of all the world the Father, and Thee with all my heart
 Do I worship and acknowledge, and further I implore
 That Saint Peter speed my prayer for the Cid Campeador,
 That God keep his head from evil; and when this day we twain 355
 Depart, then grant it to us that we meet in life again.”
 And now the prayer is over and the mass in its due course.
 From church they came, and already were about to get to horse.
 And the Cid clasped Xiména, but she, his hand she kissed. 360
 Sore wept the Dame, in no way the deed to do she wist.
 He turned unto his daughters and he looked upon the two:
 “To the Spiritual Father, have I commended you.
 We must depart. God knoweth when we shall meet again.”
 Weeping most sore--for never hast thou beheld such pain
 As the nail from the flesh parteth, from each other did they part. 365

And Cid with all his vassals disposed himself to start,
 And as he waited for them anew he turned his head,
 Minaya Alvar Fañez then in good season said:
 “Cid! Where is now thy courage? Upon a happy day
 Wast thou born. Let us bethink us of the road and haste away. 370
 A truce to this. Rejoicing out of these griefs shall grow.
 The God who gave us spirits shall give us aid also.”
 Don Sancho the good Abbot, they charged him o’er again
 To watch and ward Xiména and likewise her daughters twain,
 And the ladies that were with them. That he shall have no lack 375
 Of guerdon let the Abbot know. By this was he come back,
 Then out spake Alvar Fañez: “Abbot, if it betide
 That men should come desirous in our company to ride,
 Bid them follow but be ready on a long road to go
 Through the sown and through the desert; they may overtake us so.” 380
 They got them upon horseback, they let the rein go slack.
 The time drew near when on Castile they needs must turn the back.
 Spinaz de Can, it was the place where the Cid did alight.
 And a great throng of people welcomed him there that night. 385
 On the next day at morning, he got to horse once more,
 And forth unto his exile rode the true Campeador.
 To the left of San Estévan the good town did he wheel.
 He marched through Alcobiella the frontier of Castile.
 O’er the highway to Quinéa his course then has he bent.
 Hard by Navas de Palos o’er Duéro stream he went. 390
 All night at Figueruéla did my lord the Cid abide.
 And very many people welcomed him on every side.

XIX

When it was night the Cid lay down. In a deep sleep he fell,
 And to him in a vision came the angel Gabriel:
 “Ride, Cid, most noble Campeador, for never yet did knight 395
 Ride forth upon an hour whose aspect was so bright.
 While thou shalt live good fortune shall be with thee and shine.”
 When he awoke, upon his face he made the holy sign.

XX

He crossed himself, and unto God his soul commended then,
 he was glad of the vision that had come into his ken 400
 The next day at morning they began anew to wend.
 Be it known their term of sufferance at the last has made an end.
 In the mountains of Miédes the Cid encamped that night,
 With the towers of Atiénza where the Moors reign on the right.

XXI

‘Twas not yet come to sunset, and lingered still the day. 405
 My lord the Cid gave orders his henchmen to array.
 Apart from the footsoldiers, and valiant men of war,
 There were three hundred lances that each a pennon bore.

XXII

“Feed all the horses early, so may our God you speed.
 Let him eat who will; who will not, let him get upon the steed. 410
 We shall pass the mountain ranges rough and of dreadful height.
 The land of King Alfonso we can leave behind tonight.

And whoso'er will seek us shall find us ready then."
 By night the mountain ranges he traversed with his men. 415
 Morn came. From the hills downward they were about to fare.
 In a marvelous great forest the Cid bade halt them there,
 And to feed the horses early; and he told them all aright
 In what way he was desirous that they should march by night.
 They all were faithful vassals and gave assent thereto;
 The behests of their great captain it behooved them all to do. 420
 Ere night, was every man of them unto the riding fit.
 So did the Cid that no man might perchance get wind of it.
 They marched all through the night-tide and rested not at all.
 Near Henáres a town standeth that Castejón men call.
 There the Cid went into ambush with the men of his array. 425

XXIII

He couched there in the ambush till the breaking of the day.
 This Minaya Alvar Fañez had counselled and had planned:
 "Ha, Cid, in happy hour thou girdedst on the brand.
 Thou with an hundred henchmen shalt abide to hold the rear.
 Till we have drawn forth Castejón unto the bushment here. 430
 But give me now two hundred men on a harrying raid to ride.
 We shall win much if thy fortune and our God be on our side.
 "Well didst thou speak, Minaya," the Campeador he said,
 "Do thou with the two hundred ride on a harrying raid.
 With Alvar Salvadórez, Alvar Alvarez shall advance, 435
 likewise Galínd Garcíaz, who is a gallant lance.
 Let them ride beside Minaya, each valiant cavalier.
 Let them ride unfearing forward and turn from naught for fear.
 Out unto Guadalajara, from Hita far and wide,
 To Alcalá the city forth let the harriers ride. 440
 That they bring all the booty let them be very sure,
 Let them leave naught behind them for terror of the Moor.
 Here with an hundred lances in the rear will I remain,
 And capture Castejón good store of provender to gain.
 If thou come in any danger as thou ridest on the raid, 445
 Send swiftly hither, and all Spain shall say how I gave aid."
 Now all the men were chosen who on the raid should ride,
 And those who in the rearguard with the lord Cid should abide.
 And now the dawn was breaking and morning coming on,
 And the sun rising. Very God! how beautifully it shone! 450
 All men arose in Castejón, and wide they threw the gates;
 And forth they went to oversee their farmlands and estates.
 All were gone forth, and the gates stand open as they were thrown,
 And but a little remnant were left in Castejón.
 Round the city were the people scattered the whole country o'er. 455
 Then forth out of the ambush issued the Campeador.
 And without fail round Castejón he rushed along his way.
 The Moors, both men and women, he took them for a prey,
 And of their flocks as many as thereabouts there strayed.
 My lord Cid don Rodrigo straight for the gateway made, 460
 And they that held it, when they saw that swift attack begin,
 Fled in great fear, and through the gates Roy Diaz entered in
 With the sword naked in his hand; and fifteen Moors he slew
 Whom he ran down. In Castejón much gold, and silver too,
 He captured. Then unto him his knights the booty brought. 465
 To my lord Cid they bore it. The spoil they valued naught.
 Lo! the two hundred men and three to plunder that rode out,

Sped fearlessly, and ravaged the country roundabout.
 For the banner of Minaya unto Alcalá did gleam.
 Then they bore home the booty up the Henáres stream 470
 Past Guadalajára. Booty exceeding great they bore
 Of sheep and kine and vesture and of other wealth good store.
 Straightway returned Minaya. None dared the rear attack.
 With the treasure they had taken his company turned back.
 Lo, they wore come to Castejón, where the Campeador abode. 475
 He left the hold well guarded. Out from the place he rode.
 With all his men about him to meet them did he come,
 And with arms wide asunder welcomed Minaya home:
 “Thou art come, Alvar Fañez, good lance thou art indeed.
 Whereso I send thee, in such wise I well may hope to speed. 480
 Put straightway all together the spoil both shine and mine;
 The fifth part of all, Minaya, an thou so desire, is thine.”

XXIV

“Much do I thank thee for it, illustrious Campeador.
 With what thou giv’st me, the fifth part of all our spoils of war,
 The King Alfonso of Castile full well content would be. 485
 I renounce it in thy favor; and without a claim to thee.
 But I swear to God who dwelleth in the high firmament,
 That till upon my charger I gallop in content
 Against the Moors, and till I wield both spear and brand again,
 And till unto my elbow from the blade the blood doth drain 490
 Before the Cid illustrious, howe’r so small it be,
 I will not take the value of a copper groat from thee.
 When through me some mighty treasure thou hast at thy command.
 I will take thy gift; till such a time, all else is in thine hand.”

XXV

They heaped the spoil together. Pondered the Cid my lord, 495
 He who in happy hour had girded on the sword,
 How tidings of his raiding to the King would come ere long,
 And Alfonso soon would seek him with his host to do him wrong.
 He bade his spoil-dividers make a division fair,
 And furthermore in writing give to each man his share. 500
 The fortune of each cavalier had sped exceeding well,
 One hundred marks of silver to each of them there fell,
 And each of the foot soldiers the half of that obtained.
 A round fifth of the treasure for my lord the Cid remained
 But here he could not sell it, nor in gifts give it away. 505
 No captives, men or women, he desired in his array.
 And with the men of Castejón he spoke to this intent
 To Hita and Guadalajára ambassadors he sent
 To find how high the ransom of the fifth part they would rate.
 Even as they assessed it, his profit would be great. 510
 Three thousand marks of silver the Moors agreed to pay.
 The Cid was pleased. And duly was it paid on the third day.
 My lord the Cid determined with all his men of war
 That there within the castle they would abide no more,
 And that they would have held it, but that water sore it lacked: 515
 “Ye Moors are friendly to the King; even so runs the pact,
 With his host will he pursue us. And I desire to flee
 From Castejón; Minaya and my men, so hark to me;

XXVI

“Nor take it ill, mine utterance. For here we cannot stay.
 The king will come to seek us, for he is not far away; 520
 But to destroy the castle seems in no way good to me.
 An hundred Moorish women in that place I will set free
 And of the Moors an hundred. Since there, as it befell,
 I captured them. Hereafter shall they all speak of me well.
 Ye all are paid; among you is no man yet to pay. 525
 Let us on the morrow morning prepare to ride away,
 For against my lord Alfonso the strife I would not stir.”
 What the Cid said was pleasing to his every follower.
 Rich men they all departed from the hold that they had taen
 And the Moors both men and women blessed them o'er and o'er again. 530
 Up the Henáres hastened they and hard they rode and strong.
 They passed through the Alcárrias, and swift they marched along,
 By the Caverns of Anquíta they hastened on their way.
 They crossed the stream. Into Taránz the great plain entered they,
 And on down through that region as hard as they might fare. 535
 Twixt Faríza and Cetína would the Cid seek shelter there.
 And a great spoil he captured in the country as he went,
 For the Moors had no inkling whatso'er of his intent.
 On the next day marched onward the great Cid of Bivár,
 And he went by Alháma, and down the vale afar. 540
 And he passed Bubiérca and Atéca likewise passed,
 And it was nigh to Alcocér that he would camp at last
 Upon a rounded hillock that was both strong and high.
 They could not rob him of water; the Jalón it flowed hard by.
 My lord Cid don Rodrigo planned to storm Alcocér. 545

XXVII

He pitched a strong encampment upon the hillock there,
 Some men were toward the mountains, some by the stream arrayed.
 The gallant Cid, who in good hour had girded on the blade,
 Bade his men near the water dig a trench about the height,
 That no man might surprise them by day nor yet by night. 550
 So might men know that there the Cid had taken up his stand.

XXVIII

And thereupon the tidings went out through all that land,
 How my lord Cid the Campeador had there got footing sure,
 He is gone forth from the Christians, he is come unto the Moor,
 In his presence no man dareth plough the farmlands as of yore. 555
 Very merry with his vassals was the great Campeador.
 And Alcocér the Castle wider tribute had he laid.

XXIX

In Alcocér the burghers to the Cid their tribute paid
 And all the dwellers in Terrér and Teca furthermore.
 And the townsmen of Calatayúd, know well, it irked them sore. 570
 Full fifteen weeks he tarried there, but the town yielded not
 And when he saw it forthwith the Cid devised a plot.
 Save one left pitched behind him, he struck his every tent.
 Then with his ensign lifted, down the Jalón he went,
 With mail-shirts on and girded swords, as a wise man should him bear. 575

To draw forth to his ambush the men of Alcocér.
 And when they saw it, name of God! How glad was everyone!
 "The provender and fodder of my lord the Cid are gone.
 If he leaves one tent behind him, the burden is not light
 Of the others that he beareth. He 'scapes like one in flight. 580
 Let us now fall upon him, great profit shall we gain.
 We shall win a mighty booty before he shall be ta'en
 By them who have their dwelling in the city of Terrér;
 For if by chance they take him, in the spoil we shall not share.
 The tribute that he levied, double he shall restore." 585
 Forth from the town of Alcocér in wild haste did they pour.
 When the Cid saw them well without he made as if he fled;
 With his whole host in confusion down the Jalón he sped.
 "The prize 'scapes," cried the townsmen. Forth rushed both great and small,
 In the lust of conquest thinking of nothing else at all. 590
 They left the gates unguarded, none watched them any more.
 And then his face upon them turned the great Campeador,
 He saw how twixt them and their hold there lay a mighty space;
 He made them turn the standard. They spurred the steeds apace.
 "Ho! cavaliers! Now swiftly let every man strike in, 595
 By the Creator's favor this battle we shall win."
 And there they gave them battle in the midmost of the mead.
 Ah God! is the rejoicing on this morning great indeed.
 The Cid and Alvar Fañez went spurring on ahead;
 Know ye they had good horses that to their liking sped. 600
 'Twixt the townsmen and the castle swiftly the way they broke.
 And the Cid's henchmen merciless, came striking stroke on stroke,
 In little space three hundred of the Moors they there have slain.
 Loud was the shouting of the Moors in the ambush that were ta'en.
 But the twain left them; on they rushed. Right for the hold they made 605
 And at the gate they halted, each with a naked blade.
 Then up came the Cid's henchmen for the foe were all in flight.
 Know ye the Cid has taken Alcocér by such a sleight.

XXX

Per Vermudóz came thither who the Cid's flag did bear.
 On the high place of the city he lifted it in air. 610
 Outspoke the Cid Roy Diaz. Born in good hour was he:
 "To God in Heaven and all his saints great thanks and praises be.
 We shall better now our lodging for cavalier and steed."

XXXI

Alvar Fañez and all ye my knights, now hearken and give heed
 We have taken with the castle a booty manifold. 615
 Dead are the Moors. Not many of the living I behold
 Surely we cannot sell them the women and the men;
 And as for striking off their heads, we shall gain nothing then.
 In the hold let us receive them, for we have the upper hand.
 When we lodge within their dwellings, they shall do as we
 command." 620

XXXII

The Cid with all his booty lieth in Alcocér.
 He let the tent be sent for, that he left behind him there.
 It irked the men of Teca, wroth in Terrér were they;

Know ye on all Calatayúd sorely the thing did weigh. 625
 To the Sovereign of Valencia they sent the news apace:
 How that the King Alfonso hath banished in disgrace
 One whom men call my lord the Cid, Roy Diaz of Bivár,
 He came to lodge by Alcocér, and strong his lodgings are.
 He drew them out to ambush; he has won the castle there. 630
 "If thou adest not needs must thou lose both Teca and Terrér,
 Thou wilt have lost Calatayúd that cannot stand alone.
 All things will go to ruin on the banks of the Jalón,
 And round about Jilóca on the far bank furthermore."
 When the King Tamín had heard it, his heart was troubled sore: 635
 "Here do I see three Moorish kings. Let two without delay
 With three thousand Moors and weapons for the fight ride there away;
 Likewise they shall be aided by the men of the frontier.
 See that ye take him living and bring him to me here.
 He must pay for the realm's trespass till I be satisfied." 640
 Three thousand Moors have mounted and fettle them to ride.
 All they unto Segórbe have come to lodge that night.
 The next day they got ready to ride at morning light.
 In the evening unto Celfa they came the night to spend.
 And there they have determined for the borderers to send. 645
 Little enow they tarried; from every side they came.
 Then they went forth from Celfa (of Canál it has its name),
 Never a whit they rested, but marched the livelong day.
 And that night unto their lodging in Calatayúd came they.
 And they sent forth their heralds through the length of all the land. 650
 A great and sovran army they gathered to their hand.
 With the two Kings Fáriz and Gálve (these are the names they bear).
 They will besiege my noble lord the Cid in Alcocér.

XXXIII

They pitched the tents and got them to their lodging there and then.
 Strong grew their bands for thereabouts was found great store of men. 655
 Moreover all the outposts, which the Moors set in array,
 Marched ever hither and thither in armour night and day.
 And many are the outposts, and great that host of war.
 From the Cid's men, of water have they cut off all the store.
 My lord the Cid's brave squadrons great lust to fight they had, 660
 But he who in good hour was born firmly the thing forbade.
 For full three weeks together they hemmed the city in.

XXXIV

When three weeks were well nigh over and the fourth would soon begin,
 My lord Cid and his henchmen agreed after this guise:
 "They have cut us off from water; and our food must fail likewise. 665
 They will not grant unto us that we depart by night,
 And very great is their power for us to face and fight.
 My knights what is your pleasure, now say, that we shall do?
 Then first outspake Minaya the good knight and the true:
 "Forth from Castile the noble unto this place we sped; 670
 If with the Moors we fight not, they will not give us bread.
 Here are a good six hundred and some few more beside.
 In the name of the Creator let nothing else betide:
 Let us smite on them tomorrow."
 The Campeador said he: 675
 "Minaya Alvar Fañez, thy speaking liketh me.

Thou hast done thyself much honor, as of great need thou must.”
 All the Moors, men and women, he bade them forth to thrust
 That none his secret counsel might understand aright
 And thereupon they armed them all through that day and night. 680
 And the next day in the dawning when soon the sun should rise,
 The Cid was armed and with him all the men of his emprise.
 My lord the Cid spake to them even as you shall hear.
 “Let all go forth, let no one here tarry in the rear,
 Save only two footsoldiers the gates to watch and shield. 685
 They will capture this our castle, if we perish in the field;
 But if we win, our fortunes shall grow both great and fair.
 Per Vermudóz, my banner I bid thee now to bear;
 As thou art very gallant, do thou keep it without stain.
 But unless I so shall order thou shalt not loose the rein.” 690
 He kissed the Cid’s hand. Forth he ran the battle-flag to take.
 They oped the gates, and outward in a great rush did they break.
 And all the outposts of the Moor beheld them coming on,
 And back unto the army forthwith they got them gone.
 What haste there was among the Moors! To arm they turned them back. 695
 With the thunder of the war-drum the earth was like to crack.
 There might you see Moors arming, that swift their ranks did close.
 Above the Moorish battle two flags-in-chief arose,
 But of their mingling pennons the number who shall name?
 Now all the squadrons of the Moors marching right onward came, 700
 That the Cid and all his henchmen they might capture out of hand.
 “My gallant men here in this place see that ye firmly stand,
 Let no man leave the war-ranks till mine order I declare.”
 Per Vermudóz, he found it too hard a thing to bear,
 He spurred forth with the banner that in his hand he bore: 705
 “May the Creator aid thee, thou true Cid Campeador,
 Through the line of battle yonder thy standard I will take;
 I shall see how you bring succor, who must for honor’s sake.”
 Said the Campeador: “Of charity, go not to the attack.”
 For answer said Per Vermudóz: “Is naught shall hold me back.” 710
 Spurring the steed he hurled him through the strong line of the foes.
 The serried Moors received him and smote him mighty blows,
 To take from him the banner; yet they could not pierce his mail.
 Said the Campeador: “Of charity go help him to prevail.”

XXXV

Before their breasts the war-shields there have they buckled strong, 715
 The lances with the pennons they laid them low along,
 And they have bowed their faces over the saddlebow,
 And thereaway to strike them with brave hearts did they go.
 He who in happy hour was born with a great voice did call:
 “For the love of the Creator, smite them, my gallants ah. 720
 I am Roy Diaz of Bivár, the Cid, the Campeador.”
 At the rank where was Per Vermudóz the mighty strokes they bore.
 They are three hundred lances that each a pennon bear.
 At one blow every man of them his Moor has slaughtered there,
 And when they wheeled to charge anew as many more were slain. 725

XXXV

You might see great clumps of lances lowered and raised again,
 And many a shield of leather pierced and shattered by the stroke,
 And many a coat of mail run through, its meshes all to-broke,

And many a white pennon come forth all red with blood,
 And running without master full many a charger good. 730
 Cried the Moors "Mahound!" The Christians shouted on Saint James of grace.
 On the field Moors thirteen hundred were slain in little space.

XXXVII

On his gilded selle how strongly fought the Cid, the splendid knight.
 And Minaya Alvar Fañez who Zorita held of right,
 And brave Martin Antolínez that in Burgos did abide, 735
 And likewise Muño Gustióz, the Cid's esquire tried!
 So also Martin Gustióz who ruled Montemayór,
 And by Alvar Salvadórez Alvar Alvarez made war
 And Galínd Garcíaz the good knight that came from Aragon,
 There too came Felez Múñoz the Cid his brother's son. 740
 As many as were gathered there straightway their succor bore,
 And they sustained the standard and the Cid Campeador.

XXXVIII

Of Minaya Alvar Fañez the charger they have slain
 The gallant bands of Christians came to his aid amain.
 His lance was split and straightway he set hand upon the glaive, 745
 What though afoot, no whit the less he dealt the buffets brave.
 The Cid, Roy Diaz of Castile, saw how the matter stood.
 He hastened to a governor that rode a charger good.
 With his right hand he smote him such a great stroke with the sword
 That the waist he clave; the half of him he hurled unto the sward. 750
 To Minaya Alvar Fañez forthwith he gave the steed.
 "Right arm of mine, Minaya, now horse thee with all speed!
 I shall have mighty succor from thee this very day.
 The Moors leave not the battle; firm standeth their array,
 And surely it behooves us to storm their line once more." 755
 Sword in hand rode Minaya; on their host he made great war,
 Whom he overtook soever, even to death he did.
 He who was born in happy hour, Roy Diaz, my lord Cid,
 Thrice smote against King Fáriz. Twice did the great strokes fail,
 But the third found the quarry. And down his shirt of mail 760
 Streamed the red blood. To leave the field he wheeled his horse away.
 By that one stroke the foeman were conquered in the fray.

XXXIX

And Martin Antolínez a heavy stroke let drive
 At Gálve. On his helmet the rubies did he rive;
 The stroke went through the helmet for it reached unto the flesh. 765
 Be it known, he dared not tarry for the man to strike afresh.
 King Fáriz and King Gálve, but beaten men are they.
 What a great day for Christendom! On every side away
 Fled the Moors. My lord Cid's henchmen still striking gave them chase.
 Into Terrér came Fáriz, but the people of the place 770
 Would not receive King Gálve. As swiftly as he might
 Onward unto Calatayúd he hastened in his flight.
 And after him in full pursuit came on the Campeador.
 Till they came unto Calatayúd that chase they gave not o'er.

XL

- Minaya Alvar Fañez hath a horse that gallops well. 775
 Of the Moors four and thirty that day before him fell.
 And all his arm was bloody, for 'tis a biting sword;
 And streaming from his elbow downward the red blood poured.
 Said Minaya: "Now am I content; well will the rumor run
 To Castile, for a pitched battle my lord the Cid hath won." 780
 Few Moors are left, so many have already fallen dead,
 For they who followed after slew them swiftly as they fled.
 He who was born in happy hour came with his host once more.
 On his noble battle-charger rode the great Campeador.
 His coif was wrinkled. Name of God! but his great beard was fair. 785
 His mail-hood on his shoulders lay. His sword in hand he bare.
 And he looked upon his henchmen and saw them drawing nigh:
 "Since we ha' won such a battle, glory to God on high!"
 The Cid his henchmen plundered the encampment far and wide
 Of the shields and of the weapons and other wealth beside. 790
 Of the Moors they captured there were found five hundred steeds and ten.
 And there was great rejoicing among those Christian men,
 And the lost of their number were but fifteen all told.
 They brought a countless treasure of silver and of gold.
 Enriched were all those Christians with the spoil that they had ta'en 795
 And back unto their castle they restored the Moors again;
 To give them something further he gave command and bade.
 With all his train of henchmen the Cid was passing glad.
 He gave some monies, some much goods to be divided fair,
 And full an hundred horses fell to the Cid's fifth share. 800
 God's name! his every vassal nobly did he requite,
 Not only the footsoldiers but likewise every knight.
 He who in happy hour was born wrought well his government,
 And all whom he brought with him therewith were well content.
 "Harken to me, Minaya, my own right arm art thou. 805
 Of the wealth, wherewith our army the Creator did endow,
 Take in thine hand whatever thou deemest good to choose.
 To Castile I fain would send thee to carry there the news
 Of our triumph. To Alphonso the King who banished me
 A gift of thirty horses I desire to send with thee. 810
 Saddled is every charger, each steed is bridled well.
 There hangeth a good war-sword at the pommel of each selle."
 Said Minaya Alvar Fañez: "I will do it with good cheer.

XLI

- "Of the gold and the fine silver, behold a bootful here
 Nothing thereto is lacking. Thou shalt pay the money down 815
 At Saint Mary's Church for masses fifty score in Burgos town;
 To my wife and to my daughters the remainder do thou bear.
 Let them offer day and night for me continually their prayer.
 If I live, exceeding wealthy all of those dames shall be.

XLII

- Minaya Alvar Fañez, therewith content was he. 820
 They made a choice of henchmen along with him to ride.
 They fed the steeds. Already came on the eventide.
 Roy Diaz would decide it with his companions leal.

XLIII

“Dost thou then go, Minaya, to the great land of Castile
 And unto our well-wishers with a clear heart canst thou say: 825
 ‘God granted us his favor, and we conquered in the fray?’
 If returning thou shalt find us here in this place, ‘tis well;
 If not, where thou shalt hear of us, go seek us where we dwell.
 For we must gain our daily bread with the lance and with the brand,
 Since otherwise we perish here in a barren land. 830
 And therefore as methinketh, we must get hence away.”

XLIV

So was it, and Minaya went at the break of day.
 But there behind the Campeador abode with all his band.
 And waste was all the country, an exceeding barren land.
 Each day upon my lord the Cid there in that place they spied, 835
 The Moors that dwelt on the frontier and outlanders beside.
 Healed was King Fáriz. With him they held a council there,
 The folk that dwelt in Teca and the townsmen of Terrér,
 And the people of Calatayúd, of the three the fairest town.
 In such wise have they valued it and on parchment set it down 840
 That for silver marks three thousand Alcocér the Cid did sell.

XLV

Roy Diaz sold them Alcocér. How excellently well
 He paid his vassals! Horse and foot he made them wealthy then,
 And a poor man you could not find in all his host of men.
 In joy he dwelleth aye who serves a lord of noble heart. 845



IMAGE 5.29: THE CID'S SIGNATURE | An autographed signature of the Cid.

Author: User “Escarlati”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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XLVI

When my lord the Cid was ready from the Castle to depart,
 The Moors both men and women cried out in bitter woe:
 “Lord Cid art thou departing? Still may our prayers go
 Before thy path, for with thee we are full well content.”
 For my lord the great Cid of Bivár, when from Alcocér he went, 850
 The Moors both men and women made lamentation sore.
 He lifted up the standard, forth marched the Campeador.
 Down the Jalón he hastened, on he went spurring fast.
 He saw birds of happy omen, as from the stream he passed.
 Glad were the townsmen of Terrér that he had marched away, 855
 And the dwellers in Calatayúd were better pleased than they.
 But in the town of Alcocér ‘twas grief to all and one,
 For many a deed of mercy unto them the Cid had done.

My lord the Cid spurred onward. Forward apace he went;
 'Twas near to the hill Monreál that he let pitch his tent. 860
 Great is the hill and wondrous and very high likewise.
 Be it known from no quarter doth he need to dread surprise.
 And first he forced Doróca tribute to him to pay,
 And then levied on Molína on the other side that lay,
 Teruél o'er against him to submit he next compelled 865
 And lastly Celfa de Canál within his power he held.

XLVII

May my lord the Cid, Roy Diaz, at all times God's favor feel.
 Minaya Alvar Fañez has departed to Castile.



IMAGE 5.30: JURA DE SANTA GADEA | The “Santa Gadea Oath,” where the man in the center with the red cape swears on the Bible that he did not murder his brother, while the Cid stands witness.

Author: Marcos Hiráldez Acosta
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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To the King thirty horses for a present did he bring.
 And when he had beheld them beautifully smiled the King: 870
 “Who gave thee these, Minaya, so prosper thee the Lord?”
 “Even the Cid Roy Diaz, who in good hour girded sword.
 Since you banished him, by cunning has he taken Alcocér.
 To the King of Valencia the tidings did they bear.
 He bade that they besiege him; from every water-well 875
 They cut him off. He sallied forth from the citadel,
 In the open field he fought them, and he beat in that affray
 Two Moorish kings he captured, sire, a very mighty prey.
 Great King, this gift he sends thee. Thine hands and feet also
 He kisses. Show him mercy; such God to thee shall show.” 880

Said the King:

“’Tis over early for one banished, without grace
 In his lord’s sight, to receive it at the end of three week’s space.
 But since ‘tis Moorish plunder to take it I consent. 885
 That the Cid has taken such a spoil, I am full well content.
 Beyond all this. Minaya. thine exemption I accord,
 For all thy lands and honors are unto thee restored.
 Go and come! Henceforth my favor I grant to thee once more.
 But to thee I say nothing of the Cid Campeador.

XLVIII

“Beyond this, Alvar Fañez, I am fain to tell it thee 890
 That whosoever in my realm in that desire may be,
 Let them, the brave and gallant, to the Cid betake them straight.
 I free them and exempt them both body and estate.”
 Minaya Alvar Fañez has kissed the King’s hands twain:
 “Great thanks, as to my rightful lord I give thee, King, again. 895
 This dost thou now, and better yet as at some later hour.
 We shall labor to deserve it, if God will give us power.”
 Said the King: “Minaya, peace for that. Take through Castile thy way.
 None shall molest. My lord the Cid seek forth without delay.”

Cantar II

The Marriage of the Cid’s Daughters

XCVIII

O’er the mountains, o’er the rivers, o’er the hills they took the road.
 And at length before Valladolid where the King lay they were.
 Minaya and Per Vermudóz sent tidings to him there,
 That reception to their followers he might bid his men extend.
 “My lord Cid of Valencia presents with us doth send.” 5

XCIX

Glad was the King. Man gladder you never yet did see.
 He commanded all his nobles to ride forth hastily.
 And forth among the first of them did King Alfonso go,
 Of him who in good hour was born the tidings for to know. 10
 Know you the Heirs of Carrión happed in that place to be,
 Also Count don García the Cid’s worst enemy.
 Of the tidings some were merry, and some were all folorn.
 They caught sight of his henchmen who in happy hour was born.
 They feared it was an army for no herald came before.
 Straightway the King Alfonso crossed himself o’er and o’er. 15
 Minaya and Per Vermudóz came forward with all speed,
 They leaped from the saddle, they dismounted from the steed.
 Before the King Alfonso upon their knees they fell.
 They kissed the ground beneath him, the kissed his feet as well:
 “Now a boon, King Alfonso. Thou art great and glorious. 20
 For my lord Cid the Campeador do we embrace thee thus.
 He holds himself thy vassal; he owns thee for his lord.
 He prizes high the honor thou didst to him accord.
 O King, but a few days agone in the fight he overcame
 The King out of Morocco, Yússuf (that is his name), 25

With a host of fifty thousand from the field he drove away.
 The booty that he captured was a great and sovran prey.
 Great wealth unto his followers because of this did fall.
 He sends thee twoscore horses and doth kiss thy hands withal.
 Said King Alfonso: 30
 “Gladly to accept them am I fain.
 To the Cid who sent me such a gift I send my thanks again.
 When I do unto his liking, may he live to see the day.”
 Thereat were many of good cheer and kissed his hands straightway.
 Grieved was Count don García. Wroth was his heart within. 35
 Apart he wells a little with ten men of his kin:
 “A marvel is this matter of the Cid, so grows his fame.
 Now by the honor that he hath we shall be put to shame.
 Kings he oerthroweth lightly, and lightly bringeth steeds
 As though he dead had found them; we are minished by his deeds.” 40

C

Hear now of King Alfonso what he said upon this score:
 “Thanks be to the Creator and the lord Saint Isidore
 For the two hundred horses that the Cid to me hath sent.
 Yet shall he serve me better in this my government.
 To Minaya Alvar Fañez and Per Vermudóz I say 45
 That you forthwith clothe your bodies in honorable array,
 And as you shall require it of me take battle-gear
 Such as before Roy Diaz in good manner shall appear.
 Take then the gift I give you even these horses three.
 As it seems to my avisement, as my heart telleth me, 50
 Out of all these adventures some good will come to light.”

CI

They kissed his hands and entered to take their rest that night.
 In all things that they needed he bade men serve them well.
 Of the two Heirs of Carrión now am I fain to tell,
 How secretly they counselled what thing should be their cast: 55
 “Of my lord Cid the high affairs go forward wondrous fast.
 Let us demand his daughters that with them we may wed.
 Our fortune and our honor thereby may be well sped.”
 Unto the King Alfonso with their secret forth went they.

CII

“As from our King and master a boon of thee we pray 60
 By favor of thy counsel we desire to obtain
 That thou ask for us in marriage of the Cid his daughters twain.
 With honor and with profit shall the match for then, be fraught.”

Cantar III

The Affront of Corpes

CXXIV

“Now of the Cid the Campeador let us demand our wives.
 Let us say that we will bear them to the lands of Carrión.
 The place where they are heiresses shall unto them be shown.
 We shall take them from Valencia, from the Campeador his reach.
 And then upon the journey we shall work our will on each, 5

Ere the matter of the lion for a sore reproach and scorn
 They turn to our discomfort who are heirs of Carrión born.
 We shall bear with us of treasure nigh priceless a fair stock.
 Of the daughters of the Campeador we two shall make our mock. 10
 We shall be rich men always who possess such valiant things,
 And fit to marry daughters of emperors or kings,
 Who art the Counts of Carrión by virtue of our birth.
 The Campeador his daughters we shall mock at in our mirth.
 Ere the matter of the lion they throw at us in disdain.”

When this they had decided the two returned again. 15
 Ontspake Ferránd Golzavez for silence in the Court:
 “Cid Campeador, so may our God abide thy strong support,
 May it please Dame Xiména, but first seem good to thee,
 And Minaya Alvar Fañez and all men here that be
 Give us our wives. By marriage are they ours in very deed. 20
 Unto our lands in Carrión those ladies we will lead.
 With the dower-lands to enfeoff them that we gave for bridal right
 Of the lands of our possession, thy daughters shall have sight,
 And those wherein the children to be born to us shall share.”

The Cid my lord the Campeador scented no insult there: 25
 “I shall give you my daughters and of my wealth dispone.
 Ye gave them glebe of dowry in the lands of Carrión,
 Three thousands marks of dower shall to my girls belong.
 I will give mules and palfreys both excellent and strong,
 And great steeds of battle swift and of mighty thew, 30
 And cloth and silken garments with the gold woven through.
 Coláda and Tizón the swords I will give to you likewise
 Full well ye know I got them in very gallant guise.
 My sons ye are, for to you do I give my daughters two.
 My very heart’s blood thither ye carry home with you. 35
 In León and in Galicia and Castile let all men hear
 How I sent forth my sons-in-law with such abundant gear.
 And serve you well my daughters, your wedded wives that be.
 An you serve them well rich guerdon ye shall obtain of me.”
 To this the heirs of Carrión their full assent made plain. 40
 The daughters of the Campeador were given them and taen,
 And they began receiving as the Cid’s orders went.
 When of all their heart’s desire they were at last content,
 Then Carrión’s heirs commanded that the packs be loaded straight,
 Through Valencia the city was the press of business great, 45
 And all have taken weapons and all men gallop strong,
 For they must forth the daughters of the Cid to speed along
 Unto the lands of Carrión. To mount all men prepare,
 Farewell all men are saying. But the two sisters there,
 Dame Sol and Dame Elvíra, kneeled to the Cid Campeador: 50
 “A boon, so may God keep thee, O father, we implore.
 Thou begottest us. Our mother she brought us forth in pain.
 Our liege-lord and our lady, here do ye stand ye twain.
 Now to the lands of Carrión to send us is your will;
 It is our bounden duty thy commandment to fulfil. 55
 And so we two together ask but this boon of thee,
 That in the lands of Carrión thy tidings still may be.”
 My lord the Cid has clasped them, and he has kissed the twain.

CXXV

This hath he done. Their mother hath doubled it again.
 “Go, daughters! the Creator of you henceforth have care 60

Mine and your father's blessing you still with you shall bear.
 Go forth where you are dowered in Carrión to dwell.
 I have, after my thinking, married you passing well."
 The hands of their father and their mother kissed the two.
 Blessing and benediction they gave to them anew. 65
 My lord Cid and the others have fettle them to ride,
 With armor and with horses and caparisons of pride.
 From Valencia the splendid were the Heirs departing then.
 They took leave of the ladies and all their bands of men.
 Through the meadow of Valencia forth under arms they went. 70
 The Cid and all his armies were very well content.
 He who in good hour belted brand in signs had seen it plain
 That these marriages in no way should stand without a stain.
 But since the twain are married, he may not repent him now.

CXXVI

"My nephew Felez Muñoz, I prithee where art thou? 75
 Thou art my daughters' cousin in thy soul and in thine heart.
 With them even unto Carrión I command thee to depart.
 Thou shalt see what lands for dower to my girls are given o'er,
 And shalt come again with tidings unto the Campeador."
 Quoth Felez Muñoz: "Heart and soul that duty pleases me." 80
 Minaya Alvar Fañez before the Cid came he:
 "Back to the town of Valencia, Oh Cid, now let us go;
 For if our God and Father the Creator's will be so,
 To Carrión's lands thy daughters to visit we shall wend. 85
 Dame Sol and Dame Elvira, to God do we commend.
 Such things may you accomplish as will make us glad and fain."
 The sons-in-law gave answer: "Now that may God ordain."
 They lamented much at parting. Daughters and sire wept sore,
 So also wept the cavaliers of the Cid Campeador.
 "Thou, cousin, Felez Muñoz, now hark to this aright. 90
 Thou shalt go by Molina, and there shalt lie one night,
 And greet fair the Morisco Avengalvón my friend;
 That he may most fair reception to my sons-in-law extend.
 Tell him I send my daughters to the lands of Carrión,
 In all their needs his courtesy as beseemeth shall be shown. 95
 Let him ward them to Medina for the love he beareth me.
 For all that he cloth for them I will give him a rich fee."
 They parted then, as when the nail out of the flesh is torn.
 He turned back to Valencia who in happy hour was born.
 And now the Heirs of Carrión have fettle them to fare. 100
 Saint Mary of Alvarrazín, their halting-place was there.
 From thence the Heirs of Carrión plied furiously the spur.
 Ho! in Molina with the Moor Avengalvón they were.
 The Morisco when he heard it in his heart was well content,
 And forth with great rejoicings to welcome them he went. 105
 Ah, God! how well he served them in what e'er their joy might be!
 The next day in the morning to horse with them got he.
 He bade two hundred horsemen for escort forth to ride.
 They crossed the mountains of Luzón (so are they signified),
 And the Vale of Arbujuélo to the Jalón they came. 110
 The place where they found lodging, Ansera is its name.
 Unto the daughters of the Cid, the Moor fair presents gave,
 And to either Heir of Carrión beside a charger brave.
 For the love he bore the Campeador, all this for them he wrought.

They looked upon the riches that the Moor with him had brought 115
 And then together treason did the brothers twain concert.
 "Since the daughters of the Campeador we shortly shall desert,
 If but we might do unto death Aengalvon the Moor,
 The treasure he possesses for ourselves we should secure
 Safe as our wealth in Carrión those goods we will maintain. 120
 And ne'er will the Cid Campeador avenge on us the stain."
 While they of Carrión this shame complotted each with each,
 In the midst a Moor o'erheard them, that could of Latin speech.
 He kept no secret. With it to Avengalvón he ran:
 "Thou art my lord. Be wary of these persons, Castellan. 125
 I heard the heirs of Carrión that plotted death for thee."

CXXVII

This same Avengalvón the Moor, a gallant man was he
 He got straightway on horseback with servitors ten score.
 He brandished high his weapons, he came the Heirs before.
 And the two Heirs with what he said but little pleased they are: 130
 "If for his sake I forebore not, my lord Cid of Bivár,
 I would do such deeds upon you as through all the world should ring,
 And then to the true Campeador his daughters would I bring.
 And unto Carrión never should you enter from that day."

CXXVIII

What I have done against you, ho! Heirs of Carrión, say, 135
 For without guile I served you, and lo, my death ye plot.
 For wicked men and traitors I will leave you on the spot.
 Dame Sol and Dame Elvira with your good leave I go;
 For of these men of Carrión I rate the fame but low.
 God will it and command it, who is Lord of all the Earth. 140
 That the Campeador hereafter of this match have joy and mirth."
 That thing the Moor has told them, and back he turned him there.
 When he crossed over thee Jalón, weapon he waved in air.
 He returned unto Molína like a man of prudent heart.
 And now from Ansaréra did Carrión's Heirs depart; 145
 And they began thereafter to travel day and night.
 And they let Atiénza on the left, a craggy height.
 The forest of Miédes, now have they overpassed,
 And on through Montes Claros they pricked forward spurring fast.
 And then passed Griza on the left that Alamos did found. 150
 There be the caves where Elpha he imprisoned underground.
 And they left San Estévan, on their right that lay afar.
 Within the woods of Corpes, the Heirs of Carrión are.
 And high the hills are wooded, to the clouds the branches sweep,
 And savage are the creatures that roundabout them creep; 155
 And there upon a bower with a clear spring they light
 And there the Heirs of Carrión bade that their tent be pight.
 There with their men about them, that night they lay at rest.
 With their wives clasped to their bosom their affection they protest,
 But ill the twain fulfilled it, when the dawn came up the East. 160
 They bade put goods a plenty on the back of every beast.
 Where they at night found lodging, now have they struck the tent.
 The people of their household far on before them went.
 Of the two Heirs of Carrión so the commandment ran,
 That none behind should linger, a woman or a man. 165
 But Dame Sol and Dame Elvira their wives shall tarry still,

With whom it is their pleasure to dally to their fill.
 The others have departed. They four are left alone.
 Great evil had been plotted by the Heirs of Carrión.
 “Dame Sol and Dame Elvira, ye may take this for true: 170
 Here in the desert wildwood shall a mock be made of you.
 Today is our departure, we will leave you here behind.
 And in the lands of Carrión no portion shall you find.
 Let them hasten with these tidings to the Cid Campeador.
 Thus, the matter of the lion, we avenge ourselves therefor.” 175
 Their furs and their mantles, from the ladies they have whipped.
 In their shifts and their tunics they left the ladies stripped.
 With spur on heel before them those wicked traitors stand,
 And saddle-girths both stout and strong they have taken in the hand.
 When the ladies had beheld it, then out spake Sol the dame: 180
 “Don Diégo, don Ferrándo, we beech you in God’s name.
 You have two swords about you, that for strength and edge are known.
 And one they call Coláda, the other is Tizón.
 Strike off our heads together, and martyrs we shall die.
 The Moriscos and the Christians against this deed shall cry. 185
 It stands not with our deserving that we should suffer thus.
 So evil an example, then do not make of us.
 Unto our own abasement, if you scourge us, you consent,
 That men will bring against you in parle and parliament.”
 Naught profits it the ladies, however hard they pray. 190
 And now the Heirs of Carrión upon them gan to lay.
 With the buckled girths they scourged them in fashion unbeseen,
 And exceeding was their anguish from the sharp spurs and keen.
 They rent the shifts and wounded the bodies of the two,
 And forth upon the tunics the clear blood trickled through. 195
 In their very hearts the ladies have felt that agony.
 What a fair fortune were it, if God’s will it might be,
 Had then appeared before them the Cid the Campeador.
 Powerless were the ladies, and the brothers scourged them sore.
 Their shifts and their sullies throughout the blood did stain. 200
 Of scourging the two ladies wearied the brothers twain,
 Which man should smite most fiercely they had vied each with each.
 Dame Sol and Dame Elvira had no longer power of speech.
 Within the wood of Corpes for dead they left the pair.

CXXIX

Their cloaks and furs of ermine along with them they bare, 205
 In their shifts and tunics, fainting, they left them there behind,
 A prey to every wild-fowl and beast of savage kind.
 Know you, for dead, not living, they left them in such cheer.
 Good hap it were if now the Cid, Roy Diaz, should appear.

CXXX

The Heirs of Carrión for dead have left them thus arrayed, 210
 For the one dame to the other, could give no sort of aid.
 They sang each other’s praises as they journeyed through the wood:
 “For the question of our marriage we have made our vengeance good.
 Unbesought, to be our lemans we should not take that pair,
 Because as wedded consorts for our arms unfit they were. 215
 For the insult of the lion vengeance shall thus be taen.”

CXXXI

They sang each other's praises, the Heirs of Carrión twain.
 But now of Felez Múñoz will I tell the tale once more.
 Even he that was nephew to the Cid Campeador.
 They had bidden him ride onward, but he was not well content. 220
 And his heart smote within him as along the road he went.
 Straightway from all the others' a space did he withdraw.
 There Felez Múñoz entered into a thick-grown straw,
 Till the coming of his cousins should be plain to be perceived
 Or what the Heirs of Carrión as at that time achieved. 225
 And he beheld them coming, and heard them say their say,
 But they did not espy him, nor thought of him had they.
 Be it known death he had not scaped, had they on him laid eye.
 And the two Heirs rode onward, pricking fast the spur they ply.
 On their trail Felez Múñoz has turned him back again. 230
 He came upon his cousins. In a swoon lay the twain.
 And crying "Oh my cousins!" straightway did he alight.
 By the reins the horse he tethered, and went to them forthright.
 "Dame Sol and Dame Elvíra, cousins of mine that be,
 The two Heirs of Carrión have borne them dastardly. 235
 Please God that for this dealing they may get a shameful gain."
 And straightway he bestirred him to life to bring the twain.
 Deep was their swoon. Of utterance all power they had forlorn.
 Of his heart the very fabric thereby in twain was torn.
 "Oh my cousins Dame Elvíra and Dame Sol," he cried and spake, 240
 "For the love of the Creator, my cousins twain, awake,
 While yet the day endureth, ere falls the evening-hour,
 Lest in the wood our bodies the savage beast devour."
 In Dame Sol and Dame Elvíra fresh life began to rise;
 And they looked on Felez Múñoz when at last they oped their eyes: 245
 "For the love of God my cousins, now be of courage stout.
 From the time the Heirs of Carrión shall miss me from their rout,
 With utmost speed thereafter will they hunt me low and high.
 And if God will not help us, in this place we then must die."
 To him out spoke the Lady Sol in bitter agony: 250
 "If the Campeador, our father, deserveth well of thee,
 My cousin give us water, so may God help thee too."
 A hat had Felez Múñoz, from Valencia, fine and new,
 Therein he caught the water, and to his cousins bore.
 To drink their fill he gave them, for they were stricken sore. 255
 Till they rose up, most earnestly he begged them and implored.
 He comforts them and heartens them until they are restored.
 He took the two and quickly set them a-horse again.
 He wrapped them in his mantle. He took the charger's rein
 And sped them on, and through Corpes Wood they took their way. 260
 They issued from the forest between the night and day.
 The waters of Duéro they at the last attain.
 At Dame Urraca's tower he left behind the twain,
 And then unto Saint Stephen's did Felez Múñoz fare.
 He found Diégo Tellez, Alvar Fañez' vassal, there. 265
 When he had heard those tidings on his heart great sorrow fell.
 And he took beasts of burden and garments that excel.
 Dame Sol and Dame Elvíra to welcome did he go.
 He lodged the in Saint Stephen's. Great honor did he show
 Those ladies. In Saint Stephen's very gentle are the men, 270
 When they had heard the tidings their hearts were sorry then.
 To the Cid's daughters tribute of plenteous fare they yield.

In that place the ladies tarried, till the time when they were healed.
 Loud they sang each other's praises, those Heirs of Carrión, 275
 And of their deeds the tidings through all these lands were known.
 Of the good King don Alfonso the heart for grief was torn.
 To Valencia the city now are the tidings borne.
 To my lord Cid the Campeador that message when they brought,
 Thereon for a full hour's space, he pondered and he thought.
 His hand he has uplifted and gripped his beard amain: 280
 "Now unto Christ be glory who o'er all the earth doth reign.
 Since thus sought they of Carrión to keep mine honor whole.
 Now by this beard that never was plucked by living soul,
 Thereby the Heirs of Carrión no pleasure shall they gain.
 As for the dames my daughters, I shall marry well the twain. 285

The Cid and all his courtiers were sorry grievously,
 Heart and soul Alvar Fañez a sad man was he.
 Minaya with Per Vermudóz straightway the steed bestrode,
 And good Martin Antolínez in Burgos that abode, 290
 With ten score horse that to that end the Cid set in array.
 Most earnestly he charged them to ride both night and day,
 And to the town Valencia his daughters twain to bring.
 About their lord's commandment there was no tarrying.
 Swiftly they got on horseback and rode both day and night. 295
 Into Gormaz they entered, a strong place of might.
 In sooth one night they lodged there. To Saint Stephen's tidings flew
 That Minaya was come thither to bring home his cousins two.
 The dwellers in Saint Stephen's, as becomes the true and brave,
 To Minaya and his henchmen a noble welcome gave,
 And for tribute to Minaya brought that night of cheer good store. 300
 He desired not to accept it, but he thanked them well therefor;
 "Thanks, stout men of Saint Stephen's, for ye bear you wise and well.
 For the honor that ye did us, for the thing that us befel,
 Where bides the Cid the Campeador he gives true thanks to you,
 As I do here. May God on high give you your payment due." 305

Therewith they thanked him greatly, with him were all content
 Then swiftly to their lodging to rest that night they went.
 Where bode his kin, Minaya to see them went his ways. Dame
 Sol and Dame Elvira upon him fixed their gaze: "So heartily we
 thank thee, as our eyes on God were set, 310
 And prithee thank Him for it, since we are living yet.
 In the days of ease thereafter, in Valencia when we dwell,
 The tale of our affliction, we shall have strength to tell.

CXXXII

The dames and Alvar Fañez, the tears flowed from their eyes.
 Per Vermudóz because of them was sorely grieved likewise. 315
 "Dame Sol and Dame Elvira, be not down-hearted still,
 Since you are well and living and without other ill.
 Ye have lost a good marriage, better matches shall ye make.
 Oh may we soon behold the day when vengeance we shall take!" 320
 So all that night they lay there keeping a merry tide.
 The next day in the morning they fettle them to ride.
 The people of Saint Stephen's their party escort bore,
 With every sort of solace e'en to Riodamor.
 There they took leave, and got them in stead to travel back.
 Minaya and the ladies rode forward on the track. 325
 They have passed Alcoceva. On the right Gormaz left they.

They have come o'er the river in the place called Vadorrey,
 And in the town Berlanga their lodging have they made.
 The next day in the morning set forth the cavalcade. 330
 In the place called Medína their shelter have they sought.
 From Medína to Molína on the next day were they brought.
 And there the Moor Avengalvón was pleased in heart thereby.
 Forth with good will he issued to give them welcome high,
 For my lord Cid's love a supper he gave them rich and great. 335
 Thence on unto Valencia they have departed straight.
 When to him who in good honor was born the news of it was sent,
 Swiftly he got on horseback, and forth to greet them went.
 As he rode he brandished weapons; very joyful was his face.
 My lord the Cid came forward his daughters to embrace.
 And after he had kissed them he smiled upon the two: 340
 "Are ye then come my daughters? 'Gainst ill God succor you.
 This marriage I accepted, daring not say otherwise.
 May the Creator grant it, who dwelleth in the skies,
 That you with better husbands hereafter I may see.
 God! on my sons of Carrión grant me avenged to be. 345
 "The hands of their father to kiss, the two bent down.
 And under arms they hastened and came into the town.
 Their mother Dame Xiména with them good cheer she made.
 And he who in good hour was born, he tarried not nor stayed,
 But there unto his comrades so privily he spake: 350
 To King Alfonso of Castile those tidings shall they take.

CL

The Cid then put spur to the charger and made him gallop
 so fast that all were astonished at the career he ran.
 The King with hand uplifted signed the cross upon his face.
 "By San Isidro of León, I swear it by his grace 355
 Is no nobleman so mighty our whole country o'er."
 My lord Cid on the charger came then the King before,
 And of his lord Alfonso there has he kissed the hand.
 "To start fleet Baviéca thou gavest me command. 360
 Today no Moor nor Christian has a horse so strong and swift.
 Sire, unto thee I give him. Say thou wilt accept the gift."
 Then said the King:
 "No pleasure would I have therein indeed.
 If I took him, then less glorious were the master of the steed. 365
 But a horse like this befitteth too well a man like thee,
 Swift to chase the Moors ye routed in the battle, when they flee.
 Who that war-horse taketh from thee, God succor not again,
 For by thee and by the charger to great honor we attain."
 Their leave then have they taken. He left the Court forthright.
 The Campeador most wisely counselled them who were to fight: 370
 "Ha, Martin Antolínez! Per Vermudóz thou, too,
 So likewise Muño Gustióz, my tried man and true.
 Be resolute in combat like the gentlemen ye be.
 See that of you good tidings in Valencia come to me." 375
 Said Martin Antolínez: "Oh sire, what sayest thou?
 For we must bear the burden we accepted even now.
 Thou shalt hear naught of the vanquished, though haply of the slain."
 He who in happy hour was born, thereof was glad and fain.
 Of all his leave he taketh that for his friends are known.
 Went my lord Cid to Valencia, and the King to Carrión. 380

But now the three weeks' respite of the term is past and o'er.
 Lo! at the time appointed, they who serve the Campeador,
 The debt their lord laid on them they were very fain to pay.
 In safe-keeping of Alfonso, King of León, were they.

There for the Heirs of Carrión for two days' space they stayed. 385
 With horses and caparisons, came the Heirs there well arrayed.
 And in close compact with them have agreed their kinsmen all,
 On the Campeador his henchmen, if in secret they might fall,
 To slay them in the meadows, because their lords were silent.
 They did not undertake it, though foul was their intent, 390
 For of Alfonso of León they stood in mighty dread.

Watch o'er their arms they kept that night. And prayers to God they said.
 At last has night passed over, and breaketh now the dawn,
 And many worthy nobles there to the place have drawn,
 For to behold that combat, wherefore their mirth was high. 395
 Moreover King Alfonso above all men is by,
 Since he desireth justice and that no wrong should be done.
 The men of the good Campeador, they get their armour on.
 All three are in agreement for one lord's men are they.

The Heirs of Carrión elsewhere have armed them for the fray. 400
 The Count García Ordoñez sate with them in counsel there.
 What suit they planned unto the King Alfonso they declare,
 That neither should Coláda nor Tizón share in that war,
 That in fight they might not wield them, who served the Campeador
 That the brands were given over, they deemed a bitter ill; 405
 Unto the King they told it. He would not do their will:

"When we held the court exception unto no sword did ye take;
 But if ye have good weapons, your fortune they will make.
 For them who serve the Campeador the swords e'en so will do. 410
 Up, Carrión's Heirs, to battle now get you forth, ye two!
 Like noblemen this combat, ye ought duly to achieve,
 For the Campeador his henchmen naught undone therein will leave.
 If forth, ye come victorious, then great shall be your fame;
 But if that ye are vanquished, impute to us no blame.
 All know ye sought it." 415
 Carrión's Heirs were filled with grief each one.
 And greatly they repented the thing that they had done.
 Were it undone fain were they to give all Carrión's fee.

The henchmen of the Campeador are fully armed all three. 420
 Now was the King Alfonso come forth to view them o'er.
 Then spake to him the henchmen that served the Campeador:
 "We kiss thy hands as vassals to their lord and master may,
 'Twixt our party and their party thou shalt be judge this day.
 For our succor unto justice but not to evil stand.
 Here Carrión's Heirs of henchmen have gathered them a band. 425
 What, or what not, we know not, that in secret they intend;
 But our lord in thine hand left us our safety to defend.
 For the love of the Creator justly maintain our part."
 Said then the King in answer: "With all my soul and heart."
 They brought for them the chargers of splendid strength and speed. 430
 They signed the cross upon the selles. They leaped upon the steed.
 The bucklers with fair bosses about their necks are cast.
 And the keen pointed lances, in the hand they grip them fast.
 Each lance for each man of the three doth its own pennon bear.
 And many worthy nobles have gathered round them there. 435
 To the field where were the boundaries, accordingly they went.
 The three men of the Campeador were all of one intent,

That mightily his foeman to smite each one should ride.
 Lo! were the Heirs of Carrión upon the other side, 440
 With stores of men, for many of their kin were with the two.
 The King has given them judges, justice and naught else to do,
 That yea or nay they should not any disputation make.
 To them where in the field they sate the King Alfonso spake:
 "Hearken, ye Heirs of Carrión, what thing to you I say:
 In Toledo ye contrived it, but ye did not wish this fray. 445
 Of my lord Cid the Campeador I brought these knights all three
 To Carrión's land, that under my safe-conduct they might be.
 Wait justice. Unto evil no wise turn your intent.
 Whoso desireth evil with force will I prevent;
 Such a thing throughout my kingdom he shall bitterly bemoan." 450
 How downcast were the spirits of the Heirs of Carrión!
 Now with the King the judges have marked the boundaries out.
 They have cleared all the meadow of people roundabout.
 And unto the six champions the boundaries have they shown—
 Whoever went beyond them should be held for overthrown. 455
 The folk that round were gathered now all the space left clear;
 To approach they were forbiddden within six lengths of a spear.
 'Gainst the sun no man they stationed, but by lot gave each his place.
 Forth between them came the judges, and the foes are face to face.
 Of my lord Cid the henchmen toward the Heirs of Carrión bore, 460
 And Carrión's Heirs against them who served the Campeador.
 The glance of every champion fixes on his man forthright;
 Before their breasts the bucklers with their hands have they gripped tight,
 The lances with the pennons now have they pointed low,
 And each bends down his countenance over the saddlebow; 465
 Thereon the battle-chargers with the sharp spurs smote they,
 And fain the earth had shaken where the steeds sprang away.
 The glance of every champion fixes on his man forthright.
 Three against three together now have they joined the fight.
 Whoso stood round for certain deemed that they dead would fall. 470
 Per Vermudóz the challenge who delivered first of all,
 Against Ferránd González there face to face he sped.
 They smote each other's bucklers withouten any dread.
 There has Ferránd González pierced don Pero's target through.
 Well his lance-shaft in two places he shattered it in two. 475
 Unto the flesh it came not, for there glanced off the steel.
 Per Vermudóz sat firmly, therefore he did not reel.
 For every stroke was dealt him, the buffet back he gave,
 He broke the boss of the buckler, the shield aside he drave.
 He clove through guard and armour, naught availed the man his gear. 480
 Nigh the heart into the bosom he thrust the battle-spear.
 Three mail-folds had Ferrándo, and the third was of avail.
 Two were burst through, yet firmly held the third fold of mail.
 Ferrándo's shirt and tunic, with the unpierced iron mesh,
 A handsbreadth by Per Vermudóz were thrust into the flesh. 485
 And forth from his mouth straightway a stream of blood did spout.
 His saddle-girths were broken; not one of them held out.
 O'er the tail of the charger he hurled him to the ground.
 That his death stroke he had gotten thought all the folk around.
 He left the war-spear in him, set hand his sword unto. 490
 When Ferránd González saw it, then well Tizón he knew.
 He shouted, "I am vanquished," rather than the buffet bear.
 Per Vermudóz, the judges so decreeing, left him there.

CLI

With Dídagó González now doth don Martín close
 The spears. They broke the lances so furious were the blows. 495
 Martín Antolínez on sword his hand he laid.
 The whole field shone, so brilliant and flawless was the blade.
 He smote a buffet. Sidewise it caught him fair and right.
 Aside the upper helmet the glancing stroke did smite.
 It clove the helmet laces. Through the mail-hood did it fall, 500
 Unto the coif, hard slashing through coif and helm and all,
 And scraped the hair upon his brow. Clear to the flesh it sped.
 Of the helm a half fell earthward and half crowned yet his head.
 When the glorious Coláda such a war-stroke had let drive,
 Well knew Dídagó González that he could not 'scape alive. 505
 He turned the charger's bridle rein, and right about he wheeled.
 A blade in hand he carried that he did not seek to wield.
 From Martín Antolínez welcome with the sword he got.
 With the flat Martín struck him. With the edge he smote him not.
 Thereon that Heir of Carrión, a mighty yell he gave: 510
 "Help me, Oh God most glorious, defend me from that glaive."
 Wheeling his horse, in terror he fled before the blade.
 The steed bore him past the boundary. On the field don Martín stayed.
 Then said the King: "Now hither come unto my meinie.
 Such a deed thou hast accomplished as has won this fight for thee." 515
 That a true word he had spoken so every judge deemed well.

CLII

The twain had won. Now let us of Muño Gustióz tell,
 How with Ansuór González of himself account he gave.
 Against each other's bucklers the mighty strokes they drave. 520
 Was Ansuór González a gallant man of might.
 Against don Muño Gustióz on the buckler did he smite,
 And piercing through the buckler, right through the cuirass broke.
 Empty went the lance; his body was unwounded by the stroke.
 That blow struck, Muño Gustióz has let his buffet fly.
 Through the boss in the middle was the buckle burst thereby. 525
 Away he could not ward it. Through his cuirass did it dart.
 Through one side was it driven though not nigh unto the heart.
 Through the flesh of his body he thrust the pennoned spear,
 On the far side he thrust it a full fathom clear.
 He gave one wrench. Out of the selle that cavalier he threw. 530
 Down to the earth he cast him, when forth the lance he drew.
 And shaft and lance and pennon all crimson came they out.
 All thought that he was wounded to the death without a doubt.
 The lance he has recovered, he stood the foe above.
 Said González Ansuórez: "Smite him not for God his love. 535
 Now is won out the combat for all this game is done."
 "We have heard defeat conceded," said the judges every one.
 The good King don Alfonso bade them clear the field straightway.
 For himself he took the armour upon it yet that lay.
 In honor have departed they who serve the Campeador. 540
 Glory be to the Creator, they have conquered in the war.
 Throughout the lands of Carrión was sorrow at the height.
 The King my lord Cid's henchmen has sent away by night,
 That they should not be frightened or ambushed on the way,
 Like men of prudent spirit they journeyed night and day. 545
 Ho! in Valencia with the Cid the Campeador they stand.

On Carrión's Heirs of knavery the three have put the brand,
 And paid the debt the lord Cid set upon them furthermore.
 On that account right merry was the Cid Campeador.

550

Upon the heirs of Carrión is come a mighty smirch.
 Who flouts a noble lady and leaves her in the lurch,
 May such a thing befall him, or worse fortune let him find.
 Of Carrión's Heirs the dealings let us leave them now behind.
 For what has been vouchsafed them now were they all forlorn.

555

Of this man let us make mention who in happy hour was born.
 And great are the rejoicings through Valencia the town,
 Because the Campeador his men had won such great renown.
 His beard their lord Roy Diaz hard in his hand has ta'en:
 "Thanks to the King of Heaven, well are 'venged my daughters twain.
 Now may they hold their Carrión lands. Their shame is wiped away.
 I will wed them in great honor, let it grieve whom it may."

560

They of Navarre and Aragon were busied now to treat,
 And with Alfonso of León in conference they meet.
 Dame Sol and Dame Elvira in due course wedded are.
 Great were their former matches, but these are nobler far.

565

He gave with greater honor than before the twain to wed;
 He who in happy hour was born still doth his glory spread,
 Since o'er Navarre and Aragon as queens his daughters reign;
 Today are they kinswomen unto the kings of Spain.
 From him came all that honor who in good hour had birth.

570

The Cid who ruled Valencia has departed from the earth
 At Pentecost. His mercy may Christ to him extend.
 To us all, just men or sinners, may He yet stand our friend.
 Lo! the deeds of the Cid Campeador! Here takes the book an end.

THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

S. Rustichello and Marco Polo (ca. 1254-1324 C.E.)

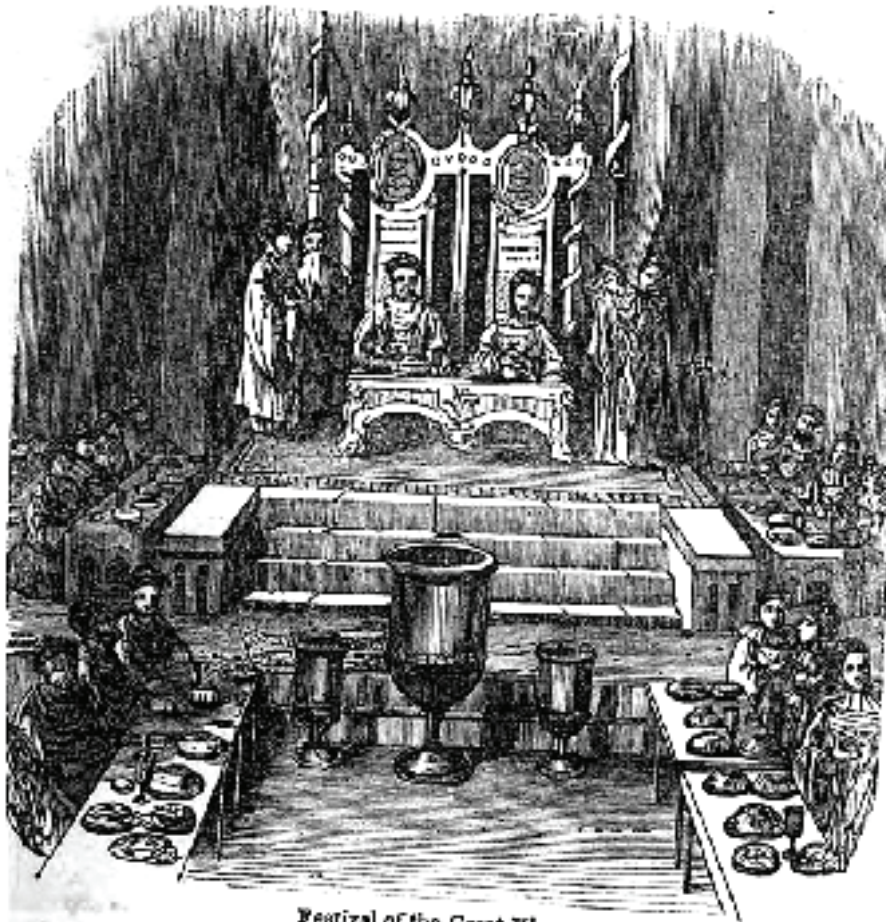
Written ca. 1298 C.E.

Italy

Marco Polo's father Niccolò and his uncle Maffeo were merchants and adventurers from Venice, who traded with the Middle East for a long time and traveled to Bukhara (currently, the capital of Uzbekistan) ca. 1250, establishing friendly relations with Kublai Khan of the Mongol empire. Kublai Khan's empire, which ranged from the Pacific to the Black Sea, occupied all of China and other neighboring regions, and officially established the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) in China. When Niccolò and Maffeo left for the Mongol Court the second time in 1271, they took Marco, who was about sixteen or seventeen years old. After staying in China and serving the emperor for seventeen years, they returned to Venice in 1295. Soon after his return to Venice, Marco was imprisoned by the Genoese, having joined the battle between Venice and Genoa. In prison, he met Rustichello from Pisa, a writer of romances and chivalry literature. Marco Polo dictated his travel story and Rustichello wrote it down in Franco-Italian. The result was meant to be a "description of the world," and it became an instant success. The title of a popular version of the manuscript was titled "Il Milione (The Million)," and it is known as *The Travels of Marco Polo* in English. A classic of travel literature, it was particularly influential in Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries, notably to Christopher Columbus.

Written by Kyounghye Kwon

TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO.



Festival of the Great Khan.

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
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IMAGE 5.31: THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO | Title page for *The Travels of Marco Polo* published in 1858 by Harper & Brothers.

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TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

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Marco Polo, translated by Hugh Murray

Preliminary Notice

At the time when the events now related took place, ties of a more salutary nature connected Europe with the Eastern world. The Italian towns had become conspicuous as the scenes where arts and commerce, after being nearly crushed by the inroad of the barbarous nations, first began to revive. Their manufacturing industry, indeed, though very considerable, was surpassed by that of the Low Countries; still they formed almost the sole channel by which intercourse was maintained with Asia, whence at that time were imported all articles of luxury,—precious stones, pearls, spices, and cloths of unrivalled fineness. Venice, Genoa, and Pisa contended with each other in this career; but the first, owing to her situation and superior power, held the principal place. Her position was much advanced by a very extraordinary event, which occurred in the beginning of the thirteenth century. A crusade had been organized in France among a number of the nobles, who, proceeding to Venice, procured the necessary shipping by inducing Dandolo, the doge, a gallant chief, with other distinguished persons, to share in the enterprise. On reaching the shores of the Levant, their views took a very singular direction; for instead of advancing to the Holy Land, they turned their arms against Constantinople, carried that capital by storm, and placed Baldwin, count of Flanders, on the imperial throne of the East. The Venetians shared, not only the booty, but also the power acquired by this wicked achievement. They were allowed to occupy an extensive quarter of the city, and to maintain there a podesta or bailo, invested with very ample jurisdiction.

There had never been wanting native merchants, ready to bring the desired commodities from the remoter provinces of Asia to the contiguous parts of Europe. But the Venetian traders, encouraged by their increasing prosperity, and the advantageous position now attained, began to aim at penetrating into the interior, and obtaining the goods on better terms in the country where they were produced. The dominions of the caliph, the head of the Mohammedan faith, opposed, it is true, a powerful obstacle to their taking the most direct route. But the successors of Gengis, though so terrible and merciless in the field, welcomed in their tented cities, without the least distinction of country or religion, all who brought articles that were either ornamental or useful. We have seen from Rubruquis, how Christian merchants, on paving their way with presents, passed unmolested through the camps of Sartach and Baatu. There were soon found distinguished citizens of Venice ready to follow in the same track.

Nicolo and Maffio Polo, two individuals who united the character, then common, of nobles and traffickers, in the middle of the thirteenth century, set out for Constantinople, whence they proceeded to the shores of the Crimea. There they were encouraged to visit a great Tartar chief on the Volga, where a series of events, for which we shall refer to the following narrative, led them on eastwards as far as China. After a short stay, they returned to Venice; and two years later, went back, according to engagement, carrying with them Marco, son to Nicolo, a promising youth. They spent twenty-four years in the East, chiefly at the court of the great khan, the Tartar monarch who ruled over China. At the end of that time they finally returned; but, on reaching Venice, were so completely altered,—their dress, appearance, and even language had become so foreign,—that their nearest friends were unable to recognise them. After obtaining with difficulty access to their paternal mansion, they determined by a public display to satisfy their countrymen as to the happy results of their journey. All their relations and acquaintances were invited to a magnificent feast. They then presented themselves in splendid dresses, first of crimson satin, next of damask, and lastly of velvet bearing the same colour, which they successively threw off and distributed among the company. Returning in their ordinary attire, Marco produced the rags in which they had been disguised, ripped them open, and exhibited such a profusion of diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and precious jewels, as completely dazzled the spectators. Mr Marsden questions this anecdote, as unsuitable to the dignity of their characters; yet there is no reason to suppose in them any indifference to display; and Ramusio assures us, that about 200 years after, when he was a boy, he had been told it by Malipiero, an aged and respectable senator, who had heard the story from his own grandfather. It appears certain, that on the news of their wealth and adventures, persons of all ranks, ages, and professions, flocked to the house with congratulations and inquiries. Marco, whose society was courted by all the distinguished youths, stood forth as principal orator. Having often occasion in his enumerations of people and treasure, to repeat the term million, then not very common in Europe, the surname of *Millione* was applied to him, first in jest, but Ramusio says he has seen him thus named in the records of the republic; and the house in which he lived, down to that day, bore the title of the *Corte del Millione*. Count Boni has even adopted this as the title of his learned work on the subject.

Meantime, he appears not to have thought of committing his observations to writing; and the fruits of his travels would probably never have reached posterity, but for a severe misfortune by which he was overtaken. Venice and Genoa, those two mighty rivals, were then at open war; and news arrived that a fleet belonging to the latter had appeared on the coast of Dalmatia. Andrea Dandolo was immediately sent against them, when Marco, with characteristic spirit, offered his services, and was appointed to the command of a galley. The squadrons encountered near the island of

Curzola; and it was a disastrous day for Venice. Her fleet was completely defeated; and Dandolo himself, who was made prisoner, escaped only by a voluntary death the ignominy of being carried in triumph to Genoa. Marco, also, was wounded and taken; but, too wise to imitate the rash example of his commander, he was conveyed to that city, and lodged in prison. Here, according to Ramusio, his character and adventures excited an extraordinary interest; and being visited by the principal inhabitants, his captivity was rendered as mild as possible. A more important circumstance was, that he had a fellow-prisoner, Rusticians, a citizen of Pisa, though of French origin, who was imbued with an enthusiastic love of legendary and romantic lore. One of such a temper could not but listen with rapture to the wondrous tale of his companion; and it was soon agreed between them, that it would be most unjust to the world to withhold from it the knowledge of so many marvellous scenes as those which he had witnessed. Marco, we suspect, was no great penman; but his companion was fond of composition, though without having attained very high proficiency. We quite agree with Count Boni, from the tenor of the narrative, that the traveller wrote no part of it, but merely dictated; nay, we doubt much if there was any such regular or author-like process as this term would imply. We should rather say that he talked it to his companion, who wrote it down as he best could. The frequent change from the first to the third person seems to prove, that while some parts were thus committed to paper, others were written from memory after the conversation. Thus, by a curious combination of circumstances, was produced, in a foreign language and an irregular form, this extraordinary history. It was still a sealed book to the traveller's countrymen; but there seems every reason to believe that it soon received an Italian dress, under which it was rapidly circulated. On the 12th May 1299, peace was concluded between the two rival cities; and Marco in consequence regained his liberty." On his arrival, he found a considerable change in the family. His father, dreading, it is said, that through the son's captivity there should be no heirs to his great wealth, had taken a young wife; not being, perhaps, unwilling to excuse, on this ground, a step which might seem unsuitable to his age. Hence Marco found on his return three young brothers who had been born during his absence. He had too much discretion to take umbrage at this circumstance, or the consequent diminution of riches, which, indeed, were still sufficiently ample for all parties. Following soon after the example of his parent, he became the father of two daughters, named Moretta and Fantina. The rest of his life was spent in Venice; but modern inquirers have in vain sought to trace in it a single incident. It has only been discovered, that his will was made in 1323, proving him to have at least exceeded the age of sixty-six.

Introductory Narrative of the Journey

Prologue—Journey of Nicolo and Maffio Polo into the East—Their Arrival at the Court of Kublai, the Tartar Emperor of China—Sent back on a Mission to the Pope—Return, carrying Marco with them—Final Departure, and Voyage through the Indian Ocean to Persia—Arrival at Venice.

Prologue

Emperors, kings, dukes, marquises, counts, knights, and all persons wishing to know the various generations of men in the world, also the kingdoms, provinces, and all the regions of the East, read this book: in it you will find very great and wonderful things of the nations, chiefly of Armenia, Persia, and Tartary, India, and various other provinces. In the present work Messer Marco Polo, a prudent and learned citizen of Venice, relates in order the various things which he himself saw, or heard from men of honour and truth. And those who read this book may be assured that all things in it are true. For I would have you to know that, from the creation of Adam to the present day, no Pagan, or Saracen, or Christian, or any other person of whatever race or generation, explored so many parts of the world, or saw such great wonders, as this Messer Marco Polo. He being in the year of our Lord 1295 shut up as a captive in the prisons of Genoa, thought with himself what a great evil it would be, if the wonders seen and heard by him should not be known to those who could not view them with their own eyes. He therefore caused the accounts here contained to be written by Messer S. Rusticians of Pisa, who was confined with him in the same prison, in the year of our Lord 1298.

I—Nicolo and Maffio Polo travel into the East

In the year of our Lord 1250, the Emperor Baldwin reigning at Constantinople, Nicolo Polo, father of the said Marco, and Maffio, brother of Nicole, entered a ship, laden with divers costly goods; and, spreading their sails, committed themselves to the deep. They arrived in safety at Constantinople, where they disposed of their cargo with advantage. They then determined to proceed together, in search of farther profit, to the Greater Sea and, having purchased many precious jewels, departed from Constantinople, and, entering a ship, sailed to Soldaia. After remaining there some days, they resolved to proceed farther, and, mounting on horseback, came by continued journeys to Sara, the residence of Barka Khan, king and lord of the Tartars, who then inhabited Bulgaria. That prince, who was much rejoiced at their arrival, received them very honourably and kindly. They gave him all the jewels brought from Constantinople, which he gladly accepted, and bestowed in return double their value. After they had dwelt in this city

a year, a most furious war arose between Barka and Alau, the ruler of Eastern Tartary. Their forces were led against each other; and, after a very sharp contest and much slaughter on both sides, Alau was victorious.) This war rendered it impossible for the Venetians to return with safety by the same road, and they thought it advisable to proceed eastward, and endeavour by another route to find their way back to Venice. Departing from Barka they happily reached a certain city named Oukaka, subject to the dominion of a western chief. Thence they passed a river named Tigris, and wandered through a desert during seventeen successive days, finding no inhabitants, except Tartars dwelling in tents and subsisting by their cattle. They then came to a city in the province of Persia, named Bokhara, the noblest in that country, governed by a king called Barak. Here, being unable to proceed, they remained three full years.

II—They arrive at the Court of the Tartar Emperor of China

While the brothers sojourned in Bokhara, it happened that Alau, lord of the East, despatched ambassadors to the sovereign of all the Tartars, who in their language is called the great khan, meaning the king of kings, and whose name was Kublai. They, on meeting the brothers, felt not a little wonder, having never seen any men from the Latin countries. And dressing them courteously, they besought that they would accompany the embassy to the khan, promising much honour and wealth, since, though wonderfully desirous, he had never seen one of their nation. The Venetians made a suitable answer, and frankly agreed to comply with the request. They set out and continued a whole year travelling in a north-eastern direction; and though much delayed by heavy snows and the swelling of rivers, at length reached the residence of that mighty monarch, having beheld on their way many wonderful objects, which will be described hereafter in this book.

III—Their Reception

Kublai, illustrious for his benignity, received the brothers kindly and joyfully, being very desirous to see Latins. He urgently inquired what sort of emperor they had, how he lived and administered justice; asking questions also respecting the supreme pontiff, and all the acts and manners of the Christians—to which they made judicious replies in the Tartar language, which they had learned.

IV—Sent back on an Embassy to the Pope

This great king and master of all the Tartars in the world, and of all those regions, being informed respecting the actions of the Latins, was greatly pleased. Calling a council of his barons, he informed them, that he wished to send messengers to the pope, the lord of the Christian; which they unanimously approved. He then asked the brothers in friendly terms to be the bearers of his message; and this they prudently declared themselves ready and willing to undertake. He next ordered letters to be written, to be conveyed by them in company with a certain baron named Kogotal, whom he assigned as a companion. He instructed them, after the necessary salutations, to request of his holiness to send a hundred wise men, learned in all the seven arts, who might show to the idolaters, and others subject to his dominion, the diabolical nature of their law, and how that of the Christians was superior. Farther, he piously enjoined them to bring a portion of the oil of the lamp burning in Jerusalem before the sepulchre of our Saviour. Moreover, he gave to them a golden tablet marked with his seal, containing an express order, that wherever they went they should have their necessities supplied. Having received this, and taken leave of the king, barons, and the whole court, they mounted their horses and commenced their journey. After some days, Kogotal, the baron, at a city named Alau, fell sick and could not proceed; but the brothers went on till they came safely to Laias in Armenia. In this journey, however, owing to the bad roads, and the large rivers which they could not cross on horseback, three years were consumed. Wherever they went, on showing the golden tablet, they were received with the greatest honours, and supplied with whatever they wanted.

V—Find him dead, and await a new Election

Departing from Laias in April 1269, the brothers arrived at Acre, where they learned with much grief that his holiness Clement IV was dead. They there fore went to Theobald, viscount of Piacenza, who resided there as legate of the apostolical see, and was a man of high authority and virtue. They related to him the cause why they wished to visit the supreme pontiff. He was struck with admiration, and revolving in his mind, that the holy Roman church and the Christian faith might hence derive the greatest benefit, advised them to wait till another pope should be named, to whom they might deliver their embassy. They there fore determined to spend the interval in visiting their families at Venice. Departing from Acre, they proceeded to Negropont, and thence to their native city. Here Messer Nicolo found that his wife, whom he left pregnant, had died, leaving a son named Marco, the same who wrote this book.

Waiting the appointment of another pope, the travellers spent two full years at Venice.

VI—*Their Return to Kublai*

At last seeing that no pontiff was elected, and unwilling to delay their return to the great khan, they departed, taking with them Marco, son of Nicolo. They repaired to Acre, and told the legate, that having tarried too long, and there being no appearance of an election, they must beg permission, in conformity with that monarch's injunctions, to take the portion of oil from the lamp burning before the sepulchre. Having obtained his consent, they went to Jerusalem, took what they desired, and returned, when he gave them letters, with permission to depart. They proceeded from Acre to Laias; but during their stay there, were informed that the legate himself had been appointed pope, under the name of Gregory X of Piacenza, being the same who afterwards held a council at Lyons, on the Rhone. The new pontiff sent a messenger after them, desiring their immediate return; and they joyfully obeyed, making the voyage in a galley prepared for them by the King of Armenia. They paid their homage to his holiness, who received them graciously, loaded them with many honours, and gave them two very learned friars, of the order of preachers, the wisest that could be found in those parts, named Nicolo of Vicenza and William of Tripoli, to accompany them to the great khan. He bestowed on them letters and privileges, instructed them in the message which he wished to be conveyed to that monarch, and gave his benediction to Nicolo, Maffio, Marco, and the two friars. They then proceeded together to Laias; but while there, the Soldan of Babylonia, named Bonduchdaree, came with a mighty army to attack the city. In these circumstances, the preachers, struck with the fear of war, and with the dangers already encountered, gave to Nicolo and Maffio certain letters, and resolved to proceed no farther. Then the brothers commenced their journey, and by constant marches arrived safely at a very rich and powerful city named Clemenfu, where the great khan resided. The observations made by them on this expedition will be narrated afterwards in the proper place; but on account of the severe weather, as well as the difficulty and danger of passing the rivers, they consumed in it three years and a half. When their return became known to the khan, he rejoiced exceedingly, and ordered forty of his messengers to go to meet them, by whom they were supplied with every necessary, and loaded with honours.

VII—*They are honourably received*

Having reached this great city, where the monarch had his abode, they went to his palace, presenting themselves most humbly on bended knees. He desired them to rise, and asked how they did; they replied, that, by the grace of God, they were well, especially since they had found him healthy and cheerful. He then inquired about their transactions with the supreme pontiff, when they explained to him all that they had done, delivering the letters confided to them by Pope Gregory. He received them graciously, commending them for their fidelity and attention. They next presented the oil from the sepulchre, which he reverently accepted. He inquired, who was that young man with them, to which Nicole replied: "my lord, he is your servant, my son." "Then," said the great khan, "he is welcome, I am much pleased with him." He celebrated their return by a joyful feast; and while they remained in his court, they were honoured before all his barons.

VIII—*Employments and Missions of Marco*

During this stay, Messer Marco acquired the Tartar and four other languages, so as to speak and write them well; he learned also their manners, and became in all things exceedingly sensible and sagacious. When the great khan saw him display so much worth and prudence, he sent him as his messenger to a very distant land, which it required six months to reach. He returned and reported his embassy very sensibly, relating many new things respecting the countries through which he had travelled; while other ambassadors, being able to say nothing, except about the special message intrusted to them, were accounted foolish and ignorant by the khan, who was greatly delighted to become acquainted with the varieties of nations. Messer Marco, aware of this, studied all these strange objects, and thus pleased beyond measure his majesty and the barons, who predicted that, if he lived, he would become an eminent man. In short, he remained in the court of the khan seventeen years, and never ceased to be employed as an ambassador. The other chiefs then began to envy the honours paid to him, and his knowledge of the country, which exceeded that of any other person who ever visited it.

IX—*They seek to return Home*

After Nicolo, Maffio, and Marco had remained long at the court of the great khan, and accumulated very considerable wealth in gold and jewels, they felt a strong desire to revisit their native country. Nicolo therefore took an opportunity one day, when the monarch seemed in particularly good humour, to throw himself at his feet, and solicit for them all permission to depart; but the sovereign was now so much attached to his visitors that he would by no means listen to this proposal. It happened, however, that the Queen Bolgana, the spouse of Argon, lord of the

East, died, and in her last will enjoined that he should receive no wife unless of her family. He therefore sent as ambassadors to the khan three barons, Aulatam, Alpusca, and Goza, with a great train, requesting a lady of the same lineage with the deceased queen. The monarch received the embassy with joy, and selected a young princess of that house. Every thing being arranged, and a numerous train of attendants appointed, they were graciously dismissed, and began their return; but after travelling eight months, their advance was rendered impossible by fresh wars that had arisen among the Tartar princes. They were therefore very reluctantly obliged to retrace their steps, and state the cause that had arrested their progress. It happened that at that time Marco arrived from a voyage to India, and, by relating the novelties he had observed, pleased those envoys very much, proving himself well fitted to guide them by this route, which he recommended as shorter and easier than that by land. They therefore besought as a favour of the khan, that the Latins might accompany them and the queen. The sovereign granted this favour, yet unwillingly, on account of his love for them.

X—Voyage, and Arrival at Venice

When that great monarch saw that they were about to depart, he called them before him, and delivering golden tablets signed with the royal seal, ordered that they should have free passage through his land, and that their charges, with those of all their family, should be every where defrayed. He caused to be prepared fourteen ships, each with four masts, and many with twelve sails; upon which the barons, the lady, and the three brothers took leave, and, with numerous attendants, went on board. The prince gave them their expenses for two years; and after sailing three months, they came to a certain island named Java, where are many wonderful things, which I shall relate in this book. They then departed from it; and I must tell you that they sailed through the seas of India full eighteen months, and saw many strange objects, which will also be hereafter described. At length they came to the court of King Argon, but found that he was already dead, when it was determined to give the princess in marriage to Casan, his son. I must tell you, that though in that vessel there embarked full 600 persons, exclusive of mariners, all died except eighteen and they found the dominion of the land of Argon held by Achatu, to whom they very tenderly recommended the lady on the part of the great khan. Casan was then at a place on the borders of Persia, which has its name from the *arbor secco*, where an army of 60,000 men was assembled to guard certain positions against hostile irruption. They accordingly went thither, fulfilled their mission, and then returned to the residence of Achatu, where they reposed during the space of nine months. They then took leave and went on their way, when the monarch presented four golden tablets, with instructions that they should be honoured, and all the expenses of themselves and their family defrayed. This was fully executed, so that they frequently went accompanied by 200 horsemen. I have also to tell you to the honour of those three Latins, in whom the great khan had placed such confidence, appointing them to conduct the Queen Cocacin, with a daughter of the King of Manji, to Argon, the lord of the East;—that those two young and beautiful ladies were guarded by them as if they had been their daughters, and bestowed upon them the veneration due to fathers. Indeed, Cocacin and her husband Casan, now reigning, treated the messengers with such kindness, that there was nothing they would not have done for them; and when they were about to depart, the queen grieved very much, and even shed tears. Thus, after much time and many labours, by the grace of God they came to Trebisond, then to Constantinople, Negropont, and finally to Venice. They arrived in the year 1295, bringing with them great riches, and giving thanks to God, who had delivered them from many labours and dangers.

Part I

Description of China, and of the Court of the Emperor Kublai.

Kublai, Great Khan of the Tartars, and Emperor of China—His War with Nayan—Favour for the Christians—Description of Kambalu (Peking)—An Insurrection there—Great Festivals celebrated by the Emperor—Their Order and Pomp—His extensive Hunting Expeditions—Leopards, Falcons, and other Animals employed—Mode of pursuing and taking the Game—Hunting Palace at Shanduin Tartary—At Cianganor—Paper Money—Large Revenue—Arrangement of his Government and Officers—Bounty towards the People—Manners and Superstitions of the Chinese—Marco Polo's Journey through the Western Provinces—Thibet, Bengal, and the neighbouring Countries—Return to the Vicinity of Peking Journey through the Eastern Provinces—The Yellow River—Manjior Southern China—Its Conquest by Kublai—Character of the deposed king—Nan-king and other great Cities—The Kiang—Its immense Trade and Shipping—Kin-sai, the Capital—Its extra ordinary Extent and Magnificence—Splendour of its Palace—Journey through Tche-kiang and Fo-kien—The Porcelain Manufacture—Arrival at Zai-tun or Amoy.

I—Power and Magnificence of Kublai

Now I am to give you a wonderful account of the greatest king of the Tartars, still reigning, named Kublai, or lord of lords. That name is assuredly well merited, since he is the most powerful in people, in lands, and in treasure, that is, or ever was, from the creation of Adam to the present day; and by the statements to be made in this book, every man shall be satisfied that he really is so. Whosoever descends in the direct line from Gengis is entitled to be master of all the Tartars, and Kublai is the sixth great khan. He began to reign in the year of our Lord 1256, and maintained the dominion by his valour, address, and wisdom. His brothers sought to oppose his succession, but by bravery and right he triumphed over them. From the beginning of his reign, forty-two years have elapsed to the present day, in the year 1298. He is now full eighty-five years old, and before his accession commanded many armies, when he approved himself good at weapons, and a brave captain. But since that time he has joined the army only once, which was in the year 1286, and I will tell you on what occasion.

II—Insurrection raised by Nayan

You must understand that a certain cousin of his, named Nayan, who, like his ancestors, was his vassal, yet had many lands and provinces of his own, and could raise 400,000 horsemen, being thirty years old, refused to remain longer in subjection, and assumed the whole sovereignty to himself. He sent to a certain great lord, named Kaidu, a nephew of that monarch, but in rebellion against him, and desirous of doing him the greatest injury. To him Nayan proposed to attack the monarch on one side, while he himself advanced on another, so that they might acquire the dominion over his whole territory. Kaidu declared himself well pleased, and promised to be ready at the time appointed. He could bring into the field 100,000 cavalry; and those two assembled a mighty army on horseback and foot, and marched against the great khan.

III—Kublai prepares to meet him

When Kublai learned these things, he was not at all alarmed, but declared, that he wished he might never wear a crown, nor hold sway over a kingdom, if he did not bring the traitors to an evil death. He therefore made his whole army be prepared in twenty-two days, and so secretly, that nothing was known beyond his own council. He raised full 360,000 mounted soldiers, and 100,000 infantry; and the reason of their number not being greater, was, that they consisted only of his huntsmen, and those immediately round his person, the rest being employed in carrying on distant wars; for if he could have assembled his whole host, the multitude would have been such as no man could have numbered. He then called his astrologers, and asked of them if he would be victorious; they answered, that he would do to his enemies according to his pleasure.

IV—Description of the Battle

The great khan having assembled these forces, took his departure, and in twenty days came to a vast plain, where Nayan had assembled all his troops, amounting to 400,000 warriors. The khan took much care to scour the paths, and intercept all who could have carried the intelligence; so that when he approached at dawn of day, the rebel was lying asleep in bed with a favourite wife, not having the least dread of his arrival, and, consequently, no guard on any side of the camp. Kublai then advanced, having a tower fixed upon four elephants, whereon were placed his ensigns, so that he could be seen by the whole army. His men, divided into bands of twenty thousand, surrounded in a moment the adverse force, each soldier having a footman on the crupper behind him, with a bow in his hand. When Nayan and his men saw their camp thus encircled by the khan and his host, they were seized with amaze; yet they ran to arms, formed themselves in order of battle, and were soon prepared to strike. Then began the beating on many instruments, and singing with loud voices; for it is the custom of the Tartars, that until the horn termed *naccar* is winded the troops do not engage. But when that grand trumpet of the great khan was sounded, all the other performers began playing, and raising their voices very loud, making a noise that was truly most wonderful. Then the two armies rushed against each other with sword, spear, and lance, while the footmen were prepared with bow and quiver. The battle was fierce and cruel; the arrows filled the air like rain; horses and horsemen were seen falling to the ground; and the tumult was such, that if Jove had thundered, he could not have been heard. Nayan was a baptized Christian, and therefore had the cross upon his standard. Never, in our day, was there so hard and terrible a combat, nor so many assembled on one field, especially of horsemen; and the number who fell on both sides was fearful to behold. The battle continued from nine in the morning till mid day; but the great khan at last remained master of the field. When Nayan and his men saw that they could hold out no longer, they betook themselves to flight; but it availed them nothing; he was taken, and all his troops surrendered.

V—*The Death of Nayan*

When that great monarch heard that Nayan was taken, he ordered him to be put to death in the manner I am now to tell you. He was wrapped in a carpet, and violently tossed to and fro till he died. This mode was adopted, that, being of imperial lineage, his blood might not be shed on the ground, nor his cries ascend into the air. When that battle was gained, four of his provinces paid tribute and homage to the great khan. These were Cicorcia, Cauli, Bastol, and Suchintin.

VI—*Kublai silences the Mockery of the Jews and Saracens*

When the monarch had achieved this triumph, the Saracens, Pagans, Jews, and other generations of men who believe not in God, expressed wonder at the cross which the vanquished leader had carried on his standard, and said in derision of the Christians,—“see how the cross of your God has aided Nayan and his people.” They made such a noise on this subject, that it came to the ears of the prince, who was much displeased, and sending for the Christians, said to them,—“if your God did not assist Nayan, he acted with great justice, because he is a good and righteous God. Nayan was a traitor and rebel against his lord, and there fore God did well in not assisting him.” Then the Christians replied,—“O, great sire! thou hast spoken the truth, for the cross will aid nothing unjust, and he met only what he well deserved.” Having gained this victory, the great khan returned to his capital, Kambalu, with much festival and rejoicing. When the other king, named Kaidu, heard how his ally had been worsted, he was struck with fear, and did not attempt to lead his army against the monarch. Now you have seen how that prince went to battle, and for what cause, while on all other occasions he sent his son and his barons; but this war was of such magnitude that it seemed to deserve his own immediate presence.

VII—*His Opinions as to the Christian Religion*

The grand khan, having obtained this splendid victory, returned with great pomp and triumph to his capital of Kambalu. He arrived there in November, and remained till after March, in which month our festival of Easter occurred. Aware that this was one of our most solemn periods, he commanded all the Christians to attend him, bringing with them their book containing the four gospels. He caused it, in a very respectful manner, to be repeatedly perfumed with incense, ordering all his nobles present to do the same. Such was the custom upon each of the two great festivals of Easter and Christmas; and he followed the same course as that pursued by the Saracens, Jews, and idolaters. Being asked the reason of this conduct, he replied,—“there are four great prophets revered and worshipped by different classes of mankind. The Christians hold Christ as their divinity; the Saracens, Mohammed; the Jews, Moses; and the idolaters, Sogomobar Khan, their most distinguished idol. I honour and respect all the four, and seek aid from them, as any one of them may really be supreme in heaven.” Yet, from the behaviour of his majesty towards the Christians, he evidently believed their faith the best and truest; observing, that it enjoined nothing on its professors that was not full of virtue and holiness. He would not indeed allow the cross to be borne before them in processions, because, as he said, on it so exalted a person had been nailed and put to death. Some may ask, why if thus partial to the true faith, he did not openly embrace it? He stated his reason to Nicolo and Maffio Polo, when, on his sending them ambassadors to the Pope, they ventured to address to him a few words on the subject. “Why,” said he, “should I become a Christian? You must yourselves see that the professors of that faith now in this country are ignorant and weak, unable to do anything extraordinary, while the idolaters have power to do whatever they please. While I am seated at table, the cups, filled with wine or other beverage, come to me from the middle of the hall spontaneously, without being touched by any human hand. They are able to control bad weather, and force it to retire to any quarter of the heavens; they can perform other wonderful things of the same nature. You have witnessed their idols exercising the faculty of speech, and predicting whatever events are inquired into. Should I become a convert and profess Christianity, the nobles of my court, and others disinclined to the faith, will ask what adequate motives have induced me to be baptized. What wonders, what miracles, they will say, have its ministers performed? But the idolaters declare, that their exhibitions are made through their own holiness and the might of their idols. To this I shall be unable to make any answer, and be considered as labouring under a grievous mistake, while the heathen teachers, by the profound art which they display, may easily accomplish my death. Return, however, to your pontiff, and present to him my request, that he would send a hundred persons learned in your law, who, when confronted with the others, will be able to control them, and while proving themselves endowed with similar skill, shall render their antagonists unable in their presence to carry on these practices. On witnessing this, I will interdict the exercise of their religion, and suffer myself to be baptized. This example will be followed by all my nobility, and by my subjects in general; so that the Christians in these regions will become more numerous than those inhabiting your own country.” From this language it evidently appears that had the pope sent out persons duly qualified to preach the gospel, the great khan would have embraced that faith, for which he certainly entertained a strong predilection.

VIII—*Rewards bestowed on his Soldiers*

Now let us tell of the officers and barons of the great khan, and how he rewarded those who fought with him in the battle against Nayan. To those who commanded 100 men, he gave the command of 1,000, and to those of 1,000 that of 10,000; and he bestowed, according to their rank, tablets of gold or of silver, on all of which was written,—“By the might of the great God, and by the favour which he gave to our emperor: may that prince be blessed, and may all those who do not obey him die and be destroyed.” Those who hold these documents enjoy certain privileges, with written instructions how they are to exercise their authority. He who commands 100,000 men receives a golden one, weighing 300 saggi, under which is sculptured a lion on one side, and on the other the sun and moon. Those who bear these noble tablets have instructions, that whenever they ride they should bear above their head an umbrella of gold, and as often as they are seated, it should be upon silver. There are also tablets whereon is sculptured a gerfalcon, which he gives to three great barons, who have then equal authority with himself. They can take, whenever they please, and lead from place to place, the troops and horses of any prince or king; and whoever dares to disobey in any thing their will and mandate, must die as a rebel to the sovereign.” Now let us speak of the outward form and manners of this mighty prince.

IX—*The Person of Kublai—His Wives, Concubines, and Sons*

The great khan, lord of lords, named Kublai, is of a fine middle size, neither too tall nor too short; he has a beautiful fresh complexion, and well-proportioned limbs. His colour is fair and vermeil like the rose, his eyes dark and fine, his nose well formed and placed. He has four ladies, who always rank as his wives; and the eldest son, born to him by one of them, succeeds as the rightful heir of the empire. They are named empresses; each bears his name, and holds a court of her own; there is not one who has not 300 beautiful maidens, with eunuchs, and many other male and female attendants, so that some of the courts of these ladies contain 10,000 persons; and when he wishes to visit any one, he makes her come to his apartment, or sometimes goes to hers. He maintains also a number of concubines. There is a race of Tartars who are called Migrat or Ungrat, and are a very handsome people. From them are selected 100 girls, the most beautiful in all their country, who are conducted to court. He makes them be guarded by the ladies of the palace; and they are examined if they have a sweet breath, and be sound in all their limbs. Those that are approved in every respect wait upon their great lord in the following order: six of them attend every three days, then other six come in their place, and so on throughout the year. It may be asked, if the people of this province do not feel aggrieved by having their children thus forcibly taken away. Assuredly not: on the contrary, they regard it as a favour and an honour; and the fathers feel highly gratified when their daughters are thus selected. If, says one, my daughter is born under an auspicious planet, his majesty can best fulfil her destiny by marrying her more nobly than I can do. On the contrary, if the young lady, by bad conduct or any misfortune, be found disqualified, he attributes the dis appointment to her malignant stars. Know, too, that the great khan has by his wives twenty-two sons; the elder was named Gyngym Khan, and was to be lord of all the empire after his father; but he died, leaving a son named Temur, who in time will succeed; he is a wise and good man, tried in many battles. The monarch has also twenty-five sons by his concubines; and each is a great baron; and of the twenty-two sons by his four wives, seven reign over large kingdoms, like wise and good men, because they resemble their father,—and he is the best ruler of nations and conductor of wars in the world. Now I have told you about himself, his wives, sons, and concubines; next I will relate how he holds his court.

X—*His magnificent Palace in Kambalu*

He resides in the vast city of Kambalu, three months in the year, December, January, and February, and has here his great palace, which I will now describe. It is a complete square, a mile long on every side, so that the whole is four miles in circuit; and in each angle is a very fine edifice, containing bows, arrows, cords, saddles, bridles, and all other implements of war. In the middle of the wall between these four edifices are others, making altogether eight, filled with stores, and each containing only a single article. Towards the south are five gates, the middle one very large, never opened nor shut unless when the great khan is to pass through; while on the other side is one by which all enter in common. Within that wall is another, containing eight edifices similarly constructed; in which is lodged the wardrobe of the sovereign. These walls enclose the palace of that mighty lord, which is the greatest that ever was seen. The floor rises ten palms above the ground, and the roof is exceedingly lofty. The walls of the chambers and stairs are all covered with gold and silver, and adorned with pictures of dragons, horses, and other races of animals. The hall is so spacious that 6,000 can sit down to banquet; and the number of apartments is incredible. The roof is externally painted with red, blue, green, and other colours, and is so varnished that it shines like crystal, and is seen to a great distance around. It is also very strongly and durably built. Between the walls are pleasant meadows filled with various living creatures, as white stags, the musk animal, deer, wild goats, ermines, and other

beautiful creatures. The whole enclosure is full of animals, except the path by which men pass. On the other side, towards the south, is a magnificent lake, whither many kinds of fish are brought and nourished. A river enters and flows out; but the fish are retained by iron gratings. Towards the north, about a bowshot from the palace, Kublai has constructed a mound, full a hundred paces high and a mile in circuit, all covered with evergreen trees which never shed their leaves. When he hears of a beautiful tree, he causes it to be dug up, with all the roots and the earth round it, and to be conveyed to him on the backs of elephants, whence the eminence has been made verdant all over, and is called the green mountain. On the top is a palace, also covered with verdure; it and the trees are so lovely that all who look upon them feel delight and joy. In the vicinity is another palace, where resides the grandson of the great khan, Temur, who is to reign after him, and who follows the same life and customs as his grandsire. He has already a golden bull and the imperial seal; but he has no authority while his grandfather lives.

XI—Description of the City of Kambalu

Having described to you the palaces, I will tell you of the great city of Cathay, which contains them. Near it is another large and splendid one, also named Kambalu, which means in our language city of the lord; but the monarch, finding by astrology that this town would rebel, built another near it, divided only by a river, and bearing the same name, to which its inhabitants were compelled to remove. It forms a regular square, six miles on each side, and thus twenty-four miles in circumference. It is surrounded by walls of earth, ten paces thick and twenty in height; yet the upper part becomes gradually thinner, so that at top the breadth is only three paces. There are twelve gates, each containing an edifice, making one in each square of that wall, and filled with men, who guard the place. The streets are so broad and so straight that from one gate an other is visible. It contains many beautiful houses and palaces, and a very large one in the midst, containing a steeple with a large bell, which at night sounds three times; after which no man must leave the city without some urgent necessity, as of sickness, or a woman about to bear a child. At each gate a thousand men keep guard, not from dread of any enemy, but in reverence of the monarch who dwells within it, and to prevent injury by robbers.

XII—The Suburbs—Merchants

When the monarch comes to his chief city, he remains in his noble palace three days and no more, when he holds a great court, making high festival and rejoicing with his ladies. There is a vast abundance of people through all the suburbs of Kambalu, which are twelve in number, one corresponding to each gate; no one can count the number of residents; and they contain as stately edifices as any in the city, except the king's palace. No one is allowed to be buried within the city; and no females of bad character can reside there, but most have their dwellings in the suburbs, where there are said to be no fewer than 20,000. There are brought also to Kambalu the most costly articles in the world, the finest productions of India, as precious stones and pearls, with all the produce of Cathay and the surrounding countries, in order to supply the lords and the barons and ladies who reside there. Numerous merchants, likewise, bring more than a thousand wagons laden with grain; and all who are within a hundred miles of the city come thither to purchase what they want."

XIII—Wicked Administration of Achmac—Insurrection

I will hereafter particularly mention a council of twelve persons, having power to dispose at will of the lands, governments, and all things belonging to the state. One of these, a Saracen, named Achmac, had acquired an extraordinary influence with the great khan; indeed his master was so infatuated with him that he allowed him the most uncontrolled license. It was even discovered after his death that he had employed spells to fascinate the khan, and compel him to give full credit to what was told him by his favourite, who was thus enabled to conduct public affairs according to his pleasure. He disposed of all the commands and public offices; passed sentence upon offenders; and when desirous to inflict an injury on any one whom he hated, needed only to go to the emperor and say, "such a man has been guilty of an offence against your majesty, and deserves death." The monarch usually replied, do as you judge best, and Achmac then ordered him to be immediately executed. So manifest were the proofs of his influence, and of the sovereign's implicit reliance on his statements, that no one dared to contradict him on any occasion; even those highest in office stood in awe of him. Any one charged by him with a capital offence, whatever means he might employ to justify himself and refute the accusation, could not find an advocate; for none dared to oppose the purpose of Achmac. Thus he caused unjustly the death of many, and was also enabled to indulge his unlawful propensities. Whenever he saw a woman who pleased him, he contrived either to add her to the number of his wives, or to lead her into a criminal intimacy. On receiving information of any man having a beautiful daughter, he despatched emissaries with instructions to say to him, "what are your views with regard to this handsome girl? the best thing you can do is to give her to the lord-vice gerent;" for so they termed Achmac, implying that he was

his majesty's representative; "we will induce him to appoint you to a certain government or office for three years." The father was thus tempted to give away his child; and as soon as the affair was arranged, the other went and informed the emperor that a government was vacant, or would become so on a particular day, and recommended the parent as well qualified to discharge its duties. His majesty consented; and the appointment was immediately made. Thus, either through ambition to hold high office, or dread of his power, he obtained possession of the fairest females, under the denomination of wives or of concubines. Besides, he had twenty-five sons, who held the highest offices in the state, and, availing themselves of his authority, were guilty of similar violent and licentious proceedings. He had likewise accumulated great wealth, since every one who obtained an appointment found it requisite to make him a liberal present.

During a period of twenty-two years, he exercised this absolute authority. At length the Kataians, natives of the country, unable to endure longer his multiplied acts of injustice and violation of domestic rights, began to devise means of bringing about his death and the overthrow of the government. Among the leading persons in this plot was Chenku, a commander of 6,000 men, in whose family his dissolute conduct had spread dishonour. He proposed the measure to one of his nation, named Vanku, who commanded 10,000 men, and suggested for its execution the period when the great khan, having completed his three months' residence in Kambalu, should have departed for his palace at Shandu, while his son Gengis had also retired to the place usually visited by him at that season. The charge of the city was then intrusted to Achmac, who communicated all affairs that occurred during his master's absence, and received the necessary instructions. Vanku and Chenku, having thus consulted together, imparted the design to some leading persons among the Kataians, and also to their friends in various other cities. They formed an agreement, that on a certain day, immediately on perceiving a signal made by fire, they should rise and put to death all persons wearing beards. This distinction was made because they themselves naturally wanted this appendage, which characterized the Tartars, the Saracens, and the Christians. The grand khan, having acquired the sovereignty of Kataia, not by any legitimate right, but solely by force of arms, placed no confidence in the natives, and therefore intrusted all the provincial governments to Tartars, Saracens, Christians, and other foreigners belonging to his household. From this cause his reign was universally detested by the people, who found themselves treated as slaves by the Tartars, and still worse by the Saracens.

Vanku and Chenku, having thus arranged their plans, succeeded at night in entering the palace; when the former placed himself on one of the royal seats, made the apartment be lighted up, and sent a messenger to Achmac, then residing in the old city. He professed to come from Gengis, the emperor's son, who, he said, had unexpectedly arrived, and required his immediate attendance. The viceroy was much surprised by this intelligence; but, as he stood in awe of the prince, he presently obeyed. On passing the gate of the new city, he met the Tartar officer named Kogatai, who commanded the guard of 12,000 men, and who asked him whither he was going at that late hour. He stated his intention of waiting upon Gengis, whose arrival had just been announced to him. "It is very surprising," said the officer, "how he should have come so secretly that I was not apprized of it, so as to send a party of guards to attend him." The two Kataians, meantime, felt confident, that if they could succeed in despatching Achmac, they had nothing farther to fear. On entering the palace, and seeing so many lights blazing, he prostrated himself before Vanku, whom he supposed to be the prince, when Chenku, who held a sword ready in his hand, severed his head from his body. Kogatai had stopped at the door; but, seeing this catastrophe, he exclaimed that treason was at work, and presently discharged an arrow, which slew Vanku as he sat upon the throne. He then caused his men to seize the other, and despatched an order to the city to kill every one who should be found abroad. The Kataians, however, seeing the conspiracy discovered, one of their chiefs killed, and the survivor a prisoner, remained in their houses, and could not make the concerted signals to the other towns. Kogatai lost no time in sending messengers with a particular relation of these events to the khan, who, in reply, ordered him diligently to investigate the conspiracy, and to punish according to the degree of their guilt those found implicated in it. Next day, after receiving this command, he examined all the Kataians, and inflicted the punishment of death on the ringleaders. Other cities known to have participated in the guilt suffered similar inflictions.

When his majesty returned to Kambalu, he inquired eagerly into the cause of this disturbance, and learned that the infamous Achmac and seven of his sons (the others being less culpable) had committed several enormities. He gave orders that the treasure, which he had accumulated to an incredible amount, should be removed from his place of residence to the new city, where it was lodged in his own treasury. He directed even that his corpse should be disinterred, and thrown into the street, where the dogs might tear it in pieces. The sons, who had pursued the same criminal course with their father, were ordered to be flayed alive. Considering also the principles of the accursed sect of the Saracens, which allow them to indulge in the commission of every crime, and even to murder those who differ from them on points of belief, whence even the detestable Achmac and his sons might have imagined themselves guiltless, he regarded the whole body with contempt and abomination. Summoning them to his presence, he forbade the continuance of many practices enjoined in their law, ordering that in future their marriages should be arranged according to the Tartar custom; and that, in killing animals for food, instead of cutting their throats, they should rip open the stomach. Marco Polo was on the spot when these events took place.

XIV—*Guards of the Great Khan*

When the great khan holds a court, he is guarded, on account of his excellency and honour, by 12,000 horsemen, who are called *quiesitan*, that is, faithful servants of their lord; and this he does not from fear but regard to his high dignity. Over these 12,000 are four captains, so that each commands 3,000; and they keep guard in turn three days and three nights, eating and drinking at the expense of the prince. Then they go away, and another party comes; and so they proceed throughout the whole year.

XV—*The Magnificence of his Festivals*

When the khan wishes to celebrate a splendid festival, the tables are so arranged that his is much higher than the others, and he sits on the north, with his face toward the south. His first wife is seated beside him on the left, while, on the right, are his sons and nephews, and all those of imperial lineage, who are so stationed that their head is on a level with the feet of the monarch. The barons sit still lower; while the ladies, daughters, and female relations of the khan are placed beneath the queen on the left side, and under them all the wives of the barons; every class knows the spot where they ought to sit. The tables are so arranged that the monarch can see all the company, who are very numerous; and outside of that hall there eat more than 40,000 persons, who have come with presents or remarkable objects from foreign parts, and attend on the days when he holds a court or celebrates a marriage. In the midst of this hall is a very large vessel of fine gold, containing wine, and on each side two smaller ones, whence the liquor is poured out into flagons, each containing fully enough for eight men; and one of these is placed between every two guests, who have besides separate cups of gold to drink out of. This supply of plate is of very great value, and indeed the khan has so many vessels of gold and silver that none without seeing could possibly believe it.

At each door of the great hall, or of any part of the palace occupied by his majesty, stand two officers of gigantic height, holding in their hands staves, to prevent persons who enter from touching the threshold. If any one chances to commit this offence, they take from him his garment, which he must redeem by a payment, or if they spare his dress, inflict at least a number of blows fixed by authority. As strangers may not be aware of this prohibition, officers are appointed to warn them of it at the time of introduction. Since, however, some of the company, on leaving the hall, may be so affected with liquor as to be unable to guard against the accident, it is not then severely punished. Those who serve the khan at table are great barons, who hold their mouths carefully wrapped in rich towels of silk and gold, that their breath may not blow upon the dishes. When he begins to drink, all the instruments, which are very numerous, are sounded, and while the cup is in his hand, the barons and others present fall on their knees, and make signs of great humility; this is done every time he drinks, or when new viands are brought in. These I shall not attempt to recount, since any one may believe that he will have the greatest variety of beasts and birds, wild and domestic, and of fishes in their season, and in the greatest abundance, prepared most delicately in various modes suitable to his magnificence and dignity. Every baron or knight brings his wife, and she sits at table along with the other ladies. When the great sire has eaten, and the tables are removed, a number of jesters, players, and other witty persons perform various pieces, exciting much mirth and pleasure among the company, who then all depart and go to their homes.

XVI—*Great Festival at the King's Birthday*

The Tartars celebrate a festival on the day of their nativity. The birthday of the khan is on the 28th September, and is the greatest of all, except that at the beginning of the year. On this occasion he clothes himself in robes of beaten gold, and his twelve barons and 12,000 soldiers wear like him dresses of a uniform colour and shape; not that they are so costly, but similarly made of silk, gilded, and bound by a cincture of gold. Many have these robes adorned with precious stones and pearls, so as to be worth 10,000 golden bezants. The great khan, twelve times in the year, presents to those barons and knights robes of the same colour with his own; and this is what no lord in the world can do. On the day of his nativity, all the Tartars from every province of the world, who hold lands under him, celebrate a festival, and bring presents suited to their station. The same is done by every individual who asks from him any favour or office. He has twelve barons who bestow commands on such persons as they think proper. On that day, the Christians, Saracens, and all the races of men who are subject to him, make prayers to their gods that they will preserve, and grant him a long, healthy, and happy life. I will tell you no more of this festival, but of another which they celebrate at the beginning of the year, called the White Feast.

XVII—*Festival of the New Year*

The Tartars begin their year in February, when the khan and his people celebrate a feast, where all, both men and women, are clothed in white robes. They consider these as signifying joy and good fortune, and that hence all prosperity will happen to them throughout the year. On that day, all who hold land or any dominion under him,

make the most magnificent presents in their power, consisting of gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, and rich white cloths; so that, during the whole year, he may have abundance of treasures, and of the means of enjoying himself. They present also more than 5,000 camels, with about 100,000 beautiful white horses. On that day, too, he is gratified with at least 5,000 elephants covered with cloths of silk and gold, finely wrought with figures of beasts and birds, and each having on his back a box filled with vessels of gold and silver, and other things necessary for the feast. They all pass before the great khan, and form the most brilliant spectacle ever seen in this world. In the morning of that festal day, before the tables are spread, the kings, generals, counts, astrologers, physicians, falconers, and many other officers and rulers, repair to the hall of the sovereign, and those who are not admitted remain without the palace in a place where the monarch can fully see them. They are in the following order:—Foremost, his sons, nephews, and others of his lineage, then kings, generals, and others according to their rank. As soon as each has taken his place, a great prelate rises and says, with a loud voice, “incline and adore;” and presently all bend down, strike their foreheads on the earth, and make prayers to their master, adoring him as a god.” This they do four times, and then go to an altar, on which is written the name of the great khan. Then, out of a beautiful box, they pour incense on that table in reverence of him, and return to their place; they next make those rich and valuable presents which I have described. When all these things have been done, and the prince has seen them all, the tables are placed, and they sit down, when the feast is ordered and celebrated in the manner already explained. Now that I have described to you the joy of the White Feast, I will tell you of a most noble thing done by this monarch; for he has ordered vestments to be bestowed upon the barons there present.

XVIII—Robes bestowed by the Great Khan

He has twelve barons, who are called *quiesitan*, or the faithful men of the supreme lord. He gives to each thirteen vestments, differing in colour, and adorned with precious stones, pearls, and other great and most valuable articles; also a golden girdle, and sandals worked with threads of silver, so that each, in these several dresses, appears like a king; and there is a regulation what dress ought to be worn at each of the feasts. The monarch has thirteen robes of the same colour with those of his barons, but more costly. And now I will relate a most wonderful thing, namely, that a large lion is led into his presence, which, as soon as it sees him, drops down, and makes a sign of deep humility, owning him for its lord, and moving about without any chain. Now you shall hear of the great huntings made by this powerful ruler.

XIX—Profusion of Game supplied to his Court

He resides in the city of Cathay, that is Kambalu, three months, December, January, and February, and has commanded that, for forty days’ journey round, all the people should engage in hunting and falconry. The various lords of nations and lands are ordered to bring to him large beasts, stags, boars, wild-goats, and other animals. Those at the distance of thirty days’ journey send the bodies preserved with the entrails taken out, while those at forty send only the skins, which are employed as furniture for his army.

XX—Leopards and other wild Animals kept for Hunting

Now let us tell of the beasts which his majesty keeps for hunting. Among these are leopards and lynxes, or stag-wolves, well fitted for that purpose. He has also many lions larger than those of Babylon, of a beautiful hair and colour, striped lengthways, black, red, and white, and trained to catch stags, wild-oxen, hogs, wild-goats, and asses; and it is delightful to see one of these chases, where the hunters go out, carrying the lion in a cage, and with him a small dog. They have likewise abundance of eagles, with which they capture hares, foxes, and even wolves; those which are trained to catch these last are very large, and of great weight, so that no wolf can escape them.

XXI—His numerous Dogs and splendid Hunting Expeditions

Now let us speak of the dogs kept by this monarch. He has two barons who are brothers, named Bayam and Migam; they are called *cinuci*, that is, the keepers of mastiff dogs, and each commands a party of 10,000 men, one clothed in vermilion, and the other in blue; whenever they go out with the monarch they are dressed in these vestments. In each party there are 2,000 of the men, who guide respectively one, two, or more large mastiffs, making altogether a vast multitude. When his majesty goes to hunt, these two brothers attend him on opposite sides, each with 10,000 men and 5,000 dogs; and they hunt thus a day’s journey distant from each other, and never pursue any animal which is not captured. It is indeed beautiful to see the speed of these dogs and the hunters, for when the prince goes out with his barons, boars and other animals are running on every side, and the dogs pursuing.

XXII—*Falconry and the Chase after Birds*

When the monarch has remained in Kambalu these three months, he departs and goes southward to the ocean two days' journey distant. He leads with him 10,000 falconers, conveying full 5,000 gerfalcons, peregrine falcons in abundance, and also many vultures; but do not imagine that these are all kept in one place; there are 200 here, 300 there, and so on. The birds caught are mostly presented to the great sire, and when he goes to hunt with his gerfalcons, vultures, and falcons, 10,000 men are ranged, two together, so as to enclose much ground; these are called *toscaor*, meaning in our language men who remain on the watch, and each has a call and a hood to invite the birds. And when any falconer, by order of his majesty, sends forth a falcon, he has no need to follow it, because wherever it may go, it is watched by the men ranged in double order, who can either catch it again, or if necessary afford it succour. Each of the birds belonging to the sovereign and barons has a tablet of silver on its feet, with its name and that of the owner inscribed, so that wherever caught, it can be returned to him. If he is unknown, the animal must be carried to a chief named *bulangazi*, or guardian of things that are lost, who stands with his flag on an elevated spot, and all who have missed any thing go to him and recover it. Whoever finds a horse, a bird, a sword, or any thing else, and does not carry it to the owner or to this officer, is treated as a robber; thus scarcely any thing is ever lost. When the monarch goes upon these excursions, he has with him four elephants, and a chamber prepared, covered within with cloth of beaten gold, and outwardly with lions' skins, where he keeps twelve of his very best gerfalcons, with twelve barons to amuse him by their society. As the falconers ride by, they call, "Sire, the birds are passing;" when he throws open the chamber, and seeing the object, selects the gerfalcons that please him, and sends them forth against the birds, few of which ever escape. Lying on his couch, he can view and enjoy the chase. Thus, I think, there is not, and never will be, any lord in the world, who has or can have so much diversion as the great khan.

XXIII—*Magnificent Tents of the Great Khan*

When this mighty monarch comes to one of his places, named Chaccia, he causes his tents to be pitched, with those of his sons and barons. These exceed 10,000 in number, and are very beautiful and rich. That in which he keeps his court is so large that 1,000 knights can dwell in it; this is for his nobles and other attendants. He himself resides in another, looking west ward, where those to whom he wishes to speak are introduced; while there is an interior chamber in which he sleeps. The two halls have each three fine columns of aromatic wood, and are covered outwardly with beautiful lions' hides, all striped with black, white, and vermilion, so that water cannot enter. The inside is lined with skins of ermine and zibelline, of the highest value, especially the latter, of which a robe suitable for a man would be worth 2,000 golden bezants, while a common one would be worth 1,000. The Tartars call them royal skins, and they are as large as those of a fawn; the whole hall is covered with them, worked most delicately in intaglio. These apartments contain furniture of such value that a little king could not purchase them. Around are large tents for his ladies, and for his gerfalcons and other beasts and birds; for he brings all his train, doctors, astronomers, hunters, and other officials, so that the whole appears a large and crowded city. He remains there till the feast of the Resurrection, during which time he does nothing but chase cranes, swans, and other birds, when those who catch any bring them to him, and thus the sport is beyond what any one can describe. No baron, nor lord, nor husbandman, can keep a dog or falcon for twenty days' journey round his residence; beyond that distance they may do what they please. No person, too, of whatever condition, must, from March to October, take any game, but leave them to multiply their kind; so that hares and stags become so fearless as frequently to come up to men, yet are not taken. The great khan then returns to the city of Kambalu by the same road, hawking and sporting.

XXIV—*Hunting Palace at Shandu in Tartary*

At Shandu in Tartary, near the western frontier of China, he has built a very large palace of marble and other valuable stones. The halls are gilded all over and wonderfully beautiful, and a space sixteen miles in circuit is surrounded by a wall, within which are fountains, rivers, and meadows. Here he finds stags, deer, and wild-goats to give for food to the falcons and gyrfalcons, which he keeps in cages, and goes out once a week to sport with them. Frequently he rides through that enclosure, having a leopard on the crupper of his horse, which, whenever he is inclined, he lets go, and it catches a stag, deer, or wild-goat, which is given to the gerfalcons in the cage. In this park, too, the monarch has a large palace framed of cane, the interior gilded all over, having pictures of beasts and birds most skilfully worked on it. The roof is of the same material, and so richly varnished that no water can penetrate. I assure you these canes are more than three palms thick, and from ten to fifteen paces long. They are cut length ways, from one knot to the other, and then arranged so as to form the roof. The whole structure is so disposed that the khan, when he pleases, can order it to be taken down, for it is supported by more than 200 cords of silk. His majesty remains there three months of the year, June, July, and August, the situation being cool and agreeable; and during this period his palace of cane is set up, while all the rest of the year it is down. On the 28th of August, he

departs thence, and for the following purpose:—There are a race of mares white as snow, with no mixture of any other colour, and in number 10,000, whose milk must not be drunk by any one who is not of imperial lineage. Only one other race of men can drink it, called Boriats, because they gained a victory for Gengis Khan. When one of these white animals is passing, the Tartars pay respect to it as to a great lord, standing by to make way for it. The astrologers and idolaters, too, have told the khan, that on the 28th August this milk must be sprinkled through the air, and over the earth, that the spirits may drink plentifully, and may preserve all that belong to him, men, women, beasts, birds, and other things. But there is a wonderful circumstance that I had forgotten. When the monarch remained in that palace, and there came on rain, fog, or any bad weather, he had skilful astronomers and enchanters, who made these mischiefs fly away from his palace, so that none of them could approach it. These wise men are called Tebet and Quesmur; they are idolaters, and more skilful in diabolical arts and enchantments than any other generation; and though they do it by the art of the devil, they make other men believe that it is through their great sanctity and by the power of God. I must tell you, too, another of their customs, that when any man is judged and condemned to death by his lord, they cook and eat him, but not when he dies a natural death. I will tell you, too, a great wonder which these *baksi* do by their enchantments. When the monarch sits at table in his hall of state, and the cups are ten paces distant, full of wine, milk, and other beverages, they cause them, by their magical spells, to rise from the pavement and place themselves before the prince, without any one touching them; this is done in the presence of 10,000 men; and the fact is real and true, without any lie. These *baksi*, when the festivals of their idols come round, go to his majesty and say, “Great sire, you know the feast of such an idol approaches, and are aware that he can cause bad weather and much mischief to your cattle and grain. We pray, therefore, that you will give us all the sheep with black heads, also incense, aloe-wood, and such and such other things.” This they tell to the barons, who repeat it to the khan, and he gives what they demand. Then they go to the image and raise in his presence a delicious fragrance, with incense and spices, cook the flesh, and place it with bread before him. Thus every god has his day of commemoration in the same manner as our saints. They have also extensive abbeys and monasteries, one of which here resembles a little city, containing upwards of 2,000 monks, who are clothed in a particular dress, which is handsomer than that of other men. They worship their idols by the grandest feasts, songs, and lights that ever were seen. And I may tell you that many of these *baksi*, according to their order, may take wives, do so, and have a number of children. Yet there is another kind of religious men called *sensi*, who observe strict abstinence; they eat nothing but the husks of corn boiled in warm water, fast often in the course of the year, have many large idols, and sometimes adore fire. Their observances differ from those of every other sect; they would not take a wife for any thing in the world. They shave the head and beard, wear black and blue dresses of coarse canvas, sleep upon mats, and lead the hardest life of any men on earth. Their monasteries and their idols all bear the names of women.

XXV—Palace at Cianganor

At Cianganor, too, three days’ journey distant, the khan has a large palace, where he is fond of residing, because there are many lakes and rivers, as well as fine plains, abounding in cranes, pheasants, partridges, and other birds. Here, therefore, he has delightful hawking, and abundant exercise for his falcons and gyrfalcons. There are five kinds of cranes which I must describe. The first are black like crows, and very large. The second are white, and very beautiful, for all the feathers are full of round eyes, like those of the peacock, and glitter like gold. The head is white, black, and red all round, and they are larger than any of the others. The third species resemble ours. The fourth are small, and have in their ears very magnificent red and black feathers. The fifth are all gray, with handsome red and black heads, and are very large. Near this city is a valley where the khan has ordered the erection of various small houses, in which are kept flocks of partridges, and he employs a number of men to guard these birds, so that they are in abundance; and whenever he comes into this palace, he finds as many as he desires.

XXVI—Paper Money—Immense Wealth of the Great Khan

With regard to the money of Kambalu, the great khan may be called a perfect alchemist, for he makes it himself. He orders people to collect the bark of a certain tree, whose leaves are eaten by the worms that spin silk. The thin rind between the bark and the interior wood is taken, and from it cards are formed like those of paper, all black. He then causes them to be cut into pieces, and each is declared worth respectively half a livre, a whole one, a silver grosso of Venice, and so on to the value of ten bezants. All these cards are stamped with his seal, and so many are fabricated, that they would buy all the treasures in the world. He makes all his payments in them, and circulates them through the kingdoms and provinces over which he holds dominion; and none dares to refuse them under pain of death. All the nations under his sway receive and pay this money for their merchandise, gold, silver, precious stones, and whatever they transport, buy, or sell. The merchants often bring to him goods worth 400,000 bezants, and he pays them all in these cards, which they willingly accept, because they can make purchases

with them through out the whole empire. He frequently commands those who have gold, silver, cloths of silk and gold, or other precious commodities, to bring them to him. Then he calls twelve men skilful in these matters, and commands them to look at the articles, and fix their price. What ever they name is paid in these cards, which the merchant cordially receives. In this manner the great sire possesses all the gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones in his dominions. When any of the cards are torn or spoiled, the owner carries them to the place whence they were issued, and receives fresh ones, with a deduction of 3 per cent. If a man wishes gold or silver to make plate, girdles, or other ornaments, he goes to the office, carrying a sufficient number of cards, and gives them in payment for the quantity which he requires. This is the reason why the khan has more treasure than any other lord in the world; nay, all the princes in the world together have not an equal amount.

XXVII—*The Twelve Governors of Provinces and their Duty*

He has appointed twelve very great barons, who hold command over all things in the thirty-four provinces. They reside in a palace within the city of Kambalu, large and beautiful, containing many halls and apartments; and for every province there is an agent and a number of writers or notaries, having each a house to himself. They manage all the provincial affairs according to the will and pleasure of the twelve barons. The latter have power to appoint the lords of the provinces above mentioned; and having chosen the one whom they judge best qualified, they name him to the great khan, who confirms him, and bestows a golden tablet corresponding to his command. These twelve barons are called in the Tartar language *scieng*, that is, the greater officers of state. They order the army to go where and in what numbers they please, but all according to the commands of the great sire; and they do every other thing necessary for the provinces. The palace in which they dwell is called *scien*, and is the largest in all the court; they have the power of doing much good to any one whom they favour.

XXVIII—*The Couriers of the Great Khan and their Stations*

I must now inform you, that from the city of Kambalu, many messengers are sent to divers provinces, and on all the roads they find, at every twenty-five miles, a post called *jamb*, where the imperial envoys are received. At each is a large edifice, containing a bed covered with silk, and every thing useful and convenient for a traveller; so that if a king were to come, he would be well accommodated. Here, too, they find full 400 horses whom the prince has ordered to be always in waiting to convey them when sent into any quarter, along the principal roads. When they have to go through any district where there is no habitation, the monarch has caused such edifices to be reared at the distance of thirty-five or at most forty miles; thus they go through all the provinces, finding every where inns and horses for their reception. This is the greatest establishment that ever was kept by any king or emperor in the world; for at those places there are maintained more than 200,000 horses. Also the edifices, furnished and prepared in the manner now described, amount to more than 10,000. Moreover, in the intervals between these stations, at every three miles, are erected villages of about forty houses, inhabited by foot-runners, also employed on these despatches. They wear a large girdle, set round with bells, which are heard at a great distance. When one of them receives a letter or packet, he runs full speed to the next village, where his approach being announced by the bells, another is ready to start and proceed to the next, and so on. By these pedestrian messengers the khan receives news in one day and night from places distant ten days' journey; in two, from those distant twenty; and in ten, from those distant a hundred. From them he exacts no tribute, but gives them horses and many other things. When his messengers go on horseback to carry intelligence into the provinces or bring tidings from distant parts, and, more especially, respecting any district that has rebelled, they ride in one day and night 200, 250, or even 300 miles; and when there are two, they receive two good horses, bind themselves round the head and body, and gallop full speed from one station to the next at twenty-five miles' distance, where they find two others fresh and ready harnessed, on which they proceed with the same rapidity. They stop not for an instant day nor night, and are thus enabled to bring news in so short a period. Now, I will tell you the great bounty which the monarch bestows twice in the year.

XXIX—*The Care and Bounty of the Monarch towards his Subjects*

He sends his messengers through all his kingdoms and provinces, to know if any of his subjects have had their crops injured through bad weather or any other disaster; and if such injury has happened, he does not exact from them any tribute for that season or year; nay, he gives them corn out of his own stores to subsist upon, and to sow their fields. This he does in summer; in winter he inquires if there has been a mortality among the cattle, and in that case grants similar exemption and aid. When there is a great abundance of grain, he causes magazines to be formed, to contain wheat, rice, millet, or barley, and care to be taken that it be not lost or spoiled; then when a scarcity occurs, this grain is drawn forth, and sold for a third or fourth of the current price. Thus there cannot be any severe famine; for he does it through all his dominions; he bestows also great charity on many poor families in Kambalu;

and when he hears of individuals who have not food to eat, he causes grain to be given to them. Bread is not refused at the court throughout the whole year to any who come to beg for it; and on this account he is adored as a god by his people. His majesty provides them also with raiment out of his tithes of wool, silk, and hemp. These materials he causes to be woven into different sorts of cloth, in a house erected for that purpose, where every artisan is obliged to work one day in the week for his service. Garments made of the stuffs thus manufactured are given to destitute families for their winter and summer dresses. A dress is also prepared for his armies; and in every city a quantity of woollen cloth is woven, being defrayed from the tithes there levied. It must be observed, that the Tartars, according to their original customs, when they had not yet adopted the religion of the idolaters, never bestowed alms; but when applied to by any necessitous person, repelled him with reproachful expressions, saying,—begone with your complaints of a bad season, God has sent it to you, and had he loved you, as he evidently loves me, you would have similarly prospered. But since some of the wise men among the idolaters, especially the *baksi*, have represented to his majesty, that to provide for the poor is a good work and highly grateful to their deities, he has bestowed charity in the manner now described, so that, at his court, none are denied food who come to ask for it. He has also so arranged that in all the highways by which messengers, merchants, and other persons travel, trees are planted at short distances on both sides of the road, and are so tall that they can be seen from a great distance. They serve thus both to show the way and afford a grateful shade. This is done whenever the nature of the soil admits of plantation; but when the route lies through sandy deserts or over rocky mountains, he has ordered stones to be set up, or columns erected, to guide the traveller. Officers of rank are appointed, whose duty it is to take care that these matters be properly arranged, and the roads kept constantly in good order. Besides other motives, the great khan is influenced by the declaration of his soothsayers and astrologers, that those who plant trees receive long life as their reward.

XXX—*Liquor used for Wine in Cathay*

You must know that the greater part of the people of Cathay drink a wine made of rice and many good spices, and prepare it in such a way that it is more agreeable to drink than any other liquid. It is clear and beautiful, and it makes a man drunk sooner than any other wine, for it is extremely hot.

XXXI—*Stones which are burnt instead of Wood*

It may be observed, also, that throughout the whole province of Cathay, there are a kind of black stones cut from the mountains in veins, which burn like logs. They maintain the fire better than wood. If you put them on in the evening, they will preserve it the whole night, and will be found burning in the morning. Throughout the whole of Cathay this fuel is used. They have also wood indeed; but the stones are much less expensive.

XXXII—*The Astrologers of Kambalu—the Tartar Computation of Time*

The city of Kambalu contains, inclusive of Christians, Saracens, and Kataians, about 5,000 astrologers and soothsayers, whom the emperor provides with food and clothing, as he does the poor families; and they are constantly practising their art. They have astrolabes, on which are delineated the planetary signs, the hours of passing the meridian, and their successive aspects during the whole year. The astrologers of each separate sect annually examine their respective tables, to ascertain thence the course of the heavenly bodies, and their relative positions for every lunation. From the paths and configurations of the planets in the several signs, they foretell the state of the weather and the peculiar phenomena which are to occur in each month. In one, for instance, there will be thunder and storms; in another earthquakes; in a third violent lightning and rain; in a fourth pestilence, mortality, war, discord, conspiracy. What they find in their astrolabes they predict, adding, however, that God may at his pleasure do either more or less than they have announced.

Their annual prophecies are written on small squares called *takuini*, which are sold at a moderate price to all persons anxious to search into futurity. Those whose announcements prove more generally correct are accounted the most perfect masters of their art, and consequently held in the highest honour. When any one projects a great work, a long journey for commercial purposes, or any other undertaking, the probable success of which he is desirous to learn, he goes to one of these astrologers, informs him of the time at which he intends to set out, and inquires what aspect the heavens then exhibit. The astrologer replies, that before he can answer, he must be informed of the year, month, and hour of his nativity, on learning which he examines how the constellation that was then in the ascendant corresponds with the aspect of the celestial bodies at the time of the inquiry. Upon this comparison he finds his prediction as to the favourable or unfavourable issue of the enterprise.

The Tartars compute time by a cycle of twelve years, the first of which they name the lion; the second, the ox; the third, the dragon; the fourth, the dog; and so on till all the twelve have elapsed. When any one, therefore, is asked the year in which he was born, he answers, it was in that of the lion, on such a day, and at such an hour and

minute; all of which had been care fully noted in a book. When the years of the cycle are completed, they begin again with the first, and constantly go over the same ground.

XXXIII—*Religion and Customs of the Tartars (Chinese)*

These people are idolaters, and each person has, for the object of worship, a tablet fixed against an elevated part of the wall of his apartment, having a name written on it which denotes the high, heavenly, and mighty God, and this they daily worship, burning incense before it. Raising their hands, and beating their faces three times against the floor, they entreat from him the blessings of sound understanding and bodily health, addressing no other petition. Below, on the floor, they have a statue named *Natigai*, considered as the god of terrestrial objects, or of whatever is produced on the earth. They suppose him to have a wife and children, and worship him in the same manner with incense, lifting their hands, and bending to the ground. They pray to him for good weather, plentiful crops, increase of family, and other such objects. They believe the soul to be so far immortal, that immediately after death it enters another body, and according as a man's actions in this life have been virtuous or wicked, his future state will be progressively more or less fortunate. If he has been poor, yet acted worthily and respectably, he will be born anew, first of a lady, becoming himself a gentleman; then of a woman of rank, becoming a noble man, and he will continually ascend in the scale of existence till he becomes united with the divinity. On the contrary, if a gentleman's son have acted unworthily, he will, at his next birth, become a clown, and at length a dog; descending always to a condition more vile than the former.

They converse courteously, accosting each other with politeness and with countenances expressive of pleasure; they have a well-bred air, and a manner of eating particularly cleanly. The utmost reverence is shown to parents; and should any child treat his with disrespect, or neglect to assist them, there is a public tribunal having for its especial object to punish the crime of filial ingratitude. Malefactors, when found guilty, after being apprehended and thrown into prison, are strangled; but such as remain till the expiry of three years, a time appointed by his majesty for a general release, are set at liberty, having however a brand fixed on one of the cheeks, by which they may be recognised.

The great khan has prohibited all gambling and other species of fraud, to which this people are addicted beyond any other upon earth; and as a reason for this prohibition, he tells them in his edict, "I subdued you by the power of my sword, and consequently whatever you possess belongs of right to me; in gambling, there fore, you sport with my property." Yet he does not, by the right thus claimed, take any thing on an arbitrary principle. The orderly and regular manner in which all ranks present themselves before him deserves notice. On approaching within half a mile of his residence, they testify their reverence for his exalted rank by an humble, subdued, and quiet demeanour, so that not the least noise is heard, nor does any one call, or even speak aloud. Every man of rank carries with him, while he continues in the hall of audience, a vessel into which he spits, that he may not soil the floor; and having done so, he replaces the cover, and makes a bow. They usually take with them handsome buskins of white leather, and on reaching the court, before entering the hall, where they wait to be summoned by his majesty, put them on, giving those worn in walking to the care of the servants. This precaution is taken that they may not sully the beautiful carpets, curiously wrought with silk and gold, and exhibiting a variety of colours.

XXXIV—*Marco Polo's Journey—The River Pulisangan and its beautiful Bridge*

I have now to inform you that the great khan having sent Messer Marco as his ambassador into the western provinces, he departed from Kambalu, and travelled in that direction full four months. You shall now hear all that he saw on that journey going and returning. When a man leaves Kambalu and has gone ten miles, he finds a river called Pulisangan, which flows on to the ocean, and is crossed by many merchants with their goods. Over it is a grand stone bridge, which has not its equal in the world; it is 300 paces long and eight broad, and ten horsemen can ride abreast over it. It has twenty-four arches, supported by piers in the water, and is wholly of marble, finely wrought into columns in the manner that I will tell you. At the head of the bridge is a column of marble, above and beneath which are beautifully carved lions of the same material, and about a pace distant is another column, with its lions, and between the two are slabs of gray marble, to secure passengers from falling into the water; and the whole bridge thus formed is the most magnificent object in the world.

XXXV—*The great City of Gco-gui*

After leaving that bridge a man travels thirty miles westward, finding every where fine trees, villages, and inns, and then comes to a city which is named Geo-gui. The country is rich in grain, the people are all idolaters; they live by merchandise and the arts, making cloth of gold, as well as silk, and beautiful linen. There are also numerous houses for the reception of strangers. A mile beyond that city are two roads, one leading westward through Cathay,

the other southward to the great province of Manji. In riding westward through Cathay full ten days, you find always handsome cities and castles, abundance of arts and merchandise, fine inns, trees, vines, and a civilized people.

XXXVI—*The Cities of Ta-in-fu and Pi-an-fu*

At the end of this journey is a kingdom named Ta-in-fu, with a capital of the same name. It contains many arts and much merchandise, with a large supply of stores necessary for the imperial army. The district presents numerous vineyards, and being the only part of Cathay where wine is made, supplies it to the surrounding provinces. It yields also much silk, abounding in the trees on which the worms are fed. A degree of civilisation prevails among all the people of this country, in consequence of their frequent intercourse with the numerous towns which lie very near each other. The merchants are constantly carrying their goods from one to another, as fairs are successively held at each. Five days' journey beyond the ten already mentioned, there is said to be another city still larger and handsomer, named Achbaluch, where are the limits of his majesty's hunting-ground, within which no person must sport, except princes of his family, and others whose names are inscribed on the grand falconer's list; beyond, all persons qualified by their rank have that liberty. The khan scarcely ever follows the chase in this quarter; hence the wild animals, especially hares, multiply to such a degree, as to cause the destruction of all the growing corn. This having come to his knowledge, he was induced to repair thither with his whole court, and prodigious quantities of game were then taken. Leaving Ta-in-fu, and riding westward full seven days through very fine districts, amid numerous merchants, you find a large town, named Pi-an-fu, supported by commerce and the silk manufacture.

XXXVII—*The Castle of Caya-fu—Story of its King and Prester John*

Two miles west of Pi-an-fu is a famous castle, named Caya-fu, built anciently by a king named Dor. In this castle is a very beautiful palace, with a great hall, containing portraits, beautifully painted, of all the kings who formerly reigned in these provinces. Having mentioned this King Dor, I will tell you a curious story of what passed between him and Prester John. The two sovereigns being at war, Dor was in so strong a situation that the other could not reach him, and was therefore much chagrined; upon which seven of his servants said that they would bring before him his adversary, and if he wished even alive. He said he should be very much obliged to them. Having obtained this permission, they went to the king and presented themselves as strangers desirous to serve him. He gave them an honourable welcome, and they began their duties with the utmost zeal, rendering themselves extremely acceptable. After they had remained two years, he became greatly attached to them, and confided in their love as if they had been his sons. Now hear what these wicked fellows did, and how difficult it is to find defence against a traitor. The king happened to go out on an excursion with a small number of persons, among whom were these seven. When they had passed a river distant from the palace, seeing that the king had not attendants enough to defend him, they laid hands on him, drew their swords, and threatened to kill him unless he instantly went along with them. He was greatly surprised, and said to them,—“What mean you by this, my sons!—what are you saying—whither do you wish me to go?” They replied:—“We wish you to come with us to Prester John, who is our master.” When Dor heard this, he almost died with grief, and said,—“ha! my good friends, have I not honoured and treated you as children; why will you betray me into the hands of my enemy! This would be a most wicked and disloyal action.” They replied that it must be so. They led him to their sovereign, who rejoiced greatly, and addressed the king in very rough language. He made no reply, not knowing what to answer; upon which, the other set him to keep his cattle, as a mark of disgrace and contempt, and during two years he performed this menial office. After that time Prester John was appeased, and resolved to spare his captive. He bestowed on him splendid regal vestments, paying him great honour, and saying,—“Now own you were not a man capable of making war against me.” The king then replied,—“Sire, I always knew that I was unable to contend with you; I repent much of my former bad conduct, and promise faithfully that I will always be your friend.” Then said the Christian prince,—“I will impose upon you no more hardship and grief; you shall receive favour and honour.” Having then supplied him with many horses handsomely equipped, and a numerous attendance, he permitted him to go. Dor then returned to his kingdom, and from that time was a faithful friend and servant of Prester John.

XXXVIII—*The great River Kara-moran, and the City Ca-cian-fu*

Twenty miles westward from that castle is a river called Kara-moran, so large and broad that it cannot be crossed by a bridge, and flows on even to the ocean. On its banks are many cities and castles, likewise many merchants and manufactured goods; and in the country around ginger grows in great abundance. The number of birds is wonderful, so that for a Venetian grosso one can buy three pheasants; and after travelling three days, you find a noble city named Ca-cian-fu. The people are idolaters, as likewise those of Cathay. It is a city of great merchandise and many arts. They have abundance of silk, with cloth of gold of all fashions. I will go on to tell you of the capital of the kingdom.

XXXIX—The City of Quen-gian-fu

When a man has left the city of Ca-cian-fu, and travel led eight days westward, he finds always cities and castles, merchandise and arts, pleasure-grounds and houses; and the whole country is full of mulberries, producing abundance of silk. The men are idolaters and live by labouring the ground, hunting, and hawking. At the end of the eight days he comes to the noble city of Quen-gian-fu, capital of a kingdom anciently magnificent and powerful, and which had many noble and valiant kings. At present the crown is held by Mangalu, a son of the great khan. That city is rich in merchandise and manufactures, particularly of implements for the supply of an army; likewise every thing necessary for the subsistence of man. The people are all idolaters. Westward is a beautiful palace of King Mangalu, which I will describe to you. It lies in a great plain watered by a river, as also by many lakes and fountains. A wall five miles in circuit, surrounded with battlements, and well built, encloses this splendid edifice, having halls and chambers adorned with beaten gold. Mangalu exercises his dominion with great justice, and is much beloved by his people; the residents in the district enjoy great amusement in hawking and hunting.

XL—The Province of Cun-chin

A man departing from this palace travels three days westward through a very fine plain, always finding villages and castles, with men living by merchandise and rearing silk in great abundance. He then comes to great mountains and valleys belonging to the province of Cun-chin; the people are all idolaters, and subsist by agriculture and hunting, having many forests full of various wild animals. Thus a man rides for twenty days through mountains, valleys, and woods, always finding cities, castles, and good inns.

XLI—The Province of Achalech-Manji

After this journey, he enters a province named Acha lech-Manji, entirely level, and full of cities and castles. The people are all idolaters, and live by merchandise and art, and the province yields such a quantity of ginger, that it is distributed throughout Cathay, to the great profit of the inhabitants. The land also yields rice, wheat, and other grain, and is rich in all productions. The principal country is called Achalech-Manji, which means in our language one of the borders of Manji. This plain lasts for two days, and we then travel twenty through mountains, valleys, and woods, seeing many cities and castles. These people are idolaters, and live on the fruits of the earth and the flesh of birds and beasts; for there are abundance of lions, bears, wolves, stags, deer, and particularly of those animals which yield the musk.

XLII—The Province and City of Sin-din-fu

When a man has left this country and travelled twenty days westward, he approaches a province on the borders of Manji named Sin-din-fu. The capital, bearing the same name, was anciently very great and noble, governed by a mighty and wealthy sovereign. He died, leaving three sons, who divided the city into three parts, and each enclosed his portion with a wall, which was within the great wall of twenty miles in circuit. They ranked still as kings, and had ample possessions; but the great khan overcame them, and took full possession of their territory. Through the city, a large river of fresh water, abounding with fish, passes and flows on to the ocean, distant eighty or a hundred days' journey; it is called Quian-su. On that current is a very great number of cities and castles, and such a multitude of ships, as no one who has not seen could possibly believe. Equally wonderful is the quantity of merchandise conveyed; indeed it is so broad as to appear a sea and not a river. Within the city, it is crossed by a bridge, wholly of marble, half a mile long and eight paces broad; the upper part is supported by marble columns, and richly painted; and upon it are many houses where merchants expose goods for sale; but these are set up in the morning and taken down in the evening. At one of them, larger than the others, stands the chamberlain of the khan, who receives the duty on the merchandise sold, which is worth annually a thousand golden bezants. The inhabitants are all idolaters; and from that city a man goes five days' journey through castles, villages, and scattered houses. The people subsist by agriculture, and the tract abounds with wild beasts. There are also large manufactures of gauzes and cloth of gold. After travelling these five days, he comes to Thibet.

XLIII—The Province of Thibet

This is a very large province; the men have a language of their own, and are idolaters. They border upon Manji and many other countries, and are very great robbers; the extent is such, that it contains eight kingdoms and many cities and castles. There are also extensive rivers, lakes, and mountains, where is found a vast quantity of gold. Cinnamon and coral occur, which last is very dear, because they place it round the neck of their women and their idols, and hold it as a precious jewel. Here are made camlets, and other cloths of silk and gold. There are very skillful

enchanters and astrologers, but extremely wicked men, who perform works of the devil, which it were unlawful to relate, they would strike with such amazement. They have mastiff dogs as large as asses, and excellent in taking wild animals. This province was entirely destroyed by Mangou, the fifth great khan, in his wars; and its many villages and castles are all demolished. Here grow large canes, fifteen paces long and four palms thick, while from one knot to the other is full three palms. The merchants and travellers, who pass through that country in the night, take these canes and set them on fire, when they make such a loud crackling noise that lions, bears, and other destructive animals are terrified, and dare not approach. They also split them in the middle, and produce thus so mighty a sound, that it would be heard in the night at the distance of five miles; and the explosion is so alarming, that horses unaccustomed to it often break their reins and harness, and take to flight. For this reason, travellers, riding such horses, bind them by the feet, and stop their eyes and ears. A man travels twenty days through these countries without finding either inns or victuals; he must therefore carry with him food for himself and his cattle during the whole of that space, meeting always, too, ferocious wild beasts, which are very dangerous.

XLIV—Another Part of Thibet

The traveller then comes to a part of Thibet where there are houses and castles; but the people have a bad custom. None of them for the whole world will marry a virtuous maiden, saying that she is worth nothing without having had many lovers. When strangers, therefore, pass through, and have pitched their tents, or taken their lodging in inns, the old women bring their daughters, often to the number of thirty or forty, and offer them as wives during their stay; but they must not carry them thence, either back or forward. When the merchant is about to depart, he gives to the lady some toy or jewel as a testimony that she has lived with him. These jewels she hangs to her neck, and is anxious to have at least twenty; for the more she can show, the higher is she valued, and the more readily obtains a husband. After being married, she is strictly watched, and any infidelity is deeply resented. These people are idolatrous and wicked, not holding it sinful to commit wrong and robbery; in short, they are the greatest thieves in the world. They live on the fruits of the earth, but mostly by hunting and falconry; and the country contains many of those animals which produce musk, and are called in the Tartar language *gudderi*. That sinful people have many good dogs, which they employ in the pursuit of wild animals. They have neither the cards nor money circulated by the great khan, but make money of salt. They are poorly clad with the skins of beasts, canvass, and buckram; they have a language of their own, which they call Tebet. Now I will tell you of Kain-du.

XLV—The Province of Kain-du

This is a province lying to the west, having only one king, the inhabitants idolaters, and subject to the great khan. It contains a number of cities and castles, with a lake, in which are found many pearls; but the monarch forbids them, under a severe penalty, to be removed except for his own use; because, if any one were allowed to take them, they would become worth almost nothing. There is also a mountain, whence are quarried turquoise stones in great abundance, very large and beautiful; but he does not allow them to be removed unless by his mandate. In this province they have a strange and base custom, that a man thinks there is no disgrace in an improper intimacy between his wife or sister and a stranger or other person. On the contrary, when such a one comes to reside in his house, the master presently goes out, and leaves him with his wife. The visiter remains often three days, and places a hat or something else at the window as a signal; and the husband never returns till he sees this taken away. This is said to be done in honour of their idols, who on that account bestow on them many blessings. Their gold is in small rods,—the value being determined according to the weight, and not marked by any stamp. The small money is thus made: they take salt, form it into a shape, so that it weighs about half a pound, and eighty of these are worth a rod of gold. They have a very great number of the animals which yield the musk; likewise fishes from the same lake whence the pearls are drawn; also the usual kinds of wild birds and beasts. No wine is obtained from vines, but it is made from grain or rice with many spices, which makes a good liquor. In that province also grows a tree called *garofol*; it is small, with leaves like a laurel, but longer and narrower; it bears a small white flower. It yields ginger, cinnamon, and other spices, which come into our country; but I have now said to you enough of Kain-du. After travelling ten days you come to a river which bounds it, named Brius. In it is found a great quantity of gold dust; and on its banks abundance of cinnamon; it flows on to the ocean. Now let us tell you of Caraiian.

XLVI—The Province of Caraiian

When a man has departed and crossed the river, he enters this province, which is large, and contains seven kingdoms extending westward. The people are all idolaters, and under the dominion of the great khan. The king is a son of his, named Essetemur, and is great, rich, and powerful. He is also brave and upright, ruling his country with much justice." When the traveller has crossed the river, he passes, during a journey of five days, through a

country where there is abundance of cities and castles, with many very good horses; and the people are supported by cattle and the produce of land. Their language is extremely difficult to understand. At the end of these five days, he comes to the capital of the country, named Yaci, which is particularly great and noble, with many merchants and numerous arts. There are here various sects, Saracens, idolaters, and Nestorian Christians. There is a good deal of grain and rice, yet the country is not very fertile. They make a drink of the latter which intoxicates like wine. Money is formed of porcelain, such as is found in the sea, and eighty pieces are worth one bar of gold, or eight of silver. They have pits whence they draw vast quantities of salt, from which the king derives a great revenue. Adultery is not considered as a crime, unless when accompanied with violence. There is a lake here extending a hundred miles, and containing many large fishes, the best in the world. They use the raw flesh of all fowls and beasts; for the poor people go to the market and get it newly taken from the animal, put it in garlic sauce, then eat it; the rich likewise eat it raw, but previously cut into small pieces, and the sauce mixed with good spices.

XLVII—The Province of Karazan and its great Serpents

When a man leaves Yaci, or Chiaci, and goes ten days westward, he finds the province of Karazan, with a capital of the same name. The people are all idolaters, and subject to the great khan; the king is a son of that monarch, named Kogatin. Gold dust is found in the river, and on the mountains in large pieces so abundantly that a bar is given for six of silver. The porcelain, too, formerly described circulates for money, but is procured from India. Here are snakes and serpents so huge as to strike all men with astonishment; they are ten paces long, ten palms broad, and have no feet, but only a hoof like that of the lion; the nose is like a loaf of bread, the mouth so huge that it would swallow at once a man whole; the teeth are immense, nor is there any wild beast whom they do not strike with terror. There are smaller ones eight paces long and six palms broad. The mode of catching them is this:—They remain during the day in great caverns under the earth, to avoid the heat, but at night go out to feed, and seize all the animals whom they can reach; they also seek drink at the rivers, fountains, and lakes, and then make a deep track in the sand, as if a barrel had been dragged through it. In it the people fix a stake, fasten to it a steel instrument sharpened like a razor, and cover it over with sand. When the serpent comes through the track, and strikes against the steel, he is pierced with such violence, that his body is divided from one side to the other, as high as the umbilical cord, and he presently dies. They then take the body and extract the gall-bladder, which they sell very dear, being an excellent medicine for the bite of a mad dog, when administered in small doses. It is also valuable in childbirth, and when given to the woman, a safe delivery immediately follows. The flesh also is sold at a high price, being considered delicate food. The serpent also enters the dens of lions, bears, and other fierce animals, and devours their whelps, when he can get at them. Here, too, are very large horses, which are carried into India to be sold. They cut two or three nerves from the tail, so that they may not strike with it the man who rides, which is considered disgraceful. These people ride like the French, with long staffs, have arms covered with buffalo hide, and carry lances, spears, and poisoned arrows. Before the great khan conquered them they had a wicked custom, that when any stranger came to lodge with them who was agreeable, wise, and opulent, they killed him during the night by poison or some other mode. This was not out of enmity or with the view of taking his money, but because they imagined that his wisdom and other good qualities would thus remain with them. However, about thirty-five years ago, after that monarch conquered the country, he prohibited this crime, which, from fear of him, they no longer commit. Now let us tell of another province called Kardandan.

XLVIII—The Province of Kardandan

When a man departs from Karazan, and travels to the westward, he enters a province named Kardandan, inhabited by idolaters, and subject to the great khan. The chief city is called Vociam. All the people have their teeth, both upper and lower, covered with gold, which thus appear to be made of that metal. The men are soldiers, and regard nothing but war; the women, with the slaves, perform all the work. When any lady has been delivered of a boy, the husband goes to bed, taking the child with him, and remains there forty days. He thus allows rest to the mother, who is only obliged to suckle the infant. All his friends then come and make a festival, when the wife rises, manages the domestic affairs, and serves her husband, still lying in bed. They eat all kinds of flesh, both raw and cooked, and rice dressed along with it, and make a very good wine of rice and spices. They have money of gold and porcelain, and give a bar of gold for five of silver, having no mines of the latter metal within five days' distance; by this exchange the merchants make great profit. This people have neither idols nor churches, but adore the master of the house, and say of him, "we are his; and he is our god." They have neither letters nor writing, which is not wonderful, because they live in an unfrequented place, that cannot be visited in the summer on account of the air, which is then so corrupted and pestilent that no foreigner can live there. Whenever they have dealings together, they select a piece of timber, square or round, cleave it in the middle, and each takes a half; this must be done before two, three, or four witnesses. When the payment comes to be made, the one receives the money and gives his half of the wood.

In all those provinces there is no physician, but when any one is sick, doctors and exorcists of evil spirits are sent for, who, on coming to the patient, begin their incantations, beating instruments, singing and dancing. In a short time one of them falls to the ground, foams at the mouth, and becomes half-dead, when the devil enters into his body. The other magicians then ask the half-dead man what is the cause of the patient's illness. The demon answers from his mouth that the sufferer has given displeasure to such or such a spirit, who is therefore tormenting him. They then say, "we beseech you to pardon him, and take in compensation for his blood the presents which we now exhibit." Then if the sick man is to die, the fiend in the body of the magician says,—“the spirit has been wronged and displeased to such a degree, that he will not spare him for any thing in the world.” If on the contrary a cure is to take place, the devil from the body says, “take so many sheep and so many dishes of rich pottage, and make a sacrifice of them to the angry spirit.” The relations of the patient do every thing thus ordered, killing the sheep, sprinkling the blood, and preparing the dishes of pottage. A great assemblage is made of men and women, who hold a joyous feast, dancing and singing songs in praise of the spirit. They burn incense and myrrh, with which they fumigate and illuminate the whole house. When they have acted thus for about an hour, the first magician again falls down, and they inquire if the sick man is now pardoned and will be cured. It is then answered that he is not yet pardoned, but something more must be done, after which forgiveness will be granted. This order is obeyed, when he says, “he is pardoned, and will be immediately cured.” The company then exclaim, “the spirit is on our side,” and having eaten the sheep and drunk the pottage with great joy and festivity, they return to their homes.

XLIX—Of the great Battle fought between the Tartars and the King of Mien

Now I must mention a very great battle which was fought in the kingdom of Vociam, and you shall hear all how it happened. In the year of our Lord 1272, the great khan sent a mighty captain, named Nescardin, with 12,000 men, to defend the province of Caraian. He was a prudent man, very strong in arms and skilful in war; and the soldiers with him were good and very brave warriors. Now the King of Mien and of Ban-gala were afraid lest he should invade their territory; yet they thought they were able to overcome and destroy the whole army in such a manner that the great khan might never feel inclined to send another into the same quarter. They assembled, therefore, 60,000 horse and foot, with 2,000 elephants, each of which had on its back a castle well fortified and defended by twelve, fourteen, or sixteen men. The King of Mien came with the above army to the city of Vociam, where was the array of the Tartars, and took post in a plain at the distance of three days' journey. Nescardin was somewhat alarmed, considering how small a force he had in comparison with the host of the King of Mien; but he took courage, reflecting that his troops were brave and most valiant warriors. He therefore marched to meet them in the plain of Vociam, and pitched his camp near a great forest, filled with lofty trees, into which he was aware that elephants could not enter. The King of Mien, seeing the army of Nescardin, advanced to attack it. The Tartars went with great boldness to meet them, but when their horses saw the elephants with the wooden castles upon them, stationed and arranged in the first line, they were struck with such terror that the riders could not, either by force or any contrivance, make them approach. They, therefore, immediately alighted, and tied them to the trees, when the infantry returned to the line of elephants, and began to discharge their arrows with the utmost violence. Those who were on the backs of the animals fought bravely; but the Tartars were stronger, and more accustomed to battle. They wounded very severely with these missiles a multitude of the elephants, which, being terrified, took to flight and rushed with violence into the adjacent wood. As they could not be restrained from entering, and rushing backward and forward through the thick trees in confusion, they broke the wooden castles on their backs, and destroyed all their equipments. When the Tartars saw these animals disposed of, they ran to their horses, which were bound to the trees, mounted them, and rushed upon the warriors of the King of Mien. They began the attack with a shower of arrows, but as the king and his troops still defended themselves valiantly, they drew their swords, and rushed into close combat. Now mighty blows were struck; swords and spears were fiercely thrust on both sides; heads, arms, and hands were struck off; and many warriors fell to the earth dead and dying. The noise and cries would have drowned the loudest thunder. At length, after mid day, the host of Mien gave way; and the king, with all who survived the battle, took to flight, pursued by the Tartars, who killed many of the fugitives. When satisfied with pursuit, they returned to the wood to catch the elephants. They endeavoured to stop the flight of these animals by cutting down the trees and laying them across; yet they are so intelligent, that the soldiers would not have succeeded but for the aid of some of the captives taken in battle, through whose means they were able to recover two hundred. From this time the great khan began to employ elephants in his army, which he had not hitherto done. Afterwards that monarch conquered the lands of Mien, and added them to his dominion.

L—Of the great Descent

When you have departed from the said province of Caraian, there begins a great descent, which continues for two days and a half; and in all this journey nothing occurs worthy of notice, except that there is a great space

in which a market is held on certain days of the year. Thither come many merchants from divers countries and districts, some of whom bring gold and silver to exchange; and they give an ounce of the former for five of the latter. None but those who bring the gold can penetrate into the countries where it is produced, so difficult and intricate are the roads. When a man has travelled these two days and a half, he comes to a district which is called Anniz, on the borders of India, towards the south, and then he goes for fifteen days through a region covered with woods filled with elephants, unicorns, and other savage beasts, but not containing any human habitation.

LI—Of the City of Men, and the most beautiful Tomb of the King

At the termination of these wild and pathless tracts is a large and noble city called Mien, the capital of the province. The people are all idolaters, with a language peculiar to themselves, and are subject to the great khan. About this city I will tell you a thing very remarkable. There was anciently in it a rich and powerful king, who, being about to die, commanded that on his tomb should be erected two towers, one of gold, and the other of silver. They are full ten paces high, and of a suitable thickness; the first, being composed of stone, is covered all over with gold to the thickness of a finger, so that to the spectator it appears wholly of that metal. The summit is round, and filled with little golden bells, which the wind, whenever it strikes them, causes to ring. The other tower is similarly formed, but is coated with silver, and has silver bells. By these buildings the king intended to display his greatness and dignity, and they are the most beautiful and valuable to be seen in the world. Between them he caused the sepulchre to be constructed, where he is now buried. When the great khan conquered that city, he desired all the players and buffoons, of whom there were a great number in his court, to go and achieve the conquest, offering them a captain and some warlike aid. The jesters willingly undertook the affair, and setting out with the proffered assistance, subdued this province of Mien. When they came to that noble city, and saw these splendid edifices, they admired exceedingly, and sent to the great khan an account of their beauty, and of the manner in which they were constructed, asking if he wished them to be demolished, and the gold and silver sent to him. The monarch, on hearing this, commanded that they should not be destroyed, since the king had erected them to commemorate his greatness, and no Tartar touches any thing belonging to a dead man. They were therefore to continue in the same condition as they now stood. This province contains elephants, wild oxen large and beautiful, stags, deer, and other animals. Now, let me tell you of another which is called Bangala.

LII—Of the Province of Bangala

This is a province towards the south, which, in the year 1290, while I, Marco, was at the court of the great khan, was not yet conquered, but the army was there, ready to march for that purpose. It has a king and languages of its own, and the people are most wicked idolaters. They are on the confines of India. The barons and lords of that country have oxen as tall as elephants, but not so weighty; and live on flesh and rice. They have great abundance of silk, with which they carry on extensive manufactures; also ginger, sugar, and many other costly spices. This place is visited by numerous merchants, who purchase slaves, make them eunuchs, and then either sell or convey them to other places.

LIU—Of the Province of Kangigu

Kangigu is a province towards the east, subject to a king; the people are all idolaters; have a language of their own; and owning the supremacy of the great khan, they pay him an annual tribute. The king is so luxurious as to have 300 wives, for as soon as he hears of a beautiful woman in the country he takes her to himself. The people have much gold and many precious spices; but being far from the sea, their commodities do not bring the full value. They have many elephants and beasts of various other kinds. All the men and women paint their bodies, the colours being worked in with the claws of lions, dragons, and eagles, and thus never effaced. In this manner they stain their neck, breast, hands, limbs, and indeed their whole person. This is considered extremely genteel, and the more any one is painted, the higher is his rank considered. Now let us tell you of another province named Amu.

LIV—Of the Province of Amu

Amu is also a province towards the east, subject to the great khan. The people are idolaters, live by pasturage and agriculture, and have a language of their own. The ladies wear on their arms and legs valuable bracelets of gold and silver, and the men have these still finer and rarer. They have good horses in considerable numbers, many of which the Indians purchase and sell again to much advantage. They have also abundance of oxen and buffaloes, because they have extensive and good pastures; in short, they have plenty of the means of subsistence. From Amu to Kangigu, are fifteen days, and thence to Bangala, which is the third province behind, are thirty days. Now let us come to another province, which is called Tholoman, and lies eight journeys from this to the east.

LV—Of the Province of Tholoman

Tholoman is a third province towards the east. All the people are idolaters, have a language of their own, and are under the great khan. They are handsome, of rather a brown complexion, good men at arms, and have a number of cities, castles, and forts, on the top of very high mountains. When they die, the bodies are burned, and the bones which cannot be consumed are placed in chests and carried to the caverns of high mountains, where they are kept suspended, so that neither man nor beast can touch them. Gold is found here; but the smart money is of porcelain, which circulates in all these provinces. The merchants, though few, are rich; the people live on flesh and rice, and have many good spices.

LVI—Of the Province of Cyn-gui and its Lions

Cyn-gui is a province likewise situated towards the east, and when a man leaves Tholoman, he goes twelve days along a river, where there are towns and castles, but nothing else worth mentioning. At the end of these twelve days, he finds the city Sinugul, very large and noble. The inhabitants are all idolaters, and subject to the great khan. They live by merchandise and arts, and weave cloths of the bark of trees, which make fine summer dresses. They are good men at arms; but they have no money except paper. There are in this country so many lions, that if a man were to sleep out of doors, he would presently be killed and eaten by them; and at night, when a bark sails along the river, if it were not kept at a good distance from the bank, they would rush in and carry off the crew. However, though these animals be so large and dangerous, the natives have a wonderful manner of defending themselves; for the dogs of that country are so daring, that they will assault a large one, and, seconded by a man, will kill him. I will tell you how: when a man is on horseback with two of these dogs, as soon as they see a lion, they throw themselves behind him, and bite his thighs and body. The lion turns furiously round, but they wheel about with him so swiftly, that he cannot reach them. He then retreats till he comes to a tree, against which he places his back, and turns his face to the dogs; but they continue always biting him from behind, and making him turn round and round. Meantime the man discharges arrows without ceasing, till the animal falls down dead, and thus one man and two spirited dogs are sufficient to kill a large lion. The inhabitants of this province have a good deal of silk, and a great trade is carried on to all quarters along the river.

LVII—Arrival at Sin-din-fu, and Journey back to Gin-gui

Continuing to journey on its banks for twelve days more, we discover a number of cities and castles. The people are idolaters, subject to the great khan, and use paper money. Some are good at arms, others are merchants and artificers. At the end of the twelve days, the traveller comes to Sin-din-fu, of which mention has been made above. He then rides seventy days through provinces and lands which we formerly went over, and have already described. At the end of that period, he comes to Gin-gui, where we formerly were.

LVIII—Cities of Ca-cian-fu, Cian-glu, and Cian-gli

From Gin-gui or Geo-gui a man travels four days, finding a variety of cities and castles. The people are great artificers and merchants, subject to the mighty khan, and use paper money. At the end of the four days you come to Ca-cian-fu, a large and noble city, lying to the south, in the province of Cathay. The inhabitants are subject to the same monarch, are all idolaters, and burn the bodies of their dead. They have a good supply of silk, which they make into different kinds of cloth. A large river flows past it, along which great abundance of merchandise is conveyed to Kambalu, with which it is made to communicate by the digging of many canals. Now let us pass to another city called Cian-glu. The natives are idolaters, subject to the khan, use paper money, and burn the bodies of their dead. In that city, salt is made very extensively, and I will tell you how. There is a species of earth full of it, and they pile it up in heaps, upon which they throw a great quantity of water, to saturate it with the mineral. They next boil it in large cauldrons of iron, till it evaporates, and leaves a white and minute salt, which is exported to all the countries round. Five days' journey from Cian-glu is Cian-gli, where are many cities and castles. It is a town of Cathay, and the whole people are idolaters, subject to the khan, and use paper money. Through the middle of that territory flows a great river, on which is conveyed much merchandise of various kinds.

LIX—Condi-fu—Rebellion against the Great Khan

In departing from Cian-gli, we come in six days to Condi-fu, a great city, which the khan conquered by force of arms, but still it is the noblest in the province. There is a wonderful abundance of silk, as well as orchards with many delicate fruits, and the situation is delightful; it has also under it fifteen other cities of great importance and commerce, whence it derives high honour and dignity. In the year 1273, the khan gave to Litan, one of his barons, 70,000 horse to

defend and secure that city; but when the said baron had remained some time in the country, he arranged with certain men to betray it, and rebel against his lord. When the khan knew this, he sent two of his commanders, Aguil and Mongatai, with many troops, against the traitor. On their approach, the rebel went forth to meet them with his forces, consisting of a hundred thousand cavalry and many infantry, both of the country and of those he had brought with him; and there was a very great battle between him and those two chiefs. Litan was killed, with many others; and the khan caused all those who had been guilty to be put to death, and spared the lives of the rest. Now let us tell of another country named Sin-gui.

LX—Cities of Sin-gui, Lin-gui, Pin-gui, and Cin-gui

When a man has gone south from Condi-fu, he finds cities and castles, many animals of the chase and birds, with a vast abundance of all productions, and then comes to Sin-gui, which is noble, great, and beautiful, with much merchandise and many arts; the whole people are idolaters, subject to the khan, and use paper money. They have a river which is of great utility, because the people of the country have divided the stream which comes from the south into two parts; one goes eastward towards Manji, the other westward towards Cathay; and the land has thus a wonderful number of ships, though not of large size, with which they convey goods to other provinces, and bring thence an almost in credible quantity of merchandise. When a man departs from Sin-gui and goes eight days to the south, he finds many rich cities and castles. The people are idolaters, subject to the khan; they burn the bodies of their dead, and use paper money. At the end of eight days he arrives at a town named Lin-gui, great and noble, with men-at-arms, and also arts and merchandise. Here are wild animals and every kind of provision in abundance. When he departs from Lin-gui, he goes three days to the south, finding cities and castles under the powerful khan; the people idolatrous, and burning the bodies of their dead. There is much excellent hunting of birds and beasts. At the end of these three days, he discovers a very good city named Pin-gui. The people have all things necessary for subsistence, raise much silk, and pay a large revenue to the sovereign. A great quantity of merchandise is laden here for the province of Manji. When a man has departed from Pin-gui, and travelled two days with his face to the south, through beautiful and rich countries, he finds the city of Cin-gui, very large, and full of merchandise and arts. The people are wholly idolatrous, burn the bodies of their dead, their money is paper, and they are under the khan. They have much grain and grass. When a man leaves Cin-gui, he finds cities, villages, and castles, with handsome dogs and good pasturage; the people being such as are above described.

LXI—Of the great River Kara-moran

At the end of two days a man finds the great river called Kara-moran, coming from the lands of Prester John. It is full, broad, and so deep that a large ship can pass through its channel; and there are on it full 15,000 vessels, all belonging to the khan, meant for conveying his goods when he goes to the islands of the sea, which is distant about a day's journey. And each of these ships requires fifteen mariners, and carries fifteen horses with their riders, provisions, and every thing else necessary for them. When a man passes that river, he enters the province of Manji, and I will tell you how it was conquered by the khan.

LXII—Of the Province of Manji, and how it was made subject to the Great Khan

In the extensive province of Manji there was a lord and king named Facfur, who, excepting the great khan, was the mightiest sovereign in the world, the most powerful in money and people; but the men are not good at arms, nor have horses trained to war, nor experience in battle and military operations, otherwise they would never have lost so strong a country. All the lands are surrounded by waters so deep that they cannot be passed unless by bridges, and the chief cities are encompassed by broad ditches filled with water. The khan, however, in the year of our Lord 1273, sent one of his barons, Bayam Cinqsan, which means Bayam with the Hundred Eyes: for the King of Manji had found out by astrology, that he could lose his kingdom only by a man having a hundred eyes. This Bayam marched with a very great force, many ships, horse and foot, and came to the first city of Manji, called Koi-gan-zu, which we will presently describe. He called upon it to surrender; but the people refused. He then went to another city, which also refused, and so he passed five, leaving them behind, because he knew that the khan was sending a large additional force. He took, however, the sixth by storm, and then successively reduced other twelve; after which he marched direct to the capital of the kingdom, called Kin-sai, where the king and queen resided. When the monarch saw this great army, he was struck with such terror that he fled from the continent with many of his people, having 1,000 ships, and sought refuge among the islands. The queen, however, remained and defended herself as well as she could against Bayam. But having at length asked what was the name of that commander, and being told it was Bayam with the Hundred Eyes, she remembered the prophecy mentioned above, and immediately surrendered the city to him. Presently all the cities of Manji yielded, and the whole world does not contain such a kingdom, and I will now describe its magnificence.

LXIII—Of the Piety and Justice of the King towards his Subjects

This King Facfur maintained 15,000 poor children, because in that province many are exposed as soon as they are born by parents who cannot support them; so, when a rich man had no issue, he went to the king and got as many as he pleased. And when the boys and girls came of age, the king married them together, and gave them the means of living; and thus were educated 20,000 males or females annually. He did another thing: when he went through any place and saw two fine houses, and by the side of them a small one, he inquired why the first were greater than the other; and being told that it be longed to a poor man, who could not afford to build one larger, presently he gave him money enough to enable him to do so. He made himself be served by more than 1,000 domestic servants of both sexes. He maintained his kingdom in such justice, that no evil was done, and all commodities could be left unguarded except by the royal equity. Now I have given you an account of the king; I will tell you of the queen. She was led to the great khan, who made her be honoured and served as a powerful sovereign; but the king, her husband, never came out of the islands of the ocean, and died there, and thus the whole kingdom remained with the khan. Now let us tell of the province of Manji, and the manners and customs of the people; beginning with the city of Koi-gan-zu.

LXIV—Of the Cities of Koi-gan-zu, Pau-chym, and Chaym

Koi-gan-zu is a great, rich, and noble city, at the entrance of the province of Manji, lying to the south. The whole people are subject to the khan; they are idolaters, and burn the bodies of their dead. It lies on the river Kara-moran, and hence is full of ships; for many merchants bring their commodities thither to be distributed throughout other cities. It is the capital of the province. Here is made a very great quantity of salt, which is supplied thence to forty different towns; the khan has a large revenue from this and other trades here carried on. And now let me tell you of another city called Pau-chym. When a man departs from Koi-gan-zu, he goes a whole day along a causeway finely built of stone, and on each side is a large water, so that it is impossible to enter the province unless by this causeway. He then finds a city called Pau-chym; all the people are idolaters, burn the bodies of their dead, and are under the great khan. They are artificers and merchants, have abundance of silk, and make much cloth of it mixed with gold, and thus earn a sufficient livelihood. Through all that country the paper money of the khan is circulated.

When a man sets out from Pau-chym, he travels a day and discovers a very large city named Chaym. There is great abundance of the necessaries of life; fish beyond measure, beasts and birds for sport in great numbers, so that for a Venetian silver grosso you may purchase three pheasants.

LXV—Of the City of Tin-gui, and its great Saltworks

Tin-gui is a pretty agreeable city, a full day's journey from Chaym. The people are idolaters, subject to the khan, and use paper money; they have merchandise and arts, and numerous ships belonging to them. It lies to the south-east, and on the left, nearly three days' journey to the eastward, is the ocean, where salt is made in great quantities. Here is a city named Cyn-gui, large, rich, and noble, to which all the salt is brought, and the khan draws from it a revenue so wonderful that it could not be believed.

LXVI—Of the great City of Yan-gui

When a man leaves Tin-gui he proceeds a day towards the south-east, through a very fine country, finding towns and castles, and then comes to Yan-gui, a large and beautiful city, which has under it twenty-four, all good and of great trade. Its affairs are administered by one of the twelve barons of the khan; Messer Marco Polo, of whom this book treats, governed it three years. Here are made many arms and other equipments for knights and men of war; for in this place and around it numerous troops are quartered. I will now tell you of two great provinces lying to the west, and as I shall have much to say, I will begin with Nan-ghin.

LXVII—Of the great City of Nan-ghin

Nan-ghin is a province towards the west, belonging to Manji, and is very noble and rich. The people are idolaters, use paper money, and are subject to the great khan. They live by merchandise and arts, have silk in abundance, and make cloths of it interwoven with gold, in all fashions. They have an ample supply of every kind of grain and provisions; for the land is very fruitful. There are also lions and animals for hunting. There are many rich merchants who carry on much trade, and pay a large revenue to the great sire. But I will now go to the noble city of Sa-yam-fu, respecting which I shall have much to say.

LXVIII—Of the City of Sa-yan-fu, and how it was taken

Sa-yan-fu is a large and magnificent city, having under it twelve others also great and noble; it is the seat of many valuable arts and of much merchandize. The inhabitants are idolaters; they use paper money, are subject to the khan, and burn the bodies of their dead. This city held out three years after all the rest of the province had yielded to the conqueror, who besieged it with a mighty army; but he could approach it only on the side which lies to the north, because it was elsewhere surrounded by a large and deep lake, by which the besieged obtained abundance of provisions. The army was therefore about to abandon the siege in much grief and wrath, and this news was just brought to the khan, when Messeri Nicolo, Maffio, and Marco Polo said,—“we shall find a way by which the city shall be made to surrender.” The monarch, who was most eagerly bent on its capture, readily listened. Then said the two brothers and their son Marco,—“Great sire, we have with us in our train men who will make such an engine as will discharge large stones, which the citizens will not be able to endure, and will be obliged to yield.” The khan was much rejoiced, and desired that they should execute their plan as soon as possible. Now, they had in their company a German and a Nestorian Christian who were skilful in such works, and made two or three machines sufficient to throw stones of 300 pounds weight. When these were conveyed to the army and set up, they appeared to the Tartars the greatest wonder of the world. They then began discharging stones into the city, which struck the houses, broke and destroyed every thing, and caused the utmost noise and alarm. When the inhabitants saw a calamity such as they had never witnessed before, they knew not what to think or say. They met in council, and concluded that they must be all killed, unless they submitted. They therefore intimated to the lord of the host that they would surrender on the same terms that others had done. This was agreed to, and Sa-yan-fu came under the power of the great khan, through the interposition of Messeri Nicolo, Maffio, and Marco; and it was not a small service, for this town and province are among the best in his possession, and he draws from them a great revenue. Now, we shall leave this subject and treat of a city called Sin-gui.

LXIX—Of the City of Sin-gui and the River Kiang, and the Multitude of Cities on that River

When a man leaves Yan-gui and goes fifteen miles south-east, he perceives a certain city named Sin-gui, which is not very extensive, but has great merchandise and much shipping. The people are idolaters, use paper money, and are subject to the khan. That city stands upon a river, named Kiang, which is the largest in the world; being in some places ten miles broad, and up wards of a hundred days' journey in length. Through it the inhabitants have a lucrative trade, which yields a large revenue to the khan. And on account of the many cities on it, the ships navigating and the goods conveyed by means of it are more numerous and valuable than in all the rivers of Christendom and the adjacent seas beside. I tell you I have seen at that city no fewer than 5,000 ships sailing at once on its stream. For that river flows through sixteen provinces, and has more than two hundred great towns on its banks. The ships are covered, and have only one mast; yet they are of heavy burden, and carry each from 4,000 to 12,000 cantars. They have ropes composed of cane for drawing them through the water; those belonging to the larger vessels are thick, and fifteen paces in length, being cloven at the end, and bound together in such a way as to make a cord 300 paces long.

LXX—Of the City of Cai-gui

Cai-gui is a small city towards the south-east, situated upon the bank of the above-mentioned river; all the people are idolaters, subject to the khan, and use paper money. Here are collected large quantities of corn and rice; and there is a passage by water to the city of Kampala and the court of the khan; grain from this place forms a considerable part of the provision required by his court. The monarch made this communication by digging long and deep canals from one river to another, and from lake to lake, so that a large ship may pass through. And by the side of this water-channel goes a road, so that you may take either the one or the other, as is most convenient. In the middle of that river, opposite the city, is an isle of rocks, on which is a monastery of idolaters, where there are 200 monks, who serve a very great number of gods. Now, let us cross the river, and tell of a city named Cin-ghian-fu.

LXXI—Of the City of Cin-ghian-fu

Cin-ghian-fu is a city of Manji, and the people are such as we have already described, idolaters, and subjects of the great khan. They are artificers, merchants, and hunters, raise much grain, and make cloths of silk and gold. Here are two churches of Nestorian Christians, formed in the year 1278; which happened because at that time the governor under the khan was a Nestorian, named Marsarchis, and he caused these two edifices to be built. Now, let us go to the great city of Cin-ghin-gui.

LXXII—Of the City of Cin-ghin-gui, and of a dreadful Slaughter

When a man leaves Cin-ghian-fu, and travels three or four days south-east, he always discovers cities and castles, with much merchandise; the people are all idolaters, subject to the khan, and use paper money. Then he comes to the city of Cin-ghin-gui great and noble, the people idolaters, and subject to the khan; they have abundance of provisions, produce and manufacture a vast quantity of silk. And here I will tell you a wicked thing which the people of this city did, but it cost them dear. When Bayam, called the chief of the Hundred Eyes, conquered all the province, and took the capital itself, he sent a body of troops to reduce this place. It surrendered, and the soldiers entered and found such good wine, that they drank till they were intoxicated, and became quite insensible. When the men of the city saw them in this condition, that very night they slew them all, so that not one escaped. When Bayam the commander heard of this disloyal conduct, he sent an army who took the town, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. Now, let us go on, and I will tell you of another named Sin-gui.

LXXIII—Of the City of Sin-gui, of Un-gui, and of Ughim

Sin-gui is a very great and noble city. The people are idolaters, subject to the great khan, and use paper money. Most of them live by merchandise and arts, raise much silk, make cloths of it interwoven with gold very costly and fine. The town is forty miles in circuit, and the number of inhabitants is so great, that no person can count them, and if they were men-at-arms, those of the province of Manji would conquer the whole world; they are not so, however, but prudent merchants, and, as already observed, skilful in all the arts. They have also many persons learned in natural science, good physicians, and able philosophers. The city has 1,600 stone bridges under which a galley might pass; and in the mountains adjacent grow rhubarb and ginger in such abundance, that for a Venetian grosso you may buy forty pounds of the latter, fresh and good. Sin-gui has under it sixteen large cities of arts and trade. Its name signifies the earth, and another large town near it is called heaven, and these appellations they derive from their great nobleness. Now, let us depart from this place, and I will tell you of another city called Un-gui. It is a day's journey from Sin-gui, and is large and good, with merchandise and arts; but there is nothing so remarkable about it as to be worth describing; therefore we shall go on to delineate another called Ughim. It is great and rich; the men are idolaters, subject to the great khan, use paper money, and have abundance of all things. There is nothing else worth mentioning; therefore I will go on to tell you of the noble city of Kin-sai, which is the capital of the kingdom of Manji.

LXXIV—Of the most noble and wonderful City of Kin-sai; and of its Population, Trades, Lake, Villas, and splendid Palace

When a man leaves Ughim, and goes three days, he observes many noble and rich cities and castles, with great merchandise. The people are all idolaters, subject to the khan, use paper money, and have abundant means of subsistence. At the end of these three days, he finds a very noble city named Kin-sai, which means in our language the city of heaven. And now I will tell you all its nobleness; for without doubt it is the largest city in the world. And I will give you the account which was written by the Queen of Manji to Bayam, who conquered that kingdom, to be transmitted to his master, who thereby might be persuaded not to destroy it. And this letter contained the truth, as I Marco saw with my own eyes. It related, that the city of Kin-sai is 100 miles in circumference, and has 12,000 stone bridges; and beneath the greater part of these a large ship might pass, and beneath the others a smaller one. And you need not wonder there are so many bridges; because the city is wholly on the water, and surrounded by it like Venice. It contains twelve arts or trades, and each trade has 12,000 stations or houses; and in each station there are of masters and labourers at least ten, in some fifteen, thirty, and even forty, because this town supplies many others round it. The merchants are so numerous and so rich, that their wealth can neither be told nor believed. They, their ladies, and the heads of the trades do nothing with their own hands, but live as cleanly and delicately as if they were kings. These females also are of angelic beauty, and live in the most elegant manner. But it is established that no one can practise any other art than that which his father followed, even though he were worth 100,000 bezants. To the south of that city is a lake, full thirty miles in circuit; and all around it are beautiful palaces and houses, so wonderfully built that nothing can possibly surpass them; they belong to the great and noble men of the city. There are also abbeys and monasteries of idolaters in great numbers. In the middle of the lake are two islands, on one of which stands a palace, so wonder fully adorned that it seems worthy of belonging to the emperor. Whoever wishes to celebrate a marriage or other festival, goes thither, where he finds dishes, plates, and all implements necessary for the occasion. The city of Kin-sai contains many beautiful houses, and one great stone tower, to which the people convey all their property when the houses take fire, as often happens, because many of them are of wood. They are idolaters, subject to the great khan, and use paper money. They eat the flesh of dogs and other beasts, such as no Christian would touch for the world. On each of the said 12,000 bridges, ten men keep guard day and night, so

that no one may dare to raise a disturbance, or commit theft or homicide. I will tell you another thing, that in the middle of the city is a mound, on which stands a tower, wherein is placed a wooden table, against which a man strikes with a hammer, so that it is heard to a great distance; this he does when there is an alarm of fire, or any kind of danger or disturbance. The great khan causes that city to be most strongly guarded, because it is the capital of all the province of Manji, and he derives from it vast treasure and revenue; he is likewise afraid of any revolt. All the streets are paved with stones and bricks; and so are the high roads of Manji, on which account men may travel very pleasantly either on horse back or on foot. In this city, too, are 4,000 baths, in which the citizens, both men and women, take great delight, and frequently resort thither, because they keep their persons very cleanly. They are the largest and most beautiful baths in the world, insomuch that 100 of either sex may bathe in them at once. Twenty-five miles from thence is the ocean, between south and east; and there is a city named Gan-fu, which has a very fine port, with large ships, and much merchandise of immense value from India and other quarters. Past this city to the port flows a stately river, by which the ships can come up to it, and which runs thither from a great distance. The khan has divided the whole province of Manji into nine large kingdoms, all of which pay him annual tribute. In Gan-fu resides one of the kings, who has under him 140 cities. I will tell you a thing you will much wonder at, that in this province there are 1,200 towns, and in each a garrison amounting to 1,000, 10,000, 20,000, and in some instances to 30,000 men. But do not suppose these are all Tartar cavalry; for part are infantry and sent from Cathay. But the riches and profit which the khan derives from the province of Manji is so great that no man could dare to mention it, nor would any one believe him; and therefore I shall be silent. I will tell you, however, some of the customs of Manji. One is, that whenever a boy or girl is born, the day, hour, and minute are written down, also the sign and planet under which the birth takes place, so that all may know their nativity. And when any one wishes to undertake a journey, or do any thing else of importance, he repairs to the astrologer, states these particulars, and asks if he should go or act otherwise. And they are often thus diverted from their journeys and other designs; for these astrologers are skilful in their arts and diabolical enchantments, and tell them many things which they implicitly believe. Another custom is, that when a body is to be burned, all the relations dress them selves in canvass to express grief, and go with the corpse, beating instruments, and making songs and prayers to their idols. When they come to the place where the ceremony is to be performed, they frame images of men, women, camels, horses, clothes, money, and various other things, all of cards. When the fire is fully lighted, they throw in all these things, saying that the dead will enjoy them in the other world, and that the honour now done to him will be done there also by idols. In this city of Kin-sai is a palace of the king who fled, which is the noblest and most beautiful in the world. It is a square, ten miles in circuit, surrounded by a lofty wall, within which are gardens abounding in all the most delicate fruits, fountains, and lakes supplied with many kinds of fish. In the middle is the edifice itself, large and beautiful, with a hall so extensive that a vast number of persons can sit down at table. That hall is painted all over with gold and azure, representing many stories, in which are beasts, birds, knights, ladies, and various wonders. Nothing can be seen upon the walls and roof but these ornaments. There are twenty others of similar dimensions, such that 10,000 men can conveniently sit at table; and they are covered and worked in gold very nobly. This palace contains also 1,000 chambers. In the city are 160 toman of fires, that is, of houses; and the toman is 10,000, making 1,600,000 houses, among which are many great and rich palaces. There is only one church of Nestorian Christians. Each man of that city, as also of the others, has written on his door the name of his wife, his children, of his sons' wives, his slaves, and of all his household; and when any one is born, he adds the name, and when he dies, takes it away. Thus the governor of each city knows the names of every person in it; and this practice is followed in all the towns of Manji and Cathay. The same account is given of the strangers who reside for a time in their houses, both when they come and when they go; and by that means the great khan knows whoever arrives and departs, which is of great advantage.

LXXV—Farther Particulars of that City

There are within the city ten principal squares or market-places, besides which, numberless shops run along the streets. These squares are each half a mile in length, and have in front the main street, forty paces wide, and reaching in a straight line from one end of the city to the other. Thus they are, altogether, two miles in circuit, and four miles distant from each other. The street is crossed by many low and convenient bridges. Parallel to it, but on the opposite side to the squares, is a very large canal, and on its bank capacious warehouses, built of stone, to accommodate the merchants from India and other countries, and receive their goods; this situation being chosen as convenient with regard to the market-squares. Each of these, on three days in every week, contains an assemblage of from 40,000 to 50,000 persons, who bring for sale every desirable article of provision. There appears abundance of all kinds of game, roebucks, stags, fallow-deer, hares, and rabbits, with partridges, pheasants, francolins, quails, common fowls, capons, ducks and geese almost innumerable; these last being so easily bred on the lake, that for a Venetian silver grosso you may buy a couple of geese and two pairs of ducks. In the same place are also the sham-

bles, where cattle, as oxen, calves, kids, and lambs, are killed for the tables of the rich and of magistrates. These markets afford at all seasons a great variety of herbs and fruits; in particular, uncommonly large pears, weighing each ten pounds, white in the inside like paste, and very fragrant. The peaches also, both yellow and white, are in their season of delicious flavour. Grapes are not cultivated, but very good ones are brought dried from other districts. Wine is not esteemed by the natives, who are accustomed to their own liquor, prepared from rice and various spices. From the sea, twenty-five miles distant, a vast supply of fish is conveyed on the river; and the lake also contains abundance, the taking of which affords constant employment to numerous fishermen. The species vary according to the season, and the offal carried thither from the city renders them large and rich. In short, the quantity in the market is so immense, that you would think it impossible it could find purchasers; yet in a few hours it is all disposed of, so many inhabitants are there who can afford to indulge in such luxuries. They eat fish and flesh at one meal. Each of the ten squares is surrounded with lofty dwelling-houses; the lower part being made into shops, where manufactures of every kind are carried on, and imported articles are sold, as spices, drugs, toys, and pearls. In some shops is kept only the country wine, which is constantly made fresh, and served out at a moderate price. In the several streets connected with the squares are numerous baths, attended by servants of both sexes, to perform the functions of ablution for the male and female visitors, who from their childhood are accustomed to bathe in cold water, as being highly conducive to health. Here, too, are apartments provided with warm water for the use of strangers, who, from want of use, cannot endure the shock of the cold. All are in the daily habit of washing their persons, especially before meals.

In other streets reside the females of bad character, who are extremely numerous; and not only in the streets near the squares, which are specially appropriated to them, but in every other quarter they appear, highly dressed out and perfumed, in well furnished houses, and with a train of domestics. They are perfectly skilled in all the arts of seduction, which they can adapt to persons of every description; so that strangers who have once yielded to their fascination are said to be like men bewitched, and can never get rid of the impression. Intoxicated with these unlawful pleasures, even after returning home, they always long to revisit the place where they were thus seduced. In other streets reside the physicians and the astrologers, who also teach reading and writing, with many other arts. On opposite sides of the squares are two large edifices, where officers appointed by his majesty promptly decide any differences that arise between the foreign merchants and the inhabitants. They are bound also to take care that the guards be duly stationed on the neighbouring bridges, and in case of neglect, to inflict a discretionary punishment on the delinquent.

On each side of the principal street, mentioned as reaching across the whole city, are large houses and mansions with gardens; near to which are the abodes and shops of the working artisans. At all hours you observe such multitudes of people passing backwards and forwards on their various avocations, that it might seem impossible to supply them with food. A different judgment will, however, be formed, when every market-day the squares are seen crowded with people, and covered with provisions brought in for sale by carts and boats. To give some idea of the quantity of meat, wine, spices, and other articles brought for the consumption of the people of Kin-sai, I shall instance the single article of pepper. Marco Polo was informed by an officer employed in the customs, that the daily amount was forty-three loads, each weighing 243 pounds.

The houses of the citizens are well built, and richly adorned with carving, in which, as well as in painting and ornamental buildings, they take great delight, and lavish enormous sums. Their natural disposition is pacific, and the example of their former unwarlike kings has accustomed them to live in tranquillity. They keep no arms in their houses, and are unacquainted with their use. Their mercantile transactions are conducted in a manner perfectly upright and honourable. They also behave in a friendly manner to each other, so that the inhabitants of the same neighbourhood appear like one family. In their domestic relations, they show no jealousy or suspicion of their wives, but treat them with great respect. Any one would be held as infamous that should address indecent expressions to married women. They behave with cordiality to strangers who visit the city for commercial purposes, hospitably entertain them, and afford their best assistance in their business. On the other hand, they hate the very sight of soldiers, even the guards of the great khan; recollecting, that by their means they have been deprived of the government of their native sovereigns.

On the lake above mentioned are a number of pleasure-barges, capable of holding from ten to twenty persons, being from fifteen to twenty paces long, with a broad level floor, and moving steadily through the water. Those who delight in this amusement, and propose to enjoy it, either with their ladies or companions, engage one of these barges, which they find always in the very best order, with seats, tables, and every thing necessary for an entertainment. The boatmen sit on a flat upper deck, and with long poles reaching to the bottom of the lake, not more than two fathoms deep, push along the vessels to any desired spot. These cabins are painted in various colours, and with many figures; the exterior is similarly adorned. On each side are windows, which can at pleasure be kept open or shut, when the company seated at table may delight their eyes with the varied beauty of the passing scenes. Indeed, the gratification derived from these water-excursions exceeds any that can be enjoyed on land; for as the lake extends all along the city, you discover, while standing in the boat, at a certain distance from the shore, all its grandeur

and beauty, palaces, temples, convents, and gardens, while lofty trees reach down to the water's edge. At the same time are seen other boats continually passing, similarly filled with parties of pleasure. Generally, indeed, the inhabitants, when they have finished the labours of the day, or closed their mercantile transactions, think only of seeking amusement with their wives or mistresses, either in these barges or driving about the city in carriages. The main street already mentioned is paved with stone and brick to the width of ten paces on each side, the interval being filled up with small gravel, and having arched drains to carry off the water into the canals, so that it is always kept dry. On this road the carriages are constantly driving. They are long, covered at top, have curtains and cushions of silk, and can hold six persons. Citizens of both sexes, desirous of this amusement, hire them for that purpose, and you see them at every hour moving about in vast numbers. In many cases the people visit gardens, where they are introduced by the managers of the place into shady arbours, and remain till the time of returning home.

The palace already mentioned had a wall with a passage dividing the exterior court from an inner one, which formed a kind of cloister, supporting a portico that surrounded it, and led to various royal apartments. Hence you entered a covered passage or corridor, six paces wide, and so long as to reach to the margin of the lake. On each side were corresponding entrances to ten courts, also resembling cloisters with porticos, and each having fifty private rooms, with gardens attached,—the residence of a thousand young females, whom the king maintained in his service. In the company either of his queen or of a party of those ladies he used to seek amusement on the lake, visiting the idol-temples on its banks. The other two portions of this seraglio were laid out in groves, pieces of water, beautiful orchards, and enclosures for animals suited for the chase, as antelopes, deer, stags, hares, and rabbits. Here, too, the king amused himself,—his damsels accompanying him in carriages or on horseback. No man was allowed to be of the party, but the females were skilled in the art of coursing and pursuing the animals. When fatigued they retired into the groves on the margin of the lake, and, quitting their dresses, rushed into the water, when they swam sportively in different directions,—the king remaining a spectator of the exhibition. Sometimes he had his repast provided beneath the dense foliage of one of these groves, and was there waited upon by the damsels. Thus he spent his time in this enervating society, profoundly ignorant of martial affairs; hence the grand khan, as already mentioned, was enabled to deprive him of his splendid possessions, and drive him with ignominy from his throne. All these particulars were related to me by a rich merchant of Kin-sai, who was then very old; and, having been a confidential servant of King Facfur, was acquainted with every circumstance of his life. He knew the palace in its former splendour, and desired me to come and take a view of it. Being then the residence of the khan's viceroy, the colonnades were preserved entire, but the chambers had been allowed to go to ruin,—only their foundations remaining visible. The walls, too, including the parks and gardens, had been left to decay, and no longer contained any trees or animals.

LXXVI—Revenues of the Great Khan from Kin-sai and Manji

I will now tell you of the large revenue which the khan draws from this city, and the territory under its jurisdiction, which is the ninth part of the province of Manji. The salt of that country yields to him in the year eighty toman of gold, and each toman is 70,000 saiks, which amount to 5,600,000, and each saik is worth more than a gold florin; and is not this most great and wonderful! In that country, too, there grows more sugar than in the whole world besides, and it yields a very large revenue. I will not state it particularly, but remark that, taking all spices together, they pay $3\frac{1}{3}$ per cent, which is levied too on all other merchandise. Large taxes are also derived from wine, rice, coal, and from the twelve arts, which, as already mentioned, have each twelve thousand stations. On every thing a duty is imposed; and on silk especially and other articles is paid ten per cent. But I, Marco Polo, tell you, because I have often heard the account of it, that the revenue on all these commodities amounts every year to 210 toman, or 14,700,000 saiks, and that is the most enormous amount of money that ever was heard of, and yet is paid by only the ninth part of the province of Manji. Now let us depart from this city of Kin-sai, and go to another called Tam-pin-gui.

LXXVII—Tam-pin-gui and other Cities

When a man departs from Kin-sai, and goes a day to the south-east, he finds always most pleasant houses and gardens, and all the means of living in great abundance. At the end of the day he discovers the city already named, which is very large and beautiful, and is dependent on Kin-sai. The people are subject to the khan, use paper money, are idolaters, and burn the bodies of their dead in the manner already described. They live by merchandise and arts, and have an ample supply of provisions. And when a man goes three days to the south-east, seeing very large cities and castles, and much trade, he comes to the city of Un-gui, under the government of Kin-sai, and otherwise like the former. When he departs from Un-gui and goes two days south-east, he every where perceives towns and castles, so that he seems to be going through a city. Every thing is in abundance; and here are the largest and longest canes in all the country, for know that some are four palms in circuit and fifteen paces long. At the end of the two days he comes to Chen-gui, which is large and beautiful. The people, who are idolaters, are under the great khan

and the jurisdiction of Kin-sai, and have abundance of silk and provisions. In going four days south-east he finds cities and castles, and all things in the utmost plenty. There are birds and beasts for the chase, with lions very large and fierce. Throughout all the province of Manji there are neither sheep nor lambs, but oxen, goats, and hogs in great variety. At the end of the four days he finds Cian-cian, a town situated on a mountain, which divides the river into two parts, each flowing in a different direction. The people are like the former; and, at the end of three days more we reach the city of Can-giu, large and beautiful; and this is the last under the jurisdiction of Kin-sai; for now commences another kingdom, which is one of the nine parts of Manji, and is called Fu-gui.

LXXVIII—The Kingdom of Fu-gui

When a man goes from the last-mentioned city of Kin-sai he enters the kingdom of Fu-gui and, after travelling seven days, he finds houses and villages, the inhabitants of which are all idolaters, and under the jurisdiction of Fu-gui. They have provisions in great abundance, with numerous wild beasts for hunting; also large and fierce lions. They have ample supplies of ginger and galanga, so that for a Venetian grosso you can buy eighty pounds. And there is a fruit or flower having the appearance of saffron, and though not really so, yet of equal value, being much employed in manufacture. They eat the flesh of the filthiest animals, and even that of a man, provided he has not died a natural death; but if he has been killed, they account his flesh extremely delicate. When they go to war they cut their hair very close, and paint their faces an azure colour like the iron of a lance. They fight all on foot except their chief; and are the most cruel race in the world, because they go about the whole day killing men, drinking their blood, and eating their flesh.

LXXIX—Of the Cities of Que-lin-fu and Un-quem

In the middle of these seven days you come to a city called Que-lin-fu, which is very large and beautiful, subject to the great khan. It has three bridges, the largest and most magnificent in the world; for each is a mile long and ten paces broad, and all supported by columns of marble. The people live by merchandise and arts, and have abundance of silk and ginger. The ladies here are very beautiful. They have another strange thing, hens that have no feathers, but skins like a cat. They lay eggs like those of our hens, and are very good eating. And in the remainder of the seven days' journey we discover many cities and castles, merchants and merchandise, and men of art. There are lions, great and fierce, doing much injury to the passengers, who on this account cannot travel without imminent danger. At the end of the journey is found a city called Un-quem, where there is made such a quantity of sugar, that the whole court of the khan is thence supplied, which is worth a vast treasure. Beyond it is the large city of Fu-gui, capital of this kingdom.

LXXX—Of the City of Fu-gui

Fu-gui, as just stated, is the capital of the kingdom of Con-cha, which is one of the nine parts of Manji. In that city is much merchandise and art; the people are idolatrous, and subject to the great khan. He keeps there a strong army, because the towns and castles often revolt, and whenever they do so the troops hasten thither, take, and destroy them. Through the middle of that city flows a river a mile broad; here much sugar is made, and an extensive trade is carried on in precious stones and pearls, which are brought by merchants from India and its isles. It is also near the port of Zai-tun on the ocean, whither come many ships from Hindostan with much merchandise; and they ascend by the great river to Fu-gui. The people have abundance of all things necessary for subsistence; fine gardens, with good fruit; and the city is wonderfully well ordered in all respects. But we will now go on to other matters.

LXXXI—Of the most noble Port of Zai-tun, and of Ti-min-gui

When one departs from Fu-gui, passes the river, and goes five days south-east, he finds cities and castles, where there is abundance of all things, woods, birds, and beasts, with the tree which bears camphor. The people are all idolaters, under the great khan and the jurisdiction of Fu-gui. At the end of the five days he finds a city called Zai-tun, which is a noble port, where all the ships of India arrive, and for one laden with pepper which comes from Alexandria to be sold throughout Christendom, there go to that city a hundred. It is one of the two best ports in the world, and the most frequented by merchants and merchandise. Know, too, that the khan draws thence a large revenue, because all the ships from India pay upon their several kinds of goods, stones, and pearls, ten per cent, that is one in ten. The ships take for their height, on small merchandise, thirty per cent.; on pepper, forty-four; on lignum, aloes, sandalwood, and other bulky articles, forty; so that merchants, between the height and the duty, pay a full half of all commodities brought into that port. Those of this country are all idolaters, and have great abundance of every thing necessary for the human body. In that province is a city, named Ti-min-gui, where they make the most beautiful cups in the world; they are of porcelain, and are manufactured in no other part of the earth besides that city; for a Venetian grosso you may purchase three cups of this most elegant ware. The people of Fu-gui have a language of their

own. Now, I have told you of this kingdom, which is one of the nine, and the great khan draws from it as much duty and revenue as from that of Kin-sai. We have not told you of the nine kingdoms of Manji, but only of three, Manji, Kin-sai, and Fu-gui, and of these you have heard fully; but the others I cannot now describe, because it would be too tedious, and our book has not yet treated of other things which I wish to write about; for I have to tell you of the Indians, who are well worthy of being known. Their country contains many wonderful things found in none of the other parts of the world, which it will be good and profitable to write. And, I assure you, Marco remained so long in India, and saw so much of its produce, customs, and merchandise, that no man could better tell the truth. Therefore I will put them in writing, precisely as Messer Marco truly said them to me.

Middle East

The selections in this chapter are from both Persian and Arabic sources. The center of the Persian Empire was located in what is modern-day Iran, and there was a long history of classical Persian literature before the Islamic invasion in the mid-seventeenth century C.E. After the violent overthrow of the Sassanid Empire by nomadic Arab tribes, the library in Ctesiphon (the capital city) was burned, as were libraries in other major cities. Although many pre-invasion Persian works were lost, some stories are recorded in later works. Abolqasem Ferdowsi, in his *Shahnameh*, writes the history of Persia from the creation of the world to the Islamic invasion; while Ferdowsi was Muslim, he writes in Persian, and his epic preserves the stories of Persia's Zoroastrian heroes (Zoroastrianism was the state religion of Persia before the invasion).

Medieval Persian authors often wrote in both Persian and Arabic, and the most prestigious literary form was poetry. In many cases, prose writing was combined with poetry, with lines of poetry appearing at regular intervals in the prose. The emphasis was on works that were educational or enlightening, rather than simply entertaining, so works such as the *Rose Garden* of Sa'di combined wise sayings and stories with humor and wit, demonstrating Sa'di's talents in both prose and poetry.

Sa'di often admires Sufi dervishes (similar to Christian mendicant friars in their poverty and austerity) in his works; an offshoot of Islam, Sufism combines Islamic, Christian, and Buddhist beliefs. The focus is on connecting with God; since humans are unable to understand God fully with their rational minds, Sufis attempt an emotional connection. Sa'di admired their willingness to confront rulers fearlessly about their (less-than) moral behavior, since death would only reunite them with God. Jalal al-Din Rumi, one of the finest poets in Persian literature, was also a founder of a Sufi order of dervishes (sometimes called "whirling dervishes" because of the spinning that they do to achieve a trance-like state of meditation). Although seemingly conventional on the surface, his love poetry ultimately is about longing for a spiritual union with God.

The *Qur'an* is the most important work in Arabic. Believed by Muslims to be the word of God as dictated to Mohammed through the angel Jibreel (Gabriel), its influence on Arabic literature and culture is immeasurable. Only the *Qur'an* in Arabic is considered to be the true *Qur'an*; any translation alters the actual words of the text, so followers are expected to read the text in the original language. Therefore, the text presented in this anthology is not the true document, but an approximation in English.

The other major work in Arabic in this chapter is secular: *The Thousand and One Nights* (also known as *The Arabian Nights*). Technically, this sort of storytelling would not have been considered "high" literature at the time, since it was not poetry, religious, or a collection of wise sayings. Its impact on literature, however, has been considerable, both in the Middle East and Europe. The stories are drawn from Arabic, Persian, and Indian folktales (among others). Thanks to early translations, many of the individual stories are well known around the world.

AS YOU READ, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What kind of relationship do the heroes have to their societies, their leaders (rulers), their families, and their religion?
- How is the frame tale found in *The Thousand and One Nights* similar to the frame tales in Chaucer and Boccaccio?
- What is similar and different about the poetry of Rumi and Dante?
- How is the *Shahname* similar to and different from the epics from the Ancient World (such as *The Iliad*, *The Mahabharata*, and *The Aeneid*)?
- How has the role of religion changed in the stories, now that there are no pantheons of gods?

Written by Laura J. Getty

**THE ROSE GARDEN
(GOLESTAN OR GULISTAN)**

Sa'di (ca. 1213-1291 C.E.)

Published 1258 C.E.

Iran

Musharrif al-Dīn ibn Muṣliḥ al-Dīn, known as Sa'di or Saadi, wrote both poetry and prose in Persian. *The Rose Garden* is a combination of the two genres: mostly prose, with poems and lines of poetry scattered throughout. The stories and anecdotes in *The Rose Garden* offer examples of wisdom drawn from history and literature. Sa'di clearly admired Sufis, and he devotes a section of the work to "The Wisdom of Dervishes"; in it, the Sufi dervishes challenge rulers to behave morally, unafraid of earthly consequences. There are examples of rulers who are driven from power because of their cruelty, greed, or even stupidity. In other anecdotes, people are advised to avoid conflict when possible: suggesting, in one famous example, that a kind lie sometimes might be better than a harmful truth. *The Rose Garden* influenced authors such as Johannes Wolfgang Goethe, Victor Hugo, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and it is still popular today.

Written by Laura J. Getty

THE ROSE GARDEN OF SA'DI

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Sa'di, translated by L. Cranmer-Byng and S. A. Kapadia

Chapter I

The Manners of Kings

Faithlessness of the World

This was written over the portico of the Palace of King Feridun.

The world, O brother! may with none abide.
Look to thy God, let Him suffice alone!
This world that cherished thee will cast aside:
A little while and all thy wealth is flown.
What matter when depart thou must,
If death should find thee in the dust,
Or call thee from thy throne!

A Vision of Sultan Mahmud

One of the Kings of Khorasan in a dream beheld the vision of Sultan Mahmud, an hundred years after he had died. His whole body seemed to have crumbled and turned to dust, save only his eyes, which were moving in their sockets and looking about them. All the learned ones failed to interpret this, except a Dervish, who made obeisance and said: "He is still looking to see how it came to pass that his kingdom belongs to others."

Verses

Many are they, once famed, beneath the ground,
That left no record of their little worth,
And the old corse surrendered, earth to earth,
Was so consumed that not a bone is found.
The glories of King Nusherwan remain,
And time remembers his munificence.

Be generous, O friend! ere passing hence,
They shall proclaim thee with the moons that
wane.

On the Deception of Appearances

The man that never will declare his thought
Conceals a soul of honour or of sin.
Dost think yon silent jungle holdeth naught?
Perchance a lurking tiger sleeps therein.

Friendship

He is no friend who in thine hour of pride
Braggs of his love and calls himself thy kin.
He is a friend who hailes his fellow in,
And clangs the door upon the wolf outside.

Retirement and Peace

A vezier, having been deprived of his post, joined the brotherhood of Dervishes. The blessing of their society was such upon him that he acquired content once more. The Sultan became well disposed towards him, and bade him resume his office; but he refused, saying: "It is better to be retired than busy."

Verses

Those that have sought the hermit's cell where
quiet seasons rule
Have drawn the venom of the dog, the malice of
the fool;
They tore their controversies up, the pen away
they flung,
And so escaped the critic's lash, and foiled the
slanderer's tongue.

The king said: "Verily we are in need of one sufficiently intelligent who is able to carry on the affairs of the government." He answered: "It is a sign of sufficient intelligence not to meddle with such matters."

Toil and Servitude

There were two brothers in Egypt, one of them in the service of the Sultan, the other living by his own industry. The rich man once asked his poor brother why he did not serve the Sultan, in order to be released from the hardships of toil? He answered: "Why dost thou not labour, in order to be free from the baseness of service, since wise men have said it is better to eat barley-bread and sit at ease than to be girt with a golden girdle and stand in service?"

On Rejoicing Over a Fallen Foe

A certain person told Nusherwan the Just that God Most High had taken from this world an enemy of his. He asked: "Hast thou heard by any means that He intendeth to spare me?"

Exult not o'er the dying foe! One day
Thou too must quit thy tenement of clay.



IMAGE 6.1: SAADI IN A ROSE GARDEN | Saadi (also Sadi) stands in a garden with another man, surrounded by flowers with a mountain the background.

Author: Govardhan
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Chapter II

The Morals of Dervishes

Fault-Finding and Self-Conceit

I remember being pious in my youth, given to night vigils, prayers, and abstinence. One night I was sitting with my father, on whom God have mercy, keeping awake and holding the precious Koran in my lap, whilst the company around us slept. I said: "Of these people not one lifts up the head or bows the knee (in prayer). They are all sound asleep, as though they were dead." He answered: "Little one of thy father, would that thou wert also asleep, rather than proclaiming the faults of others."

Verses

The braggart sees himself alone,
Since he is veiled in self-conceit;
Were God's all-seeing eye his own,
He would no weaker braggart meet.

Forbearance

A band of vagabonds meeting a Dervish spoke evilly to him, beat him and ill-used him, where- upon he brought his complaint to his superior. The Director replied: "My son! the patched gown of the Dervishes is the garb of resignation, and he who, wearing it, cannot bear with injury, is but a pretender to whom our garb is forbidden."

Distich

Thou canst not stir the river's bed with stones:
Wisdom aggrieved is but a shallow brook.

Verses

If any injure thee, thy spleen control,
Since by forgiveness thou shalt cleanse thy soul.
O brother, since the end of all is dust,
Be dust, ere unto dust return thou must.

Humility

Hark to my tale, how once a quarrel rose
Betwixt a flag and curtain in Bagdad,—
How, drooping from the march, the dusty flag
Reproached the curtain: "Art not thou and I
Both servants in the Sultan's court? I know
No respite from his service. From the light
Of cock-crow to the gloom of nightingales
I travel, travel: thou hast neither siege
Nor battle to endure, nor whirling sand,
Nor wind, nor heat to suffer; while my step
Is ever on the march. Why art thou held
More honoured? Thou art cherished by slim boys
Of moon-pale beauty, jasmine-scented maids
Touch thee caressingly; while I am rolled
By raw recruits, and oft-times on the trail
Carried head downwards."

Then the curtain spake:
"My head is humbly on the threshold laid,
Unlike thine own, that flaunting would defy
The golden-armoured sun. Whoever rears
The neck of exaltation shall descend
Most speedily neck level with the dust."

The Dervish Way

The way of dervishes is gratefulness, praise, worship, obedience, contentment, and charity, believing in the unity of God, faith, submission, and patience. Whoever hath these qualities is indeed a Dervish, though he may wear fine raiment; whereas the idler, who neglecteth prayer, who goeth after ease and pleasure, turneth day into night in the bondage of desire, and night into day in the slumber of forgetfulness, eateth whatever he layeth hold on, and speaketh that which is uppermost, he is an evil-doer, though he may wear the garb of the Dervishes.

Verses

Thou who within of good resolve art bare,
Yet dost the mantle of the righteous wear;
Thou who hast but a reed-mat to thy floor,
Hang not the rainbow-curtain on the door.

Chapter III

The Preciousness of Contentment

Wisdom and Worldly Power

Two sons of princes lived in Egypt, the one given to the study of science, the other heaping up riches, till the former became the wise man of the age, and the latter the King of Egypt. Then the rich man looked with the eye of scorn upon the philosopher, and said: "I have reached the sovereign power whilst thou remainest poor as before." He replied: "O brother! I must needs be grateful to the Most High Creator, that I have found the inheritance of the prophets, while thou hast obtained the inheritance of Pharaoh and Haman —the Kingdom of Egypt."

Mesnevi

I am that ant which under foot is trod.
No wasp am I, for man to curse my sting.
How can I rightly thank Almighty God
That I am harmless both to clown and king?

Frugality

It is written in the annals of Ardeshir Babekan that he asked an Arabian physician how much food ought to be taken daily. He answered: "The weight of one hundred dirrhems were enough." The king asked him: "What strength will this quantity give me?" He replied: "This quantity will carry thee; but whatever' more is taken, thou wilt be the carrier of it."

Eat to live, thy prayers repeating;
Think not life was made for eating.

Self-Dependence

They asked of Hâtim Tai if he had seen any one in the world of nobler sentiments than himself. He replied: "Yes, one day I slew forty camels to give a banquet to Arab chieftains. I went forth upon some affair to a corner of the desert, where I saw a gatherer of sticks, who had piled up a heap of brushwood. I asked him why he had not become a guest of Hâtim, seeing that many people had gathered around his carpet. But he replied:

'He that hath bread procured by honest sweat,
To Hâtim will not bear to be in debt.'

Then I perceived that his sentiments were nobler than mine own."

Pearls and Starvation

I saw an Arab sitting amid a circle of jewelers at Bosrah, and telling them tales. He said: "Once I lost my way in the desert, and had consumed all my provisions. I was prepared to die, when suddenly I beheld a bag of pearls. Never shall I forget the joy I felt, deeming them to be parched grain, nor the bitterness and despair with which I found them to be pearls."

Verses

In deserts, amid shifting sand and drouth,
Nor pearl nor shell is manna to the mouth.
Ah! what avails, when food and strength are
gone,
The girdle with its pearls or pebbles strown?

Chapter IV*The Blessing of Silence**On the Choice of Words*

Subhân Vail is held to have had no peer in oratory, since he had spoken before an assembly for a whole year without using the same phrase twice; but if the same meaning happened to occur, he expressed it in another way: and this is one of the accomplishments of courtiers and princes.

Mesnevi

A word, if binding on the heart and sweet,
Is worthy of belief and approbation.
What thou hast said ne'er let thy tongue repeat:
We do not twice partake the same collation.

On Interruptions

I once heard a philosopher say that no one has ever confessed his own ignorance, save him who begins to talk whilst another has not yet finished.

Mesnevi

Words have a head, O shrewd man, and a tail;
Into no other's discourse fit thine own.
The man of sound discretion will not fail
To bide his time and hold the floor alone.

On Hearing Ourselves

A certain preacher was wont to think that his harsh voice gave pleasure, and often he shouted aloud and needlessly. Thou mightest have said that *the raven of separation* was the burden of his song; and the verse, *for the most detestable of voices is surely the voice of asses*, appears to have fitted him. This distich is also concerning him:

When Abu-l-Fares brays of Heaven's bliss,
He rocks the ruins of Persepolis.

By reason of his rank the people of the place endured this defect, and did not think fit to distress him. Afterwards, however, another preacher of those parts arrived, who bore a secret grudge against him, and said: "I have dreamed about thee, and may it prove fortunate!" "What hast thou dreamed?" "I dreamed that thy voice had become melodious, and that the people had ease during thy sermons." For a little while the preacher pondered on these words; then made answer: "Truly thou hast dreamed a blessed dream, since thou hast made me aware of my weakness. Now I know that my voice is harsh, and that the people are distressed with my loud reading; accordingly I have vowed that henceforth I will not preach save with the tones of moderation."

Chapter VII

The Effects of Education

Knowledge is Wealth

A philosopher was teaching boys, and said to them: "O darlings of your fathers, learn a trade, since no reliance may be placed upon the possessions and riches of the world: for silver and gold are a source of peril, since either a thief may steal them at once or the owner waste them by degrees; but a profession is a living spring and wealth enduring. Although a professional man may lose his fortune, he need not grieve, for his knowledge is wealth of itself, and wherever he go he will be honoured, and sit in the upper seat: but he who has no calling will glean the crumbs and suffer want."

Distich

He finds not easy to obey whose word was man's behest,
Nor will he bear with insolence whom all men have caressed.

Verses

Once confusion filled Damascus,
Each one left his quiet corner;
Learned sons of lusty peasants
Were the veziers of the Caliphs:
While the silly sons of veziers
Begged their bread through every village.

Verses

Dost want thy sire's inheritance?
Acquire his business ways,
Since all the gold that feeds thy glance
May melt within ten days.

The Lilies of Immortality

A certain illustrious man had a worthy son who died. When they asked him what he desired should be written upon the urn of the tomb, he answered: "The verses of the Holy Book are deserving of more reverence than to be written in such a place, where they might be effaced by time, or trodden upon by men, or defiled by dogs. If it is needful to write anything, let this suffice:

How gladly when the lilies bloomed,
My heart the loaded ways did roam!
Pass with the spring, O friend, and, lo!
The lilies breaking through my loam."

THE QURAN

Compiled ca. 632-651 B.C.E.

Mecca, Arabia (what is now Saudi Arabia)

The *Quran* (a.k.a. *Qur'an* or *Koran*), meaning "the recitation," is the sacred scripture of Islam, or the word of God, and is meant to be musically read aloud. Islam, rooted in the Arabic word "salema" (meaning "peace"), means "obedience" and "submission." Muslims believe that the *Quran* was revealed through the angel Gabriel to the prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. Existing only as an oral recitation during Muhammad's time, the *Quran* was compiled in written form under the first several caliphs. The holy book is written in Arabic, Islam's sacred language, and has 114 suras, or chapters. Translations of the *Quran*, although they are helpful for understanding the original, are not regarded as the same as the holy book in Arabic. As part of Abrahamic religions, the *Quran* shows connections to Jewish and Christian biblical characters and stories.



IMAGE 6.2: THE QURAN | A copy of the Quran from the Chester Beatty Library.

Author: User “Jonsafari”
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SELECTIONS FROM THE QURAN WITH SURAH INTRODUCTIONS

SAHEEH INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION

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Edited by A. B. al-Mehri

Sūrah 1: al-Fātihah

1. In the name of God, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.
2. [All] praise is [due] to God, Lord of the worlds—
3. The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,
4. Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.
5. It is You we worship and You we ask for help.
6. Guide us to the straight path—
7. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.

Sūrah 5: al-Mā'idah

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

1. O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts. Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock except for that which is recited to you [in this Qur'ān]—hunting not being permitted while you are in the state of ihrām. Indeed, God ordains what He intends.
2. O you who have believed, do not violate the rites of God or [the sanctity of] the sacred month or [neglect the marking of] the sacrificial animals and garlanding [them] or [violate the safety of] those coming to the Sacred House seeking bounty from their Lord and [His] approval. But when you come out of ihrām, then [you may] hunt. And do not let the hatred of a people for having obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Harām lead you to transgress. And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear God; indeed, God is severe in penalty.
3. Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than God, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islām as religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin—then indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.
4. They ask you, [O Muhammad], what has been made lawful for them. Say, “Lawful for you are [all] good foods and [game caught by] what you have trained of hunting animals which you train as God has taught you. So eat of what they catch for you, and mention the name of God upon it, and fear God.” Indeed, God is swift in account.
5. This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. And [lawful in marriage are] chaste women from among the believers and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before you, when you have given them their due compensation, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse or taking [secret] lovers. And whoever denies the faith—his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.
6. O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles. And if you are in a state of janābah, then purify yourselves. But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it. God does not intend to make difficulty for you, but He intends to purify you and complete His favor upon you that you may be grateful.
7. And remember the favor of God upon you and His covenant with which He bound you when you said, “We hear and we obey”; and fear God. Indeed, God is Knowing of that within the breasts.
8. O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for God, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear God; indeed, God is Acquainted with what you do.
9. God has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds [that] for them there is forgiveness and great reward.
10. But those who disbelieve and deny Our signs—those are the companions of Hellfire.
11. O you who have believed, remember the favor of God upon you when a people determined to extend their hands [in aggression] against you, but He withheld their hands from you; and fear God. And upon God let the believers rely.
12. And God had already taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We delegated from among them twelve leaders. And God said, “I am with you. If you establish prayer and give zakāh and believe in My messengers and support them and loan God a goodly loan, I will surely remove from you your misdeeds and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow. But whoever of you disbelieves after that has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.”

13. So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them. But pardon them and overlook [their misdeeds]. Indeed, God loves the doers of good.
14. And from those who say, "We are Christians" We took their covenant; but they forgot a portion of that of which they were reminded. So We caused among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection. And God is going to inform them about what they used to do.
15. O People of the Scripture, there has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you used to conceal of the Scripture and overlooking much. There has come to you from God a light and a clear Book [i.e., the Qur'an]
16. By which God guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path.
17. They have certainly disbelieved who say that God is Christ, the son of Mary. Say, "Then who could prevent God at all if He had intended to destroy Christ, the son of Mary, or his mother or everyone on the earth?" And to God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. He creates what He wills, and God is over all things competent.
18. But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of God and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills. And to God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the [final] destination.
19. O People of the Scripture, there has come to you Our Messenger to make clear to you [the religion] after a period [of suspension] of messengers, lest you say, "There came not to us any bringer of good tidings or a warner." But there has come to you a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And God is over all things competent.
20. And [mention, O Muhammad], when Moses said to his people, "O my people, remember the favor of God upon you when He appointed among you prophets and made you possessors and gave you that which He had not given anyone among the worlds.
21. O my people, enter the Holy Land [i.e., Palestine] which God has assigned to you and do not turn back [from fighting in God's cause] and [thus] become losers."
22. They said, "O Moses, indeed within it is a people of tyrannical strength, and indeed, we will never enter it until they leave it; but if they leave it, then we will enter."
23. Said two men from those who feared [to disobey] upon whom God had bestowed favor, "Enter upon them through the gate, for when you have entered it, you will be predominant. And upon God rely, if you should be believers."
24. They said, "O Moses, indeed we will not enter it, ever, as long as they are within it; so go, you and your Lord, and fight. Indeed, we are remaining right here."
25. [Moses] said, "My Lord, indeed I do not possess [i.e., control] except myself and my brother, so part us from the defiantly disobedient people."
26. [God] said, "Then indeed, it is forbidden to them for forty years [in which] they will wander throughout the land. So do not grieve over the defiantly disobedient people."
27. And recite to them the story of Adam's two sons, in truth, when they both offered a sacrifice [to God], and it was accepted from one of them but was not accepted from the other. Said [the latter], "I will surely kill you." Said [the former], "Indeed, God only accepts from the righteous [who fear Him]."
28. If you should raise your hand against me to kill me—I shall not raise my hand against you to kill you. Indeed, I fear God, Lord of the worlds.
29. Indeed, I want you to obtain [thereby] my sin and your sin so you will be among the companions of the Fire. And that is the recompense of wrongdoers."
30. And his soul permitted to him the murder of his brother, so he killed him and became among the losers.
31. Then God sent a crow searching [i.e., scratching] in the ground to show him how to hide the disgrace of his brother. He said, "O woe to me! Have I failed to be like this crow and hide the disgrace [i.e., body] of my brother?" And he became of the regretful.

32. Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land—it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one—it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors.
33. Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against God and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world; and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment,
34. Except for those who return [repenting] before you overcome [i.e., apprehend] them. And know that God is Forgiving and Merciful.
35. O you who have believed, fear God and seek the means [of nearness] to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed.
36. Indeed, those who disbelieve—if they should have all that is in the earth and the like of it with it by which to ransom themselves from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it will not be accepted from them, and for them is a painful punishment.
37. They will wish to get out of the Fire, but never are they to emerge therefrom, and for them is an enduring punishment.
38. [As for] the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands in recompense for what they earned [i.e., committed] as a deterrent [punishment] from God. And God is Exalted in Might and Wise.
39. But whoever repents after his wrongdoing and reforms, indeed, God will turn to him in forgiveness. Indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.
40. Do you not know that to God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth? He punishes whom He wills and forgives whom He wills, and God is over all things competent.
41. O Messenger, let them not grieve you who hasten into disbelief of those who say, “We believe” with their mouths, but their hearts believe not, and from among the Jews. [They are] avid listeners to falsehood, listening to another people who have not come to you. They distort words beyond their [proper] places [i.e., usages], saying “If you are given this, take it; but if you are not given it, then beware.” But he for whom God intends fitnah—never will you possess [power to do] for him a thing against God. Those are the ones for whom God does not intend to purify their hearts. For them in this world is disgrace, and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment.
42. [They are] avid listeners to falsehood, devourers of [what is] unlawful. So if they come to you, [O Muhammad], judge between them or turn away from them. And if you turn away from them—never will they harm you at all. And if you judge, judge between them with justice. Indeed, God loves those who act justly.
43. But how is it that they come to you for judgement while they have the Torah, in which is the judgement of God? Then they turn away, [even] after that; but those are not [in fact] believers.
44. Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light. The prophets who submitted [to God] judged by it for the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars by that with which they were entrusted of the Scripture of God, and they were witnesses thereto. So do not fear the people but fear Me, and do not exchange My verses for a small price [i.e., worldly gain]. And whoever does not judge by what God has revealed—then it is those who are the disbelievers.
45. And We ordained for them therein a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds is legal retribution. But whoever gives [up his right as] charity, it is an expiation for him. And whoever does not judge by what God has revealed—then it is those who are the wrongdoers [i.e., the unjust].
46. And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as guidance and instruction for the righteous.
47. And let the People of the Gospel judge by what God has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what God has revealed then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient.
48. And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book [i.e., the Qur`an] in truth, confirming that which

preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it. So judge between them by what God has revealed and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. Had God willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To God is your return all together, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ.

49. And judge, [O Muhammad], between them by what God has revealed and do not follow their inclinations and beware of them, lest they tempt you away from some of what God has revealed to you. And if they turn away—then know that God only intends to afflict them with some of their [own] sins. And indeed, many among the people are defiantly disobedient.
50. Then is it the judgement of [the time of] ignorance they desire? But who is better than God in judgement for a people who are certain [in faith].
51. O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you—then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, God guides not the wrongdoing people.
52. So you see those in whose hearts is disease [i.e., hypocrisy] hastening into [association with] them, saying, “We are afraid a misfortune may strike us.” But perhaps God will bring conquest or a decision from Him, and they will become, over what they have been concealing within themselves, regretful.
53. And those who believe will say, “Are these the ones who swore by God their strongest oaths that indeed they were with you?” Their deeds have become worthless, and they have become losers.
54. O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion—God will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of God and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of God; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And God is all-Encompassing and Knowing.
55. Your ally is none but God and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed—those who establish prayer and give zakāh, and they bow [in worship],
56. And whoever is an ally of God and His Messenger and those who have believed—indeed, the party of God—they will be the predominant.
57. O you who have believed, take not those who have taken your religion in ridicule and amusement among the ones who were given the Scripture before you nor the disbelievers as allies. And fear God, if you should [truly] be believers.
58. And when you call to prayer, they take it in ridicule and amusement. That is because they are a people who do not use reason.
59. Say, “O People of the Scripture, do you resent us except [for the fact] that we have believed in God and what was revealed to us and what was revealed before and because most of you are defiantly disobedient?”
60. Say, “Shall I inform you of [what is] worse than that as penalty from God? [It is that of] those whom God has cursed and with whom He became angry and made of them apes and pigs and slaves of taghūt. Those are worse in position and further astray from the sound way.”
61. And when they come to you, they say, “We believe.” But they have entered with disbelief [in their hearts], and they have certainly left with it. And God is most knowing of what they were concealing.
62. And you see many of them hastening into sin and aggression and the devouring of [what is] unlawful. How wretched is what they have been doing.
63. Why do the rabbis and religious scholars not forbid them from saying what is sinful and devouring what is unlawful? How wretched is what they have been practicing.
64. And the Jews say, “The hand of God is chained.” Chained are their hands, and cursed are they for what they say. Rather, both His hands are extended; He spends however He wills. And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in transgression and disbelief. And We have cast among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindled the fire of war [against you], God extinguished it. And they strive throughout the land [causing] corruption, and God does not like corrupters.

65. And if only the People of the Scripture had believed and feared God, We would have removed from them their misdeeds and admitted them to Gardens of Pleasure.
66. And if only they upheld [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to them from their Lord [i.e., the Qur'ān], they would have consumed [provision] from above them and from beneath their feet. Among them are a moderate [i.e., acceptable] community, but many of them—evil is that which they do.
67. O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And God will protect you from the people. Indeed, God does not guide the disbelieving people.
68. Say, “O People of the Scripture, you are [standing] on nothing until you uphold [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your Lord [i.e., the Qur'ān].” And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in transgression and disbelief. So do not grieve over the disbelieving people.
69. Indeed, those who have believed [in Prophet Muhammad] and those [before him] who were Jews or Sa-beans or Christians—those [among them] who believed in God and the Last Day and did righteousness—no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.
70. We had already taken the covenant of the Children of Israel and had sent to them messengers. Whenever there came to them a messenger with what their souls did not desire, a party [of messengers] they denied, and another party they killed.
71. And they thought there would be no [resulting] punishment, so they became blind and deaf. Then God turned to them in forgiveness; then [again] many of them became blind and deaf. And God is Seeing of what they do.
72. They have certainly disbelieved who say, “God is the Messiah, the son of Mary” while the Messiah has said, “O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord.” Indeed, he who associates others with God—God has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers.
73. They have certainly disbelieved who say, “God is the third of three.” And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment.
74. So will they not repent to God and seek His forgiveness? And God is Forgiving and Merciful.
75. The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.
76. Say, “Do you worship besides God that which holds for you no [power of] harm or benefit while it is God who is the Hearing, the Knowing?”
77. Say, “O People of the Scripture, do not exceed limits in your religion beyond the truth and do not follow the inclinations of a people who had gone astray before and misled many and have strayed from the soundness of the way.”
78. Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel by the tongue of David and of Jesus, the son of Mary. That was because they disobeyed and [habitually] transgressed.
79. They used not to prevent one another from wrongdoing that they did. How wretched was that which they were doing.
80. You see many of them becoming allies of those who disbelieved [i.e., the polytheists]. How wretched is that which they have put forth for themselves in that God has become angry with them, and in the punishment they will abide eternally.
81. And if they had believed in God and the Prophet and in what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them as allies; but many of them are defiantly disobedient.
82. You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity toward the believers [to be] the Jews and those who associate others with God; and you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, “We are Christians.” That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant.

83. And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, “Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses.
84. And why should we not believe in God and what has come to us of the truth? And we aspire that our Lord will admit us [to Paradise] with the righteous people.”
85. So God rewarded them for what they said with gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. And that is the reward of doers of good.
86. But those who disbelieved and denied Our signs—they are the companions of Hellfire.
87. O you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which God has made lawful to you and do not transgress. Indeed, God does not like transgressors.
88. And eat of what God has provided for you [which is] lawful and good. And fear God, in whom you are believers.
89. God will not impose blame upon you for what is meaningless in your oaths, but He will impose blame upon you for [breaking] what you intended of oaths. So its expiation is the feeding of ten needy people from the average of that which you feed your [own] families or clothing them or the freeing of a slave. But whoever cannot find [or afford it]—then a fast of three days [is required]. That is the expiation for oaths when you have sworn. But guard your oaths. Thus does God make clear to you His verses [i.e., revealed law] that you may be grateful.
90. O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than God], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.
91. Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of God and from prayer. So will you not desist?
92. And obey God and obey the Messenger and beware. And if you turn away—then know that upon Our Messenger is only [the responsibility for] clear notification.
93. There is not upon those who believe and do righteousness [any] blame concerning what they have eaten [in the past] if they [now] fear God and believe and do righteous deeds, and then fear God and believe, and then fear God and do good; and God loves the doers of good.
94. O you who have believed, God will surely test you through something of the game that your hands and spears [can] reach, that God may make evident those who fear Him unseen. And whoever transgresses after that—for him is a painful punishment.
95. O you who have believed, do not kill game while you are in the state of *ihrām*. And whoever of you kills it intentionally—the penalty is an equivalent from sacrificial animals to what he killed, as judged by two just men among you as an offering [to God] delivered to the *Ka’bāh*, or an expiation: the feeding of needy people or the equivalent of that in fasting, that he may taste the consequence of his matter [i.e., deed]. God has pardoned what is past; but whoever returns [to violation], then God will take retribution from him. And God is Exalted in Might and Owner of Retribution.
96. Lawful to you is game from the sea and its food as provision for you and the travelers, but forbidden to you is game from the land as long as you are in the state of *ihrām*. And fear God to whom you will be gathered.
97. God has made the *Ka’bāh*, the Sacred House, standing for the people and [has sanctified] the sacred months and the sacrificial animals and the garlands [by which they are identified]. That is so you may know that God knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth and that God is Knowing of all things.
98. Know that God is severe in penalty and that God is Forgiving and Merciful.
99. Not upon the Messenger is [responsibility] except [for] notification. And God knows whatever you reveal and whatever you conceal.
100. Say, “Not equal are the evil and the good, although the abundance of evil might impress you.” So fear God, O you of understanding, that you may be successful.
101. O you who have believed, do not ask about things which, if they are shown to you, will distress you. But if you ask about them while the *Qur’ān* is being revealed, they will be shown to you. God has pardoned it [i.e., that which is past]; and God is Forgiving and Forbearing.

102. A people asked such [questions] before you; then they became thereby disbelievers.
103. God has not appointed [such innovations as] bahirah or sā'ibah or wasīlah or hām. But those who disbelieve invent falsehood about God, and most of them do not reason.
104. And when it is said to them, "Come to what God has revealed and to the Messenger," they say, "Sufficient for us is that upon which we found our fathers." Even though their fathers knew nothing, nor were they guided?
105. O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided. To God is your return all together; then He will inform you of what you used to do.
106. O you who have believed, testimony [should be taken] among you when death approaches one of you at the time of bequest—[that of] two just men from among you or two others from outside if you are traveling through the land and the disaster of death should strike you. Detain them after the prayer and let them both swear by God if you doubt [their testimony, saying], "We will not exchange it [i.e., our oath] for a price [i.e., worldly gain], even if he should be a near relative, and we will not withhold the testimony of [i.e., ordained by] God. Indeed, we would then be of the sinful."
107. But if it is found that those two were guilty of sin [i.e., perjury], let two others stand in their place [who are] foremost [in claim] from those who have a lawful right. And let them swear by God, "Our testimony is truer than their testimony, and we have not transgressed. Indeed, we would then be of the wrongdoers."
108. That is more likely that they will give testimony according to its [true] objective, or [at least] they would fear that [other] oaths might be taken after their oaths. And fear God and listen [i.e., obey Him]; and God does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.
109. [Be warned of] the Day when God will assemble the messengers and say, "What was the response you received?" They will say, "We have no knowledge. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen"—
110. [The Day] when God will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Pure Spirit [i.e., the angel Gabriel] and you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and [remember] when I taught you writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind [from birth] and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, "This is not but obvious magic."
111. And [remember] when I inspired to the disciples, "Believe in Me and in My messenger [i.e., Jesus]." They said, "We have believed, so bear witness that indeed we are Muslims [in submission to God]."
112. [And remember] when the disciples said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven? [Jesus] said, "Fear God, if you should be believers."
113. They said, "We wish to eat from it and let our hearts be reassured and know that you have been truthful to us and be among its witnesses."
114. Said Jesus, the son of Mary, "O God, our Lord, send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven to be for us a festival for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You. And provide for us, and You are the best of providers."
115. God said, "Indeed, I will send it down to you, but whoever disbelieves afterwards from among you—then indeed will I punish him with a punishment by which I have not punished anyone among the worlds."
116. And [beware the Day] when God will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides God?'" He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen."
117. I said not to them except what You commanded me—to worship God, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness.
118. If You should punish them—indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them—indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise."

119. God will say, “This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness.” For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, God being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment.
120. God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is within them. And He is over all things competent.

Sūrah 10: Yūnus

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

1. Alif, Lām, Rā. These are the verses of the wise Book.
2. Have the people been amazed that We revealed [revelation] to a man from among them, [saying], “Warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe that they will have a [firm] precedence of honor with their Lord”? [But] the disbelievers say, “Indeed, this is an obvious magician.”
3. Indeed, your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne, arranging the matter [of His creation]. There is no intercessor except after His permission. That is God, your Lord, so worship Him. Then will you not remember?
4. To Him is your return all together. [It is] the promise of God [which is] truth. Indeed, He begins the [process of] creation and then repeats it that He may reward those who have believed and done righteous deeds, in justice. But those who disbelieved will have a drink of scalding water and a painful punishment for what they used to deny.
5. It is He who made the sun a shining light and the moon a derived light and determined for it phases—that you may know the number of years and account [of time]. God has not created this except in truth. He details the signs for a people who know.
6. Indeed, in the alternation of the night and the day and [in] what God has created in the heavens and the earth are signs for a people who fear God.
7. Indeed, those who do not expect the meeting with Us and are satisfied with the life of this world and feel secure therein and those who are heedless of Our signs—
8. For those their refuge will be the Fire because of what they used to earn.
9. Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds—their Lord will guide them because of their faith. Beneath them rivers will flow in the Gardens of Pleasure.
10. Their call therein will be, “Exalted are You, O God,” and their greeting therein will be, “Peace.” And the last of their call will be, “Praise to God, Lord of the worlds!”
11. And if God was to hasten for the people the evil [they invoke] as He hastens for them the good, their term would have been ended for them. But We leave the ones who do not expect the meeting with Us, in their transgression, wandering blindly.
12. And when affliction touches man, he calls upon Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove from him his affliction, he continues [in disobedience] as if he had never called upon Us to [remove] an affliction that touched him. Thus is made pleasing to the transgressors that which they have been doing.
13. And We had already destroyed generations before you when they wronged, and their messengers had come to them with clear proofs, but they were not to believe. Thus do We recompense the criminal people.
14. Then We made you successors in the land after them so that We may observe how you will do.
15. And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who do not expect the meeting with Us say, “Bring us a Qur’ān other than this or change it.” Say, [O Muhammad], “It is not for me to change it on my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me. Indeed I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.”
16. Say, “If God had willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you, for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?”
17. So who is more unjust than he who invents a lie about God or denies His signs? Indeed, the criminals will not succeed.

18. And they worship other than God that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, “These are our intercessors with God.” Say, “Do you inform God of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?” Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.
19. And mankind was not but one community [united in religion], but [then] they differed. And if not for a word that preceded from your Lord, it would have been judged between them [immediately] concerning that over which they differ.
20. And they say, “Why is a sign not sent down to him from his Lord?” So say, “The unseen is only for God [to administer], so wait; indeed, I am with you among those who wait.”
21. And when We give the people a taste of mercy after adversity has touched them, at once they conspire against Our verses. Say, “God is swifter in strategy.” Indeed, Our messengers [i.e., angels] record that which you conspire.
22. It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a storm wind and the waves come upon them from everywhere and they assume that they are surrounded [i.e., doomed], supplicating God, sincere to Him in religion, “If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful.”
23. But when He saves them, at once they commit injustice upon the earth without right. O mankind, your injustice is only against yourselves, [being merely] the enjoyment of worldly life. Then to Us is your return, and We will inform you of what you used to do.
24. The example of [this] worldly life is but like rain which We have sent down from the sky that the plants of the earth absorb—[those] from which men and livestock eat—until, when the earth has taken on its adornment and is beautified and its people suppose that they have capability over it, there comes to it Our command by night or by day, and We make it as a harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday. Thus do We explain in detail the signs for a people who give thought.
25. And God invites to the Home of Peace [i.e., Paradise] and guides whom He wills to a straight path.
26. For them who have done good is the best [reward]—and extra. No darkness will cover their faces, nor humiliation. Those are companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally.
27. But they who have earned [blame for] evil doings—the recompense of an evil deed is its equivalent, and humiliation will cover them. They will have from God no protector. It will be as if their faces are covered with pieces of the night—so dark [are they]. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.
28. And [mention, O Muhammad], the Day We will gather them all together—then We will say to those who associated others with God, “[Remain in] your place, you and your ‘partners.’” Then We will separate them, and their “partners” will say, “You did not used to worship us,
29. And sufficient is God as a witness between us and you that we were of your worship unaware.”
30. There, [on that Day], every soul will be put to trial for what it did previously, and they will be returned to God, their master, the Truth, and lost from them is whatever they used to invent.
31. Say, “Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?” They will say, “God,” so say, “Then will you not fear Him?”
32. For that is God, your Lord, the Truth. And what can be beyond truth except error? So how are you averted?
33. Thus the word [i.e., decree] of your Lord has come into effect upon those who defiantly disobeyed—that they will not believe.
34. Say, “Are there of your ‘partners’ any who begins creation and then repeats it?” Say, “God begins creation and then repeats it, so how are you deluded?”
35. Say, “Are there of your ‘partners’ any who guides to the truth?” Say, “God guides to the truth. So is He who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed or he who guides not unless he is guided? Then what is [wrong] with you—how do you judge?”
36. And most of them follow not except assumption. Indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all. Indeed, God is Knowing of what they do.

37. And it was not [possible] for this Qurʾān to be produced by other than God, but [it is] a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of the [former] Scripture, about which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds.
38. Or do they say [about the Prophet], “He invented it?” Say, “Then bring forth a sūrah like it and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides God, if you should be truthful.”
39. Rather, they have denied that which they encompass not in knowledge and whose interpretation has not yet come to them. Thus did those before them deny. Then observe how was the end of the wrongdoers.
40. And of them are those who believe in it, and of them are those who do not believe in it. And your Lord is most knowing of the corrupters.
41. And if they deny you, [O Muhammad], then say, “For me are my deeds, and for you are your deeds. You are disassociated from what I do, and I am disassociated from what you do.”
42. And among them are those who listen to you. But can you cause the deaf to This phrase refers back to the Qurʾān hear [i.e., benefit from this hearing], although they will not use reason?
43. And among them are those who look at you. But can you guide the blind although they will not [attempt to] see?
44. Indeed, God does not wrong the people at all, but it is the people who are wronging themselves.
45. And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day, [and] they will know each other. Those will have lost who denied the meeting with God and were not guided.
46. And whether We show you some of what We promise them, [O Muhammad], or We take you in death, to Us is their return; then, [either way], God is a witness concerning what they are doing.
47. And for every nation is a messenger. So when their messenger comes, it will be judged between them in justice, and they will not be wronged.
48. And they say, “When is [the fulfillment of] this promise, if you should be truthful?”
49. Say, “I possess not for myself any harm or benefit except what God should will. For every nation is a [specified] term. When their time has come, then they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].”
50. Say, “Have you considered: if His punishment should come to you by night or by day—for which [aspect] of it would the criminals be impatient?”
51. Then is it that when it has [actually] occurred you will believe in it? Now? And you were [once] for it impatient.
52. Then it will be said to those who had wronged, “Taste the punishment of eternity; are you being recompensed except for what you used to earn?”
53. And they ask information of you, [O Muhammad], “Is it true?” Say, “Yes, by my Lord. Indeed, it is truth; and you will not cause failure [to God].”
54. And if each soul that wronged had everything on earth, it would offer it in ransom. And they will confide regret when they see the punishment; and they will be judged in justice, and they will not be wronged.
55. Unquestionably, to God belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Unquestionably, the promise of God is truth, but most of them do not know.
56. He gives life and causes death, and to Him you will be returned.
57. O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers.
58. Say, “In the bounty of God and in His mercy—in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they accumulate.”
59. Say, “Have you seen what God has sent down to you of provision of which you have made [some] lawful and [some] unlawful?” Say, “Has God permitted you [to do so], or do you invent [something] about God?”
60. And what will be the supposition of those who invent falsehood about God on the Day of Resurrection? Indeed, God is full of bounty to the people, but most of them are not grateful.

61. And, [O Muhammad], you are not [engaged] in any matter or recite any of the Qurʾān and you [people] do not do any deed except that We are witness over you when you are involved in it. And not absent from your Lord is any [part] of an atom's weight within the earth or within the heaven or [anything] smaller than that or greater but that it is in a clear register.
62. Unquestionably, [for] the allies of God there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve—
63. Those who believed and were fearing God.
64. For them are good tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. No change is there in the words [i.e., decrees] of God. That is what is the great attainment.
65. And let not their speech grieve you. Indeed, honor [due to power] belongs to God entirely. He is the Hearing, the Knowing.
66. Unquestionably, to God belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth. And those who invoke other than God do not [actually] follow [His] “partners.” They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying.
67. It is He who made for you the night to rest therein and the day, giving sight. Indeed in that are signs for a people who listen.
68. They have said, “God has taken a son.” Exalted is He; He is the [one] Free of need. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. You have no authority for this [claim]. Do you say about God that which you do not know?
69. Say, “Indeed, those who invent falsehood about God will not succeed.”
70. [For them is brief] enjoyment in this world; then to Us is their return; then We will make them taste the severe punishment because they used to disbelieve.
71. And recite to them the news of Noah, when he said to his people, “O my people, if my residence and my reminding of the signs of God has become burdensome upon you—then I have relied upon God. So resolve upon your plan and [call upon] your associates. Then let not your plan be obscure to you. Then carry it out upon me and do not give me respite.
72. And if you turn away [from my advice]—then no payment have I asked of you. My reward is only from God, and I have been commanded to be of the Muslims [i.e., those who submit to God].”
73. And they denied him, so We saved him and those with him in the ship and made them successors, and We drowned those who denied Our signs. Then see how was the end of those who were warned.
74. Then We sent after him messengers to their peoples, and they came to them with clear proofs. But they were not to believe in that which they had denied before. Thus We seal over the hearts of the transgressors.
75. Then We sent after them Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his establishment with Our signs, but they behaved arrogantly and were a criminal people.
76. So when there came to them the truth from Us, they said, “Indeed, this is obvious magic.”
77. Moses said, “Do you say [thus] about the truth when it has come to you? Is this magic? But magicians will not succeed.”
78. They said, “Have you come to us to turn us away from that upon which we found our fathers and so that you two may have grandeur in the land? And we are not believers in you.”
79. And Pharaoh said, “Bring to me every learned magician.”
80. So when the magicians came, Moses said to them, “Throw down whatever you will throw.”
81. And when they had thrown, Moses said, “What you have brought is [only] magic. Indeed, God will expose its worthlessness. Indeed, God does not amend the work of corrupters.
82. And God will establish the truth by His words, even if the criminals dislike it.”
83. But no one believed Moses, except [some] offspring [i.e., youths] among his people, for fear of Pharaoh and his establishment that they would persecute them. And indeed, Pharaoh was haughty within the land, and indeed, he was of the transgressors.
84. And Moses said, “O my people, if you have believed in God, then rely upon Him, if you should be Muslims [i.e., submitting to him].”

85. So they said, "Upon God do we rely. Our Lord, make us not [objects of] trial for the wrongdoing people.
86. And save us by Your mercy from the disbelieving people."
87. And We inspired to Moses and his brother, "Settle your people in Egypt in houses and make your houses [facing the] qiblah and establish prayer and give good tidings to the believers."
88. And Moses said, "Our Lord, indeed You have given Pharaoh and his establishment splendor and wealth in the worldly life, our Lord, that they may lead [men] astray from Your way. Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts so that they will not believe until they see the painful punishment."
89. [God] said, "Your supplication has been answered." So remain on a right course and follow not the way of those who do not know."
90. And We took the Children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued them in tyranny and enmity until, when drowning overtook him, he said, "I believe that there is no deity except that in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the Muslims."
91. Now? And you had disobeyed [Him] before and were of the corrupters?
92. So today We will save you in body that you may be to those who succeed you a sign. And indeed, many among the people, of Our signs, are heedless.
93. And We had certainty settled the Children of Israel in an agreeable settlement and provided them with good things. And they did not differ until [after] knowledge had come to them. Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.
94. So if you are in doubt, [O Muhammad], about that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Scripture before you. The truth has certainly come to you from your Lord, so never be among the doubters.
95. And never be of those who deny the signs of God and [thus] be among the losers.
96. Indeed, those upon whom the word [i.e., decree] of your Lord has come into effect will not believe,
97. Even if every sign should come to them, until they see the painful punishment.
98. Then has there not been a [single] city that believed so its faith benefited it except the people of Jonah? When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in worldly life and gave them enjoyment [i.e., provision] for a time.
99. And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed—all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?
100. And it is not for a soul [i.e., anyone] to believe except by permission of God, and He will place defilement upon those who will not use reason.
101. Say, "Observe what is in the heavens and earth." But of no avail will be signs or warners to a people who do not believe.
102. So do they wait except for like [what occurred in] the days of those who passed on before them? Say, "Then wait; indeed, I am with you among those who wait."
103. Then We will save Our messengers and those who have believed. Thus, it is an obligation upon Us that We save the believers.
104. Say, [O Muhammad], "O people, if you are in doubt as to my religion—then I do not worship those which you worship besides God; but I worship God, who causes your death. And I have been commanded to be of the believers
105. And [commanded], 'Direct your face [i.e., self] toward the religion, inclining to truth, and never be of those who associate others with God;
106. And do not invoke besides God that which neither benefits you nor harms you, for if you did, then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers."
107. And if God should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him; and if He intends for you good, then there is no repeller of His bounty. He causes it to reach whom He wills of His servants. And He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

108. Say, "O mankind, the truth has come to you from your Lord, so whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul, and whoever goes astray
109. And follow what is revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and be patient until God will judge. And He is the best of judges.

Sūrah 12: Yūsuf

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

1. Alif, Lam, Rā. These are the verses of the clear Book.
2. Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qurʾān that you might understand.
3. We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Qurʾān although you were, before it, among the unaware.
4. [Of these stories mention] when Joseph said to his father, "O my father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me."
5. He said, "O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan. Indeed Satan, to man, is a manifest enemy.
6. And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives [i.e., events of dreams] and complete His favor upon you and upon the family of Jacob, as He completed it upon your fathers before, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, your Lord is Knowing and Wise."
7. Certainly were there in Joseph and his brothers signs for those who ask, [such as]
8. When they said, "Joseph and his brother are more beloved to our father than we, while we are a clan. Indeed, our father is in clear error.
9. Kill Joseph or cast him out to [another] land; the countenance [i.e., attention] of your father will [then] be only for you, and you will be after that a righteous people."
10. Said a speaker among them, "Do not kill Joseph but throw him into the bottom of the well; some travelers will pick him up—if you would do [something]."
11. They said, "O our father, why do you not entrust us with Joseph while indeed, we are to him sincere counselors?"
12. Send him with us tomorrow that he may eat well and play. And indeed, we will be his guardians."
13. [Jacob] said, "Indeed, it saddens me that you should take him, and I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are of him unaware."
14. They said, "If a wolf should eat him while we are a [strong] clan, indeed, we would then be losers."
15. So when they took him [out] and agreed to put him into the bottom of the well... But We inspired to him, "You will surely inform them [someday] about this affair of theirs while they do not perceive [your identity]."
16. And they came to their father at night, weeping.
17. They said, "O our father, indeed we went racing each other and left Joseph with our possessions, and a wolf ate him. But you would not believe us, even if we were truthful."
18. And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. And God is the one sought for help against that which you describe."
19. And there came a company of travelers; then they sent their water drawer, and he let down his bucket. He said, "Good news! Here is a boy." And they concealed him, [taking him] as merchandise; and God was knowing of what they did.
20. And they sold him for a reduced price—a few dirhams—and they were, concerning him, of those content with little.
21. And the one from Egypt who bought him said to his wife, "Make his residence comfortable. Perhaps he will benefit us, or we will adopt him as a son." And thus, We established Joseph in the land that We might teach him the interpretation of events [i.e., dreams]. And God is predominant over His affair, but most of the people do not know.

22. And when he [i.e., Joseph] reached maturity, We gave him judgment and knowledge. And thus We reward the doers of good.
23. And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, "Come, you." He said, "[I seek] the refuge of God. Indeed, he is my master, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed."
24. And she certainly determined [to seduce] him, and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof [i.e., sign] of his Lord. And thus [it was] that We should avert from him evil and immorality. Indeed, he was of Our chosen servants
25. And they both raced to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back, and they found her husband at the door. She said, "What is the recompense of one who intended evil for your wife but that he be imprisoned or a painful punishment?"
26. [Joseph] said, "It was she who sought to seduce me." And a witness from her family testified, "If his shirt is torn from the front, then she has told the truth, and he is of the bars.
27. But if his shirt is torn from the back, then she has lied, and he is of the truthful."
28. So when he [i.e., her husband] saw his shirt torn from the back, he said, "Indeed, it is of your [i.e., women's] plan. Indeed, your plan is great [i.e., vehement].
29. Joseph, ignore this. And, [my wife], ask forgiveness for your sin. Indeed, you were of the sinful."
30. And women in the city said, "The wife of al-'Azeez is seeking to seduce her slave boy; he has impassioned her with love. Indeed, we see her [to be] in clear error."
31. So when she heard of their scheming, she sent for them and prepared for them a banquet and gave each one of them a knife and said [to Joseph], "Come out before them." And when they saw him, they greatly admired him and cut their hands and said, "Perfect is God! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel."
32. She said, "That is the one about whom you blamed me. And I certainly sought to seduce him, but he firmly refused; and if he will not do what I order him, he will surely be imprisoned and will be of those debased."
33. He said, "My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. And if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them and [thus] be of the ignorant."
34. So his Lord responded to him and averted from him their plan. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.
35. Then it appeared to them after they had seen the signs that he [i.e., al-Azeez] should surely imprison him for a time.
36. And there entered the prison with him two young men. One of them said, "Indeed, I have seen myself [in a dream] pressing wine." The other said, "Indeed, I have seen myself carrying upon my head [some] bread, from which the birds were eating. Inform us of its interpretation; indeed, we see you to be of those who do good."
37. He said, "You will not receive food that is provided to you except that I will inform you of its interpretation before it comes to you. That is from what my Lord has taught me. Indeed, I have left the religion of a people who do not believe in God, and they, in the Hereafter, are disbelievers.
38. And I have followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And it was not for us to associate anything with God. That is from the favor of God upon us and upon the people, but most of the people are not grateful.
39. O [my] two companions of prison, are separate lords better or God, the One, the Prevailing?
40. You worship not besides Him except [mere] names you have named them, you and your fathers, for which God has sent down no authority. Legislation is not but for God. He has commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.
41. O two companions of prison, as for one of you, he will give drink to his master of wine; but as for the other, he will be crucified, and the birds will eat from his head. The matter has been decreed about which you both inquire."
42. And he said to the one whom he knew would go free, "Mention me before your master." But Satan made him forget the mention [to] his master, and he [i.e., Joseph] remained in prison several years.

43. And [subsequently] the king said, “Indeed, I have seen [in a dream] seven fat cows being eaten by seven [that were] lean, and seven green spikes [of grain] and others [that were] dry. O eminent ones, explain to me my vision, if you should interpret visions.”
44. They said, “[It is but] a mixture of false dreams, and we are not learned in the interpretation of dreams.”
45. But the one who was freed and remembered after a time said, “I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me forth.”
46. [He said], “Joseph, O man of truth, explain to us about seven fat cows eaten by seven [that were] lean, and seven green spikes [of grain] and others [that were] dry—that I may return to the people [i.e., the king and his court]; perhaps they will know [about you].”
47. [Joseph] said, “You will plant for seven years consecutively; and what you harvest leave in its spikes, except a little from which you will eat.
48. Then will come after that seven difficult [years] which will consume what you advanced [i.e., saved] for them, except a little from which you will store.
49. Then will come after that a year in which the people will be given rain and in which they will press [olives and grapes].”
50. And the king said, “Bring him to me.” But when the messenger came to him, [Joseph] said, “Return to your master and ask him what is the case of the women who cut their hands. Indeed, my Lord is Knowing of their plan.”
51. Said [the king to the women], “What was your condition when you sought to seduce Joseph?” They said, “Perfect is God! We know about him no evil.” The wife of al-Azeez said, “Now the truth has become evident. It was I who sought to seduce him, and indeed, he is of the truthful.
52. That is so he [i.e., al-Azeez] will know that I did not betray him in [his] absence and that God does not guide the plan of betrayers.
53. And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.”
54. And the king said, “Bring him to me; I will appoint him exclusively for myself.” And when he spoke to him, he said, “Indeed, you are today established [in position] and trusted.”
55. [Joseph] said, “Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian.”
56. And thus We established Joseph in the land to settle therein wherever he willed. We touch with Our mercy whom We will, and We do not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.
57. And the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believed and were fearing God.
58. And the brothers of Joseph came [seeking food], and they entered upon him; and he recognized them, but he was to them unknown.
59. And when he had furnished them with their supplies, he said, “Bring me a brother of yours from your father. Do not you see that I give full measure and that I am the best of accommodators?
60. But if you do not bring him to me, no measure will there be [hereafter] for you from me, nor will you approach me.”
61. They said, “We will attempt to dissuade his father from [keeping] him, and indeed, we will do [it].”
62. And [Joseph] said to his servants, “Put their merchandise into their saddlebags so they might recognize it when they have gone back to their people that perhaps they will [again] return.”
63. So when they returned to their father, they said, “O our father, [further] measure has been denied to us, so send with us our brother [that] we will be given measure. And indeed, we will be his guardians.”
64. He said, “Should I entrust you with him except [under coercion] as I entrusted you with his brother before? But God is the best guardian, and He is the most merciful of the merciful.”
65. And when they opened their baggage, they found their merchandise returned to them. They said, “O our father, what [more] could we desire? This is our merchandise returned to us. And we will obtain supplies [i.e., food] for our family and protect our brother and obtain an increase of a camel’s load; that is an easy measurement.”

66. [Jacob] said, “Never will I send him with you until you give me a promise [i.e., oath] by God that you will bring him [back] to me, unless you should be surrounded [i.e., overcome by enemies].” And when they had given their promise, he said, “God, over what we say, is Witness.”
67. And he said, “O my sons, do not enter from one gate but enter from different gates; and I cannot avail you against [the decree of] God at all. The decision is only for God; upon Him I have relied, and upon Him let those who would rely [indeed] rely.”
68. And when they entered from where their father had ordered them, it did not avail them against God at all except [it was] a need [i.e., concern] within the soul of Jacob, which he satisfied. And indeed, he was a possessor of knowledge because of what We had taught him, but most of the people do not know.
69. And when they entered upon Joseph, he took his brother to himself; he said, “Indeed, I am your brother, so do not despair over what they used to do [to me].”
70. So when he had furnished them with their supplies, he put the [gold measuring] bowl into the bag of his brother. Then an announcer called out, “O caravan, indeed you are thieves.”
71. They said while approaching them, “What is it you are missing?”
72. They said, “We are missing the measure of the king. And for he who produces it is [the reward of] a camel’s load, and I am responsible for it.”
73. They said, “By God, you have certainly known that we did not come to cause corruption in the land, and we have not been thieves.”
74. They [the accusers] said, “Then what would be its recompense if you should be liars?”
75. The brothers] said, “Its recompense is that he in whose bag it is found—he [himself] will be its recompense. Thus do we recompense the wrongdoers.”
76. So he began [the search] with their bags before the bag of his brother; then he extracted it from the bag of his brother. Thus did We plan for Joseph. He could not have taken his brother within the religion [i.e., law] of the king except that God willed. We raise in degrees whom We will, but over every possessor of knowledge is one [more] knowing.
77. They said, “If he steals—a brother of his has stolen before.” But Joseph kept it within himself and did not reveal it to them. He said, “You are worse in position, and God is most knowing of what you describe.”
78. They said, “O Azeez, indeed he has a father [who is] an old man, so take one of us in place of him. Indeed, we see you as a doer of good.”
79. He said, “[I seek] the refuge of God [to prevent] that we take except him with whom we found our possession. Indeed, we would then be unjust.”
80. So when they had despaired of him, they secluded themselves in private consultation. The eldest of them said, “Do you not know that your father has taken upon you an oath by God and [that] before you failed in [your duty to] Joseph? So I will never leave [this] land until my father permits me or God decides for me, and He is the best of judges.
81. Return to your father and say, ‘O our father, indeed your son has stolen, and we did not testify except to what we knew. And we were not witnesses of the unseen.
82. And ask the city in which we were and the caravan in which we came—and indeed, we are truthful.”
83. [Jacob] said, “Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. Perhaps God will bring them to me all together. Indeed, it is He who is the Knowing, the Wise.”
84. And he turned away from them and said, “Oh, my sorrow over Joseph,” and his eyes became white from grief, for he was [of that] a suppressor.
85. They said, “By God, you will not cease remembering Joseph until you become fatally ill or become of those who perish.”
86. He said, “I only complain of my suffering and my grief to God, and I know from God that which you do not know.
87. O my sons, go and find out about Joseph and his brother and despair not of relief from God. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from God except the disbelieving people.”

88. So when they entered upon him [i.e., Joseph], they said, "O 'Azeez, adversity has touched us and our family, and we have come with goods poor in quality, but give us full measure and be charitable to us. Indeed, God rewards the charitable."
89. He said, "Do you know what you did with Joseph and his brother when you were ignorant?"
90. They said, "Are you indeed Joseph?" He said, "I am Joseph, and this is my brother. God has certainly favored us. Indeed, he who fears God and is patient, then indeed, God does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good."
91. They said, "By God, certainly has God preferred you over us, and indeed, we have been sinners."
92. He said, "No blame will there be upon you today. God will forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful."
93. Take this, my shirt, and cast it over the face of my father; he will become seeing. And bring me your family, all together."
94. And when the caravan departed [from Egypt], their father said, "Indeed, I find the smell of Joseph [and would say that he was alive] if you did not think me weakened in mind."
95. They said, "By God, indeed you are in your [same] old error."
96. And when the bearer of good tidings arrived, he cast it over his face, and he returned [once again] seeing. He said, "Did I not tell you that I know from God that which you do not know?"
97. They said, "O our father, ask for us forgiveness of our sins; indeed, we have been sinners."
98. He said, "I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful."
99. And when they entered upon Joseph, he took his parents to himself [i.e., embraced them] and said, "Enter Egypt, God willing, safe [and secure]."
100. And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they bowed to him in prostration. And he said, "O my father, this is the explanation of my vision of before. My Lord has made it reality. And He was certainly good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you [here] from bedouin life after Satan had induced [estrangement] between me and my brothers. Indeed, my Lord is Subtle in what He wills. Indeed, it is He who is the Knowing, the Wise."
101. My Lord, You have given me [something] of sovereignty and taught me of the interpretation of dreams. Creator of the heavens and earth, You are my protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Cause me to die a Muslim and join me with the righteous."
102. That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal, [O Muhammad], to you. And you were not with them when they put together their plan while they conspired.
103. And most of the people, although you strive [for it], are not believers.
104. And you do not ask of them for it any payment. It is not except a reminder to the worlds.
105. And how many a sign within the heavens and earth do they pass over while they, therefrom, are turning away.
106. And most of them believe not in God except while they associate others with Him.
107. Then do they feel secure that there will not come to them an overwhelming [aspect] of the punishment of God or that the Hour will not come upon them suddenly while they do not perceive?
108. Say, "This is my way; I invite to God with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is God; and I am not of those who associate others with Him."
109. And We sent not before you [as messengers] except men to whom We revealed from among the people of cities. So have they not traveled through the earth and observed how was the end of those before them? And the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear God; then will you not reason?
110. [They continued] until, when the messengers despaired and were certain that they had been denied, there came to them Our victory, and whoever We willed was saved. And Our punishment cannot be repelled from the people who are criminals.
111. There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was it [i.e., the Qur'an] a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe.

Sūrah 19: Maryam*In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful*

1. Kāf, Hā, Yā, ‘Ayn, Sād.
2. [This is] a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zechariah
3. When he called to his Lord a private call [i.e., supplication],
4. He said, “My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy [i.e., disappointed].
5. And indeed, I fear the successors after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from Yourself an heir
6. Who will inherit me and inherit from the family of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, pleasing [to You].”
7. [He was told], “O Zechariah, indeed We give you good tidings of a boy whose name will be John. We have not assigned to any before [this] name.”
8. He said, “My Lord, how will I have a boy when my wife has been barren and I have reached extreme old age?”
9. [An angel] said, “Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, ‘It is easy for Me, for I created you before, while you were nothing.’”
10. [Zechariah] said, “My Lord, make for me a sign.” He said, “Your sign is that you will not speak to the people for three nights, [being] sound.”
11. So he came out to his people from the prayer chamber and signaled to them to exalt [God] in the morning and afternoon.
12. [God said], “O John, take the Scripture [i.e., adhere to it] with determination.” And We gave him judgement [while yet] a boy
13. And affection from Us and purity, and he was fearing of God
14. And dutiful to his parents, and he was not a disobedient tyrant.
15. And peace be upon him the day he was born and the day he dies and the day he is raised alive.
16. And mention, [O Muhammad], in the Book [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east.
17. And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then We sent to her Our Angel [i.e., Gabriel], and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man.
18. She said, “Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you, [so leave me], if you should be fearing of God.”
19. He said, “I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy [i.e., son].”
20. She said, “How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?”
21. He said, “Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, ‘It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed.’”
22. So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place.
23. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, “Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten.”
24. But he called her from below her, “Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream.
25. And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates.
26. So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, ‘Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man.’”
27. Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, “O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented.
28. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste.”
29. So she pointed to him. They said, “How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child?”
30. [Jesus] said, “Indeed, I am the servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet.

31. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakāh as long as I remain alive
32. And [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant.
33. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive.”
34. That is Jesus, the son of Mary—the word of truth about which they are in dispute.
35. It is not [befitting] for God to take a son; exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, “Be,” and it is.
36. [Jesus said], “And indeed, God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path.”
37. Then the factions differed [concerning Jesus] from among them, so woe to those who disbelieved—from the scene of a tremendous Day.
38. How [clearly] they will hear and see the Day they come to Us, but the wrongdoers today are in clear error.
39. And warn them, [O Muhammad], of the Day of Regret, when the matter will be concluded; and [yet], they are in [a state of] heedlessness, and they do not believe.
40. Indeed, it is We who will inherit the earth and whoever is on it, and to Us they will be returned.
41. And mention in the Book [the story of] Abraham. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet.
42. [Mention] when he said to his father, “O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see and will not benefit you at all?”
43. O my father, indeed there has come to me of knowledge that which has not come to you, so follow me; I will guide you to an even path.
44. O my father, do not worship [i.e., obey] Satan. Indeed Satan has ever been, to the Most Merciful, disobedient.
45. O my father, indeed I fear that there will touch you a punishment from the Most Merciful so you would be to Satan a companion [in Hellfire].”
46. [His father] said, “Have you no desire for my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time.”
47. [Abraham] said, “Peace [i.e., safety] will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me.
48. And I will leave you and those you invoke other than God and will invoke my Lord. I expect that I will not be in invocation to my Lord unhappy [i.e., disappointed].”
49. So when he had left them and those they worshipped other than God, We gave him Isaac and Jacob, and each [of them] We made a prophet.
50. And We gave them of Our mercy, and We made for them a mention [i.e., reputation] of high honour.
51. And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was chosen, and he was a messenger and a prophet.
52. And We called him from the side of the mount at [his] right and brought him near, confiding [to him].
53. And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron as a prophet.
54. And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet.
55. And he used to enjoin on his people prayer and zakāh and was to his Lord pleasing [i.e., accepted by Him],
56. And mention in the Book, Idrees. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet.
57. And We raised him to a high station.
58. Those were the ones upon whom God bestowed favor from among the prophets of the descendants of Adam and of those We carried [in the ship] with Noah, and of the descendants of Abraham and Israel [i.e., Jacob], and of those whom We guided and chose. When the verses of the Most Merciful were recited to them, they fell in prostration and weeping.
59. But there came after them successors [i.e., later generations] who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil—

60. Except those who repent, believe and do righteousness; for those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged at all.
61. [Therein are] gardens of perpetual residence which the Most Merciful has promised His servants in the unseen. Indeed, His promise has ever been coming.
62. They will not hear therein any ill speech—only [greetings of] peace—and they will have their provision therein, morning and afternoon.
63. That is Paradise, which We give as inheritance to those of Our servants who were fearing of God.
64. [Gabriel said], “And we [angels] descend not except by the order of your Lord. To Him belongs that before us and that behind us and what is in between. And never is your Lord forgetful—
65. Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them—so worship Him and have patience for His worship. Do you know of any similarity to Him?”
66. And man [i.e., the disbeliever] says, “When I have died, am I going to be brought forth alive?”
67. Does man not remember that We created him before, while he was nothing?
68. So by your Lord, We will surely gather them and the devils; then We will bring them to be present around Hell upon their knees.
69. Then We will surely extract from every sect those of them who were worst against the Most Merciful in insolence.
70. Then, surely it is We who are most knowing of those most worthy of burning therein.
71. And there is none of you except he will come to it. This is upon your Lord an inevitability decreed.
72. Then We will save those who feared God and leave the wrongdoers within it, on their knees.
73. And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who disbelieve say to those who believe, “Which of [our] two parties is best in position and best in association?”
74. And how many a generation have We destroyed before them who were better in possessions and [outward] appearance?
75. Say, “Whoever is in error—let the Most Merciful extend for him an extension [in wealth and time] until, when they see that which they were promised—either punishment [in this world] or the Hour [of resurrection]—they will come to know who is worst in position and weaker in soldiers.”
76. And God increases those who were guided, in guidance, and the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for recourse.
77. Then, have you seen he who disbelieved in Our verses and said, “I will surely be given wealth and children [in the next life]?”
78. Has he looked into the unseen, or has he taken from the Most Merciful a promise?
79. No! We will record what he says and extend [i.e., increase] for him from the punishment extensively.
80. And We will inherit him [in] what he mentions, and he will come to Us alone.
81. And they have taken besides God [false] deities that they would be for them [a source of] honour.
82. No! They [i.e., those “gods”] will deny their worship of them and will be against them opponents [on the Day of Judgement].
83. Do you not see that We have sent the devils upon the disbelievers, inciting them [to evil] with [constant] incitement?
84. So be not impatient over them. We only count out [i.e., allow] to them a [limited] number.
85. On the Day We will gather the righteous to the Most Merciful as a delegation
86. And will drive the criminals to Hell in thirst
87. None will have [power of] intercession except he who had taken from the Most Merciful a covenant.
88. And they say, “The Most Merciful has taken [for Himself] a son.”
89. You have done an atrocious thing.

90. The heavens almost rupture therefrom and the earth splits open and the mountains collapse in devastation
91. That they attribute to the Most Merciful a son.
92. And it is not appropriate for the Most Merciful that He should take a son.
93. There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Merciful as a servant.
94. He has enumerated them and counted them a [full] counting.
95. And all of them are coming to Him on the Day of Resurrection alone.
96. Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds—the Most Merciful will appoint for them affection.
97. So, [O Muhammad], We have only made it [i.e., the Qurʾān] easy in your tongue [i.e., the Arabic language] that you may give good tidings thereby to the righteous and warn thereby a hostile people.
98. And how many have We destroyed before them of generations? Do you perceive of them anyone or hear from them a sound?

Sūrah 55: ar-Rahmān

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

1. The Most Merciful
2. Taught the Qurʾān,
3. Created man,
4. [And] taught him eloquence.
5. The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation,
6. And the stars and trees prostrate.
7. And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance
8. That you not transgress within the balance.
9. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.
10. And the earth He laid [out] for the creatures.
11. Therein is fruit and palm trees having sheaths [of dates]
12. And grain having husks and scented plants.
13. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
14. He created man from clay like [that of] pottery.
15. And He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire.
16. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
17. [He is] Lord of the two sunrises and Lord of the two sunsets.
18. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
19. He released the two seas, meeting [side by side];
20. Between them is a barrier [so] neither of them transgresses.
21. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
22. From both of them emerge pearl and coral.
23. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
24. And to Him belong the ships [with sails] elevated in the sea like mountains.
25. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
26. Everyone upon it [i.e., the earth] will perish,

27. And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honour.
28. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
29. Whoever is within the heavens and earth asks Him; every day He is in [i.e., bringing about] a matter.
30. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
31. We will attend to you, O prominent beings.
32. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
33. O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass. You will not pass except by authority [from God].
34. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
35. There will be sent upon you a flame of fire and smoke, and you will not defend yourselves.
36. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
37. And when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil—
38. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?—
39. Then on that Day none will be asked about his sin among men or jinn.
40. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
41. The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet.
42. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
43. This is Hell, which the criminals deny.
44. They will go around between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree].
45. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
46. But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens—
47. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?—
48. Having [spreading] branches.
49. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
50. In both of them are two springs, flowing.
51. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
52. In both of them are of every fruit, two kinds.
53. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
54. [They are] reclining on beds whose linings are of silk brocade, and the fruit of the two gardens is hanging low.
55. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
56. In them are women limiting [their] glances, untouched before them by man or jinn!—
57. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?—
58. As if they were rubies and coral.
59. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
60. Is the reward for good [anything] but good?
61. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
62. And below them both [in excellence] are two [other] gardens—
63. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?—
64. Dark green [in color].
65. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
66. In both of them are two springs, spouting.

67. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
68. In both of them are fruit and palm trees and pomegranates.
69. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
70. In them are good and beautiful women
71. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?—
72. Fair ones reserved in pavilions—
73. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?—
74. Untouched before them by man or jinni—
75. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?—
76. Reclining on green cushions and beautiful fine carpets.
77. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
78. Blessed is the name of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honour.

Sūrah 76: al-Insān

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

1. Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned?
2. Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may try him; and We made him hearing and seeing.
3. Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.
4. Indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers chains and shackles and a blaze.
5. Indeed, the righteous will drink from a cup [of wine] whose mixture is of Kāfūr,
6. A spring of which the [righteous] servants of God will drink; they will make it gush forth in force [and abundance].
7. They [are those who] fulfill [their] vows and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread.
8. And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive,
9. [Saying], “We feed you only for the countenance [i.e., approval] of God. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.
10. Indeed, We fear from our Lord a Day austere and distressful.”
11. So God will protect them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and happiness
12. And will reward them for what they patiently endured [with] a garden [in Paradise] and silk [garments].
13. [They will be] reclining therein on adorned couches. They will not see therein any [burning] sun or [freezing] cold.
14. And near above them are its shades, and its [fruit] to be picked will be lowered in compliance.
15. And there will be circulated among them vessels of silver and cups having been [created] clear [as glass],
16. Clear glasses [made] from silver of which they have determined the measure.
17. And they will be given to drink a cup [of wine] whose mixture is of ginger
18. [From] a fountain within it [i.e., Paradise] named Salsabeel.
19. There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. When you see them, you would think them [as beautiful as] scattered pearls.
20. And when you look there [in Paradise], you will see pleasure and great dominion.
21. Upon them [i.e., the inhabitants] will be green garments of fine silk and brocade. And they will be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord will give them a purifying drink.

22. [And it will be said], “Indeed, this is for you a reward, and your effort has been appreciated.”
23. Indeed, it is We who have sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Qur’ān progressively.
24. So be patient for the decision of your Lord and do not obey from among them a sinner or ungrateful [disbeliever].
25. And mention the name of your Lord [in prayer] morning and evening
26. And during the night prostrate to Him and exalt [i.e., praise] Him a long [part of the] night.
27. Indeed, these [disbelievers] love the immediate and leave behind them a grave Day.
28. We have created them and strengthened their forms, and when We will, We can change their likenesses with [complete] alteration.
29. Indeed, this is a reminder, so he who wills may take to his Lord a way.
30. And you do not will except that God wills. Indeed, God is ever Knowing and Wise.
31. He admits whom He wills into His mercy; but the wrongdoers—He has prepared for them a painful punishment.

Sūrah 112: al-Ikhlās

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

1. Say, “He is God, [who is] One,
2. God, the Eternal Refuge.
3. He neither begets nor is born,
4. Nor is there to Him any equivalent.”

DIVANI SHAMSI TABRIZ AND MASNAVI

Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273 C.E.)

Persian literature

Although Rumi was born in Afghanistan and lived in Turkey, his poetry was written mostly in Persian, and his Sufi religious beliefs transcended national boundaries. Afghanistan was on the edge of the Persian Empire, and Rumi’s father was a traditional Islamic religious teacher who trained his son to follow in his footsteps. When he was forty, Rumi had a religious epiphany when he met Shams, a wandering Sufi, who was about sixty. Rumi became a Sufi, and the outpouring of poetry that followed was staggering. Sufism combines ideas from Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, and it attempts to achieve union with God: not by logical means (which is beyond the ability of the human mind), but by emotional means. Rumi founded the Mevlevi order of dervishes, sometimes called whirling dervishes because of the spinning dance that they do to achieve a trance-like state. Despite the loss of Shams, who may have been murdered by Rumi’s jealous disciples, Rumi continued to write, amassing over forty thousand couplets of poetry over his lifetime. The *Divani Shamsi Tabriz* is a collection of individual poems, including poems in the *ghazal* form and the *rubaiyat* form (which are different ways to group couplets). The *Masnavi* (also spelled *Mathnavi* or *Mathnawi*) is referred to as the “*Quran* in Persian”; it was meant to teach his followers the spirit of Sufi Islam, drawing on the *Quran*, folktales, and anecdotes (among other forms) for the prose sections between the poems. Unlike the *Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, the *Masnavi* is a cohesive collection, with a moral to each story. Today Rumi is the most important medieval Persian poet and one of the most widely-read mystical poets. Perhaps in part because of his emphasis on the positive, and his embrace of all religions, Rumi is now the best-selling poet in the United States (Ciabattari).



IMAGE 6.3: RUMI | A portrait of Rumi (or Molavi, as he is known in Iran) well-dressed and with a white beard.

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SELECTIONS FROM THE PERSIAN MYSTICS

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Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí, edited by F. Hadland Davis, L. Cranmer-Byng, and S. A. Kapadia

Sorrow Quenched In The Beloved

Through grief my days are as labour and sorrow.
My days move on, hand in hand with anguish.
Yet, though my days vanish thus, 'tis no matter.
Do Thou abide, Incomparable Pure One.

The Music Of Love

Hail to thee, then, O love, sweet madness!
Thou who healest all our infirmities!
Who art the Physician of our pride and self-conceit!
Who art our Plato and our Galen!
Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven,
And makes the very hills to dance with joy!
O lover, 'twas Love that gave life to Mount Sinai,
When "it quaked, and Moses fell down in a swoon."
Did my Beloved only touch me with His lips,
I too, like a flute, would burst out into melody.

When The Rose Has Faded

When the rose has faded and the garden is withered,
The song of the nightingale is no longer to be heard.
The BELOVED is all in all, the lover only veils Him;
The BELOVED is all that lives, the lover a dead thing.
When the lover feels no longer love's quickening,
He becomes like a bird who has lost its wings. Alas!
How can I retain my senses about me,
When the beloved shows not the Light of His countenance?

The Silence Of Love

Love is the astrolabe of God's mysteries.
A lover may hanker after this love or that love,
But at the last he is drawn to the king of Love.
However much we describe and explain Love,
When we fall in love we are ashamed of our words.
Explanation by the tongue makes most things clear,
But Love unexplained is better.

Earthly Love Essential To The Love Divine

In one 'twas said, "Leave power and weakness alone;
Whatever withdraws thine eyes from God is an idol."
In one 'twas said, "Quench not thy earthly torch,
That it may be a light to lighten mankind.
If thou neglectest regard and care for it,
Thou wilt quench at midnight the lamp of Union."

The Eternal Spendour Of The Beloved

Why dost Thou flee from the cries of us on earth?
Why pourest Thou sorrow on the heart of the sorrowful?
O Thou who, as each new morn dawns from the east,

Art seen uprising anew, like a bright fountain!
 What excuse makest Thou for Thy witcheries?
 O Thou whose lips are sweeter than sugar.
 Thou that ever renewest the life of this old world.
 Hear the cry of this lifeless body and heart!

Woman

Woman is a ray of God, not a mere mistress,
 The Creator's Self, as it were, not a mere creature!

The Divine Union

Mustafa became beside himself at that sweet call,
 His prayer failed on "the night of the early morning halt."
 He lifted not head from that blissful sleep,
 So that his morning prayer was put off till noon.
 On that, his wedding night, in the presence of his bride.
 His pure soul attained to kiss her hands.
 Love and mistress are both veiled and hidden.
 Impute it not a fault if I call Him "Bride."

"He Knows About It All"

He who is from head to foot a perfect rose or lily.
 To him spring brings rejoicing.
 The useless thorn desires the autumn,
 That autumn may associate itself with the garden;
 And hide the rose's beauty and the thorn's shame,
 That men may not see the bloom of the one and the other's shame;
 That common stone and pure ruby may appear all as one.

Resignation

True, the Gardener knows the difference in the autumn,
 But the sight of One is better than the world's sight.

Resignation The Way To Prefection

Whoso recognises and confesses his own defects
 Is hastening in the way that leads to Perfection!
 But he advances not towards the Almighty
 Who fancies himself to be perfect.

Love The Source Of Light Rather Than Vanishing Form

Whatsoever is perceived by sense He annuls,
 But He establishes that which is hidden from the senses.
 The lover's love is visible, his Beloved hidden.
 The Friend is absent, the distraction He causes present.
 Renounce these affections for outward forms,
 Love depends not on outward form or face.
 Whatever is beloved is not a mere empty form,
 Whether your beloved be of the earth or heaven.
 Whatever is the form you have fallen in love with—
 Why do you forsake it the moment life leaves it?



IMAGE 6.4: JALAL AL-DIN RUMI MATHNAVI-I MA'NAVI | The pages of a Persian manuscript.

Author: Hussain ibn Shaikh 'Ali
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The Religion Of Love

The form is still there; whence then this disgust at it?
Ah! lover, consider well what is really your beloved.
If a thing perceived by outward senses is the beloved,
Then all who retain their senses must still love it;
And since Love increases constancy,
How can constancy fail while form abides?
But the truth is, the sun's beams strike the wall.
And the wall only reflects that borrowed light.
Why give your heart to mere stones, simpleton?
Go! Seek the Source of Light which shineth always!

The Religion Of Love

The sect of lovers is distinct from all others,
Lovers have a religion and a faith of their own.
Though the ruby has no stamp, what matters it?
Love is fearless in the midst of the sea of fear.

“Pain Is Treasure”

Pain is a treasure, for it contains mercies;
The kernel is soft when the rind is scraped off.



IMAGE 6.5: MASNAVI | Pages of a Persian manuscript with beautiful blue decorations around the text.

Author: Georges Jansoone

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SELECTIONS FROM THE FLOWERS OF THE PERSIAN POETS

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Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí, edited by Nathan Haskell Dole and Belle M. Walker

“I To Myself Am Unknown”

Lo, for I to myself am unknown, now in God's name what must I do?
 I adore not the Cross nor the Crescent, I am not a Gianour nor a Jew.
 East nor West land nor sea is my home, I have kin nor with angel nor gnome,
 I am wrought not of fire nor of foam, I am shaped not of dust nor of dew.
 I was born not in China afar, not in Saqsin and not in Bulghar;
 Not in India, where five rivers are, nor 'Iraq nor Khorasan I grew.
 Not in this world nor that world I dwell, not in Paradise, neither in Hell;
 Not from Eden and Rizwan I fell, not from Adam my lineage I drew.
 In a place beyond uttermost Place, in a tract without shadow of trace,
 Soul and body transcending, I live in the soul of my Loved One anew!

SHAHNAMEH

Abu'l-Qasim Ferdowsi (ca. 935-ca. 1020 C.E.)

Begun ca. 977 and finished 1010 C.E.

Iran

Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, or *Book of Kings*, is an epic that includes other material, stretching from the creation of the world, through the legendary heroes that are the protagonists of epic literature, to the historical kings of Persia (modern-day Iran) up to the Muslim invasion. Written in classical Persian, with very few Arabic words, the *Shahnameh* records the history of Persia at a time when its traditions were changing. The characters in the epic follow Zoroastrianism, the state religion of Persia from at least 1000 B.C.E. (and perhaps as early as 1500 B.C.E.) until the Muslim invasion in 650 C.E. Zoroastrianism is monotheistic; the one god is Ahura Mazda (also called Hormozd in the text), who is challenged by an evil spirit named Angra Mainyu (also called Ahriman in the text). In the story of “Sekander” (Alexander the Great), Ferdowsi rewrites history, making Alexander the (secret) son of a Persian king, so that his conquest of the Persian Empire is an internal struggle, rather than a Persian defeat by an outside invader. In “Rudabeh,” the meeting of Rudabeh and her true love includes the earliest written reference to a Rapunzel-like scene in literature. The other selection is from the story of Rostam and his son Sohrab, one of the most famous and frequently translated sections in the epic because of its subject matter: a father and son who unknowingly end up on opposite sides on a battlefield.

*Written by Laura J. Getty***“THE SHAH NAMEH FROM PERSIAN LITERATURE, VOLUME 1**

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Firdusi, translated by James Atkinson

“Rúdábeh

The chief of Kábul was descended from the family of Zohák. He was named Mihráb, and to secure the safety of his state, paid annual tribute to Sám. Mihráb, on the arrival of Zál, went out of the city to see him, and was hospitably entertained by the young hero, who soon discovered that he had a daughter of wonderful attractions.

Her name Rúdábeh; screened from public view,
 Her countenance is brilliant as the sun;
 From head to foot her lovely form is fair
 As polished ivory. Like the spring, her cheek
 Presents a radiant bloom,—in stature tall,
 And o'er her silvery brightness, richly flow

Dark musky ringlets clustering to her feet.
 She blushes like the rich pomegranate flower;
 Her eyes are soft and sweet as the narcissus,
 Her lashes from the raven's jetty plume
 Have stolen their blackness, and her brows are bent
 Like archer's bow. Ask ye to see the moon?
 Look at her face. Seek ye for musky fragrance?
 She is all sweetness. Her long fingers seem
 Pencils of silver, and so beautiful
 Her presence, that she breathes of Heaven and love.

Such was the description of Rúdábēh, which inspired the heart of Zál with the most violent affection, and imagination added to her charms.

Mihráb again waited on Zál, who received him graciously, and asked him in what manner he could promote his wishes. Mihráb said that he only desired him to become his guest at a banquet he intended to invite him to; but Zál thought proper to refuse, because he well knew, if he accepted an invitation of the kind from a relation of Zohák, that his father Sám and the King of Persia would be offended. Mihráb returned to Kábul disappointed, and having gone into his harem, his wife, Síndokht, inquired after the stranger from Zábul, the white-headed son of Sám. She wished to know what he was like, in form and feature, and what account he gave of his sojourn with the Símúrg. Mihráb described him in the warmest terms of admiration—he was valiant, he said, accomplished and handsome, with no other defect than that of white hair. And so boundless was his praise, that Rúdábēh, who was present, drank every word with avidity, and felt her own heart warmed into admiration and love. Full of emotion, she afterwards said privately to her attendants:

“To you alone the secret of my heart
 I now unfold; to you alone confess
 The deep sensations of my captive soul.
 I love, I love; all day and night of him
 I think alone—I see him in my dreams—
 You only know my secret—aid me now,
 And soothe the sorrows of my bursting heart.”

The attendants were startled with this confession and entreaty, and ventured to remonstrate against so preposterous an attachment.

“What! hast thou lost all sense of shame,
 All value for thy honored name!
 That thou, in loveliness supreme,
 Of every tongue the constant theme,
 Should choose, and on another's word.
 The nursling of a Mountain Bird!
 A being never seen before,
 Which human mother never bore!
 And can the hoary locks of age,
 A youthful heart like thine engage?
 Must thy enchanting form be prest
 To such a dubious monster's breast?
 And all thy beauty's rich array,
 Thy peerless charms be thrown away?”

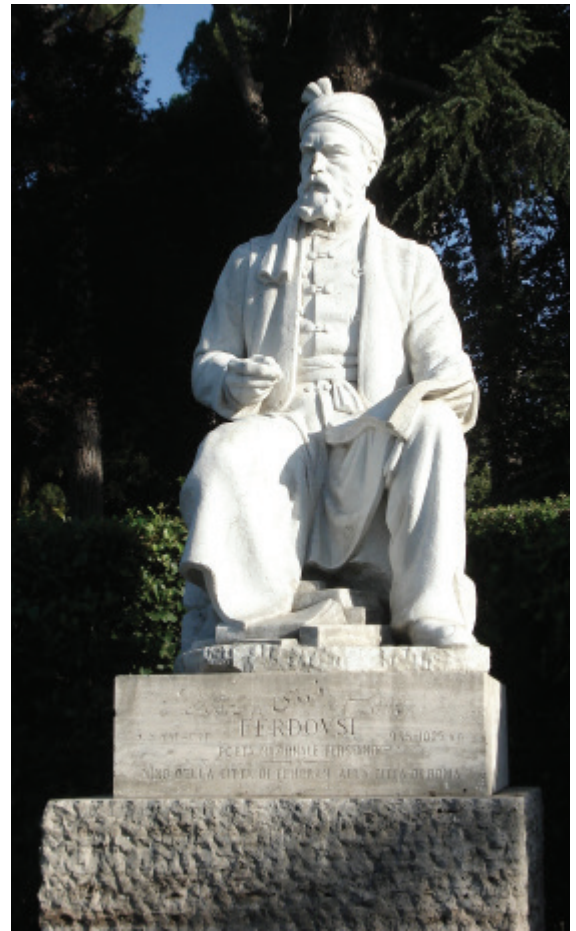


IMAGE 6.6: STATUE OF FERDOWSI | Marble statue of Ferdowsi seated.

Author: User “Harlock81”
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This violent remonstrance was more calculated to rouse the indignation of Rúdábeh than to induce her to change her mind. It did so. But she subdued her resentment, and again dwelt upon the ardor of her passion.

“My attachment is fixed, my election is made,
 And when hearts are enchained ‘tis in vain to upbraid.
 Neither Kízar nor Faghfúr I wish to behold,
 Nor the monarch of Persia with jewels and gold;
 All, all I despise, save the choice of my heart,
 And from his beloved image I never can part.
 Call him aged, or young, ‘tis a fruitless endeavour
 To uproot a desire I must cherish for ever;
 Call him old, call him young, who can passion control?
 Ever present, and loved, he entrances my soul.
 ‘Tis for him I exist—him I worship alone,
 And my heart it must bleed till I call him my own.”

As soon as the attendants found that Rúdábeh’s attachment was deeply fixed, and not to be removed, they changed their purpose, and became obedient to her wishes, anxious to pursue any measure that might bring Zál and their mistress together. Rúdábeh was delighted with this proof of their regard.

It was spring-time, and the attendants repaired towards the halting-place of Zál, in the neighborhood of the city. Their occupation seemed to be gathering roses along the romantic banks of a pellucid streamlet, and when they purposely strayed opposite the tent of Zál, he observed them, and asked his friends—why they presumed to gather roses in his garden. He was told that they were damsels sent by the moon of Kábulistán from the palace of Mihráb to gather roses, and upon hearing this his heart was touched with emotion. He rose up and rambled about for amusement, keeping the direction of the river, followed by a servant with a bow. He was not far from the damsels, when a bird sprung up from the water, which he shot, upon the wing, with an arrow. The bird happened to fall near the rose-gatherers, and Zál ordered his servant to bring it to him. The attendants of Rúdábeh lost not the opportunity, as he approached them, to inquire who the archer was. “Know ye not,” answered the servant, “that this is Ním-rúz, the son of Sám, and also called Dustán, the greatest warrior ever known.” At this the damsels smiled, and said that they too belonged to a person of distinction—and not of inferior worth—to a star in the palace of Mihráb. “We have come from Kábul to the King of Zábulistán, and should Zál and Rúdábeh be of equal rank, her ruby lips may become acquainted with his, and their wished-for union be effected.” When the servant returned, Zál was immediately informed of the conversation that had taken place, and in consequence presents were prepared.

They who to gather roses came—went back
 With precious gems—and honorary robes;
 And two bright finger-rings were secretly
 Sent to the princess.

Then did the attendants of Rúdábeh exult in the success of their artifice, and say that the lion had come into their toils. Rúdábeh herself, however, had some fears on the subject. She anxiously sought to know exactly the personal appearance of Zál, and happily her warmest hopes were realized by the description she received. But one difficulty remained—how were they to meet? How was she to see with her own eyes the man whom her fancy had depicted in such glowing colors? Her attendants, sufficiently expert at intrigue, soon contrived the means of gratifying her wishes. There was a beautiful rural retreat in a sequestered situation, the apartments of which were adorned with pictures of great men, and ornamented in the most splendid manner. To this favorite place Rúdábeh retired, and most magnificently dressed, awaiting the coming of Zál, whom her attendants had previously invited to repair thither as soon as the sun had gone down. The shadows of evening were falling as he approached, and the enamoured princess thus addressed him from her balcony:—

“May happiness attend thee ever, thou,
 Whose lucid features make this gloomy night
 Clear as the day; whose perfume scents the breeze;
 Thou who, regardless of fatigue, hast come
 On foot too, thus to see me—”

Hearing a sweet voice, he looked up, and beheld a bright face in the balcony, and he said to the beautiful vision:

“How often have I hoped that Heaven
 Would, in some secret place display
 Thy charms to me, and thou hast given
 My heart the wish of many a day;
 For now thy gentle voice I hear,
 And now I see thee—speak again!
 Speak freely in a willing ear,
 And every wish thou hast obtain.”

Not a word was lost upon Rúdábeh, and she soon accomplished her object. Her hair was so luxuriant, and of such a length, that casting it loose it flowed down from the balcony; and, after fastening the upper part to a ring, she requested Zál to take hold of the other end and mount up. He ardently kissed the musky tresses, and by them quickly ascended.

Then hand in hand within the chambers they
 Gracefully passed.—Attractive was the scene,
 The walls embellished by the painter’s skill,
 And every object exquisitely formed,
 Sculpture, and architectural ornament,
 Fit for a king. Zál with amazement gazed
 Upon what art had done, but more he gazed
 Upon the witching radiance of his love,
 Upon her tulip cheeks, her musky locks,
 Breathing the sweetness of a summer garden;
 Upon the sparkling brightness of her rings,
 Necklace, and bracelets, glittering on her arms.
 His mien too was majestic—on his head
 He wore a ruby crown, and near his breast
 Was seen a belted dagger. Fondly she
 With side-long glances marked his noble aspect,
 The fine proportions of his graceful limbs,
 His strength and beauty. Her enamoured heart
 Suffused her cheek with blushes, every glance
 Increased the ardent transports of her soul.
 So mild was his demeanour, he appeared
 A gentle lion toying with his prey.
 Long they remained rapt in admiration
 Of each other. At length the warrior rose,
 And thus addressed her: “It becomes not us
 To be forgetful of the path of prudence,
 Though love would dictate a more ardent course,
 How oft has Sám, my father, counselled me,
 Against unseemingly thoughts,—unseemingly deeds,—
 Always to choose the right, and shun the wrong.
 How will he burn with anger when he hears
 This new adventure; how will Minúchihr
 Indignantly reproach me for this dream!
 This waking dream of rapture! but I call
 High Heaven to witness what I now declare—
 Whoever may oppose my sacred vows,
 I still am thine, affianced thine, for ever.”

And thus Rúdábeh: “Thou hast won my heart,
 And kings may sue in vain; to thee devoted,
 Thou art alone my warrior and my love.”
 Thus they exclaimed,—then Zál with fond adieus

Softly descended from the balcony,
And hastened to his tent.

As speedily as possible he assembled together his counsellors and Múbirds to obtain their advice on the present extraordinary occasion, and he represented to them the sacred importance of encouraging matrimonial alliances.

For marriage is a contract sealed by Heaven—
How happy is the Warrior's lot, amidst
His smiling children; when he dies, his son
Succeeds him, and enjoys his rank and name.
And is it not a glorious thing to say—
This is the son of Zál, or this of Sám,
The heir of his renowned progenitor?

He then related to them the story of his love and affection for the daughter of Mihráb; but the Múbirds, well knowing that the chief of Kábul was of the family of Zohák, the serpent-king, did not approve the union desired, which excited the indignation of Zál. They, however, recommended his writing a letter to Sám, who might, if he thought proper, refer the matter to Minúchihr. The letter was accordingly written and despatched, and when Sám received it, he immediately referred the question to his astrologers, to know whether the nuptials, if solemnized between Zál and Rúdábeh, would be prosperous or not. They foretold that the nuptials would be prosperous, and that the issue would be a son of wonderful strength and power, the conqueror of the world. This announcement delighted the heart of the old warrior, and he sent the messenger back with the assurance of his approbation of the proposed union, but requested that the subject might be kept concealed till he returned with his army from the expedition to Karugsár, and was able to consult with Minúchihr.

Zál, exulting at his success, communicated the glad tidings to Rúdábeh by their female emissary, who had hitherto carried on successfully the correspondence between them. But as she was conveying an answer to this welcome news, and some presents to Zál, Síndokht, the mother of Rúdábeh, detected her, and, examining the contents of the packet, she found sufficient evidence, she thought, of something wrong.

“What treachery is this? What have we here!
Sirbund and male attire? Thou, wretch, confess!
Disclose thy secret doings.”

The emissary, however, betrayed nothing; but declared that she was a dealer in jewels and dresses, and had been only showing her merchandise to Rúdábeh. Síndokht, in extreme agitation of mind, hastened to her daughter's apartment to ascertain the particulars of this affair, when Rúdábeh at once fearlessly acknowledged her unalterable affection for Zál,

“I love him so devotedly, all day,
All night my tears have flowed unceasingly;
And one hair of his head I prize more dearly
Than all the world beside; for him I live;
And we have met, and we have sat together,
And pledged our mutual love with mutual joy
And innocence of heart.”

Rúdábeh further informed her of Sám's consent to their nuptials, which in some degree satisfied the mother. But when Mihráb was made acquainted with the arrangement, his rage was unbounded, for he dreaded the resentment of Sám and Minúchihr when the circumstances became fully known to them. Trembling with indignation he drew his dagger, and would have instantly rushed to Rúdábeh's chamber to destroy her, had not Síndokht fallen at his feet and restrained him. He insisted, however, on her being brought before him; and upon his promise not to do her any harm, Síndokht complied. Rúdábeh disdained to take off her ornaments to appear as an offender and a suppliant, but, proud of her choice, went into her father's presence, gayly adorned with jewels, and in splendid apparel. Mihráb received her with surprise.

“Why all this glittering finery? Is the devil
United to an angel? When a snake

Is met with in Arabia, it is killed!”

But Rúdábeh answered not a word, and was permitted to retire with her mother.

When Minúchihr was apprised of the proceedings between Zál and Rúdábeh, he was deeply concerned, anticipating nothing but confusion and ruin to Persia from the united influence of Zál and Mihráb. Feridún had purified the world from the abominations of Zohák, and as Mihráb was a descendant of that merciless tyrant, he feared that some attempt would be made to resume the enormities of former times; Sám was therefore required to give his advice on the occasion.

The conqueror of Karugsár and Mázinderán was received on his return with cordial rejoicings, and he charmed the king with the story of his triumphant success. The monarch against whom he had fought was descended, on the mother's side, from Zohák, and his Demon army was more numerous than ants, or clouds of locusts, covering mountain and plain. Sám thus proceeded in his description of the conflict.

“And when he heard my voice, and saw what deeds
I had performed, approaching me, he threw
His noose; but downward bending I escaped,
And with my bow I showered upon his head
Steel-pointed arrows, piercing through the brain;
Then did I grasp his loins, and from his horse
Cast him upon the ground, deprived of life.
At this, the demons terrified and pale,
Shrunk back, some flying to the mountain wilds,
And others, taken on the battle-field,
Became obedient to the Persian king.”

Minúchihr, gratified by this result of the expedition, appointed Sám to a new enterprise, which was to destroy Kábul by fire and sword, especially the house of Mihráb; and that ruler, of the serpent-race, and all his adherents were to be put to death. Sám, before he took leave to return to his own government at Zábul, tried to dissuade him from this violent exercise of revenge, but without making any sensible impression upon him.

Meanwhile the vindictive intentions of Minúchihr, which were soon known at Kábul, produced the greatest alarm and consternation in the family of Mihráb. Zál now returned to his father, and Sám sent a letter to Minúchihr, again to deprecate his wrath, and appointed Zál the messenger. In this letter Sám enumerates his services at Karugsár and Mázinderán, and especially dwells upon the destruction of a prodigious dragon.

“I am thy servant, and twice sixty years
Have seen my prowess. Mounted on my steed,
Wielding my battle-axe, overthrowing heroes,
Who equals Sám, the warrior? I destroyed
The mighty monster, whose devouring jaws
Unpeopled half the land, and spread dismay
From town to town. The world was full of horror,
No bird was seen in air, no beast of prey
In plain or forest; from the stream he drew
The crocodile; the eagle from the sky.
The country had no habitant alive,
And when I found no human being left,
I cast away all fear, and girt my loins,
And in the name of God went boldly forth,
Armed for the strife. I saw him towering rise,
Huge as a mountain, with his hideous hair
Dragging upon the ground; his long black tongue
Shut up the path; his eyes two lakes of blood;
And, seeing me, so horrible his roar,
The earth shook with affright, and from his mouth
A flood of poison issued. Like a lion
Forward I sprang, and in a moment drove
A diamond-pointed arrow through his tongue,

Fixing him to the ground. Another went
Down his deep throat, and dreadfully he writhed.
A third passed through his middle. Then I raised
My battle-axe, cow-headed, and with one
Tremendous blow, dislodged his venomous brain,
And deluged all around with blood and poison.
There lay the monster dead, and soon the world
Regained its peace and comfort. Now I'm old,
The vigour of my youth is past and gone,
And it becomes me to resign my station,
To Zál, my gallant son."

Mihráb continued in such extreme agitation, that in his own mind he saw no means of avoiding the threatened desolation of his country but by putting his wife and daughter to death. Síndokht however had a better resource, and suggested the expediency of waiting upon Sám herself, to induce him to forward her own views and the nuptials between Zál and Rúdábeh. To this Mihráb assented, and she proceeded, mounted on a richly caparisoned horse, to Zábúl with most magnificent presents, consisting of three hundred thousand dínars; ten horses with golden, and thirty with silver, housings; sixty richly attired damsels, carrying golden trays of jewels and musk, and camphor, and wine, and sugar; forty pieces of figured cloth; a hundred milch camels, and a hundred others for burden; two hundred Indian swords, a golden crown and throne, and four elephants. Sám was amazed and embarrassed by the arrival of this splendid array. If he accepted the presents, he would incur the anger of Minúchihr; and if he rejected them, Zál would be disappointed and driven to despair. He at length accepted them, and concurred in the wishes of Síndokht respecting the union of the two lovers.

When Zál arrived at the court of Minúchihr, he was received with honor, and the letter of Sám being read, the king was prevailed upon to consent to the pacific proposals that were made in favor of Mihráb, and the nuptials. He too consulted his astrologers, and was informed that the offspring of Zál and Rúdábeh would be a hero of matchless strength and valor. Zál, on his return through Kábúl, had an interview with Rúdábeh, who welcomed him in the most rapturous terms:—

Be thou for ever blest, for I adore thee,
And make the dust of thy fair feet my pillow.

In short, with the approbation of all parties the marriage at length took place, and was celebrated at the beautiful summer-house where first the lovers met. Sám was present at Kábúl on the happy occasion, and soon afterwards returned to Sístán, preparatory to resuming his martial labors in Karugsár and Mázinderán.

As the time drew near that Rúdábeh should become a mother, she suffered extremely from constant indisposition, and both Zál and Síndokht were in the deepest distress on account of her precarious state.

The cypress leaf was withering; pale she lay,
Unsoothed by rest or sleep, death seemed approaching.

At last Zál recollected the feather of the Símúrgh, and followed the instructions which he had received, by placing it on the fire. In a moment darkness surrounded them, which was, however, immediately dispersed by the sudden appearance of the Símúrgh. "Why," said the Símúrgh, "do I see all this grief and sorrow? Why are the tears in the warrior's eyes? A child will be born of mighty power, who will become the wonder of the world."

The Símúrgh then gave some advice which was implicitly attended to, and the result was that Rúdábeh was soon out of danger. Never was beheld so prodigious a child. The father and mother were equally amazed. They called the boy Rustem. On the first day he looked a year old, and he required the milk of ten nurses. A likeness of him was immediately worked in silk, representing him upon a horse, and armed like a warrior, which was sent to Sám, who was then fighting in Mázinderán, and it made the old champion almost delirious with joy. At Kábúl and Zábúl there was nothing but feasting and rejoicing, as soon as the tidings were known, and thousands of dínars were given away in charity to the poor. When Rustem was five years of age, he ate as much as a man, and some say that even in his third year he rode on horseback. In his eighth year he was as powerful as any hero of the time.

In beauty of form and in vigour of limb,
No mortal was ever seen equal to him.

Both Sám and Mihráb, though far distant from the scene of felicity, were equally anxious to proceed to Zábulistán to behold their wonderful grandson. Both set off, but Mihráb arrived first with great pomp, and a whole army for his suite, and went forth with Zál to meet Sám, and give him an honorable welcome. The boy Rustem was mounted on an elephant, wearing a splendid crown, and wanted to join them, but his father kindly prevented him undergoing the inconvenience of alighting. Zál and Mihráb dismounted as soon as Sám was seen at a distance, and performed the ceremonies of an affectionate reception. Sám was indeed amazed when he did see the boy, and showered blessings on his head.

Afterwards Sám placed Mihráb on his right hand, and Zál on his left, and Rustem before him, and began to converse with his grandson, who thus manifested to him his martial disposition.

“Thou art the champion of the world, and I
The branch of that fair tree of which thou art
The glorious root: to thee I am devoted,
But ease and leisure have no charms for me;
Nor music, nor the songs of festive joy.
Mounted and armed, a helmet on my brow,
A javelin in my grasp, I long to meet
The foe, and cast his severed head before thee.”

Then Sám made a royal feast, and every apartment in his palace was richly decorated, and resounded with mirth and rejoicing. Mihráb was the merriest, and drank the most, and in his cups saw nothing but himself, so vain had he become from the countenance he had received. He kept saying:—

“Now I feel no alarm about Sám or Zál-zer,
Nor the splendour and power of the great Minúchihr;
Whilst aided by Rustem, his sword, and his mace,
Not a cloud of misfortune can shadow my face.
All the laws of Zohák I will quickly restore,
And the world shall be fragrant and blest as before.”

This exultation plainly betrayed the disposition of his race; and though Sám smiled at the extravagance of Mihráb, he looked up towards Heaven, and prayed that Rustem might not prove a tyrant, but be continually active in doing good, and humble before God.

Upon Sám departing, on his return to Karugsár and Mázinderán, Zál went with Rustem to Sístán, a province dependent on his government, and settled him there. The white elephant, belonging to Minúchihr, was kept at Sístán. One night Rustem was awakened out of his sleep by a great noise, and cries of distress when starting up and inquiring the cause, he was told that the white elephant had got loose, and was trampling and crushing the people to death. In a moment he issued from his apartment, brandishing his mace; but was soon stopped by the servants, who were anxious to expostulate with him against venturing out in the darkness of night to encounter a ferocious elephant. Impatient at being thus interrupted he knocked down one of the watchmen, who fell dead at his feet, and the others running away, he broke the lock of the gate, and escaped. He immediately opposed himself to the enormous animal, which looked like a mountain, and kept roaring like the River Nil. Regarding him with a cautious and steady eye, he gave a loud shout, and fearlessly struck him a blow, with such strength and vigor, that the iron mace was bent almost double. The elephant trembled, and soon fell exhausted and lifeless in the dust. When it was communicated to Zál that Rustem had killed the animal with one blow, he was amazed, and fervently returned thanks to heaven. He called him to him, and kissed him, and said: “My darling boy, thou art indeed unequalled in valor and magnanimity.”

Then it occurred to Zál that Rustem, after such an achievement, would be a proper person to take vengeance on the enemies of his grandfather Narímán, who was sent by Feridún with a large army against an enchanted fort situated upon the mountain Sipund, and who whilst endeavoring to effect his object, was killed by a piece of rock thrown down from above by the besieged. The fort, which was many miles high, inclosed beautiful lawns of the freshest verdure, and delightful gardens abounding with fruit and flowers; it was also full of treasure. Sám, on hearing of the fate of his father, was deeply afflicted, and in a short time proceeded against the fort himself; but he was surrounded by a trackless desert. He knew not what course to pursue; not a being was ever seen to enter or come out of the gates, and, after spending months and years in fruitless endeavors, he was compelled to retire from the appalling enterprise in despair. “Now,” said Zál to Rustem, “the time is come, and the remedy is at hand; thou art yet unknown, and may easily accomplish our purpose.” Rustem agreed to the proposed adventure, and according to

his father's advice, assumed the dress and character of a salt-merchant, prepared a caravan of camels, and secreted arms for himself and companions among the loads of salt. Everything being ready they set off, and it was not long before they reached the fort on the mountain Sipund. Salt being a precious article, and much wanted, as soon as the garrison knew that it was for sale, the gates were opened; and then was Rustem seen, together with his warriors, surrounded by men, women, and children, anxiously making their purchases, some giving clothes in exchange, some gold, and some silver, without fear or suspicion.

But when the night came on, and it was dark,
 Rustem impatient drew his warriors forth,
 And moved towards the mansion of the chief—
 But not unheard. The unaccustomed noise,
 Announcing warlike menace and attack,
 Awoke the Kotwál, who sprung up to meet
 The peril threatened by the invading foe.
 Rustem meanwhile uplifts his ponderous mace,
 And cleaves his head, and scatters on the ground
 The reeking brains. And now the garrison
 Are on the alert, all hastening to the spot
 Where battle rages; midst the deepened gloom
 Flash sparkling swords, which show the crimson earth
 Bright as the ruby.

Rustem continued fighting with the people of the fort all night, and just as morning dawned, he discovered the chief and slew him. Those who survived, then escaped, and not one of the inhabitants remained within the walls alive. Rustem's next object was to enter the governor's mansion. It was built of stone, and the gate, which was made of iron, he burst open with his battle-axe, and advancing onward, he discovered a temple, constructed with infinite skill and science, beyond the power of mortal man, and which contained amazing wealth, in jewels and gold. All the warriors gathered for themselves as much treasure as they could carry away, and more than imagination can conceive; and Rustem wrote to Zál to know his further commands on the subject of the capture. Zál, overjoyed at the result of the enterprise, replied:

Thou hast illumed the soul of Narímán,
 Now in the blissful bowers of Paradise,
 By punishing his foes with fire and sword.

He then recommended him to load all the camels with as much of the invaluable property as could be removed, and bring it away, and then burn and destroy the whole place, leaving not a single vestige; and the command having been strictly complied with, Rustem retraced his steps to Zábulistán.

On his return Zál pressed him to his heart,
 And paid him public honors. The fond mother
 Kissed and embraced her darling son, and all
 Uniting, showered their blessings on his head.

Story of Sohráb

O ye, who dwell in Youth's inviting bowers,
 Waste not, in useless joy, your fleeting hours,
 But rather let the tears of sorrow roll,
 And sad reflection fill the conscious soul.
 For many a jocund spring has passed away, 5
 And many a flower has blossomed, to decay;
 And human life, still hastening to a close,
 Finds in the worthless dust its last repose.
 Still the vain world abounds in strife and hate,
 And sire and son provoke each other's fate; 10

And kindred blood by kindred hands is shed,
 And vengeance sleeps not—dies not, with the dead.
 All nature fades—the garden's treasures fall,
 Young bud, and citron ripe—all perish, all.

And now a tale of sorrow must be told, 15
 A tale of tears, derived from Múbid old,
 And thus remembered.—

With the dawn of day,
 Rustem arose, and wandering took his way,
 Armed for the chase, where sloping to the sky, 20
 Túrán's lone wilds in sullen grandeur lie;
 There, to dispel his melancholy mood,
 He urged his matchless steed through glen and wood.
 Flushed with the noble game which met his view,
 He starts the wild-ass o'er the glistening dew; 25
 And, oft exulting, sees his quivering dart,
 Plunge through the glossy skin, and pierce the heart.
 Tired of the sport, at length, he sought the shade,
 Which near a stream embowering trees displayed,
 And with his arrow's point, a fire he raised, 30
 And thorns and grass before him quickly blazed.
 The severed parts upon a bough he cast,
 To catch the flames; and when the rich repast
 Was drest; with flesh and marrow, savory food,
 He quelled his hunger; and the sparkling flood 35
 That murmured at his feet, his thirst repress;
 Then gentle sleep composed his limbs to rest.

Meanwhile his horse, for speed and form renown'd,
 Ranged o'er the plain with flowery herbage crown'd,
 Encumbering arms no more his sides opprest, 40
 No folding mail confined his ample chest,
 Gallant and free, he left the Champion's side,
 And cropp'd the mead, or sought the cooling tide;
 When lo! it chanced amid that woodland chase,
 A band of horsemen, rambling near the place, 45
 Saw, with surprise, superior game astray,
 And rushed at once to seize the noble prey;
 But, in the imminent struggle, two beneath
 His steel-clad hoofs received the stroke of death;
 One proved a sterner fate—for downward borne, 50
 The mangled head was from the shoulders torn.
 Still undismayed, again they nimbly sprung,
 And round his neck the noose entangling flung:
 Now, all in vain, he spurns the smoking ground,
 In vain the tumult echoes all around; 55
 They bear him off, and view, with ardent eyes,
 His matchless beauty and majestic size;
 Then soothe his fury, anxious to obtain,
 A bounding steed of his immortal strain.

When Rustem woke, and miss'd his favourite horse, 60
 The loved companion of his glorious course;
 Sorrowing he rose, and, hastening thence, began
 To shape his dubious way to Samengán;

“Reduced to journey thus, alone!” he said,
 “How pierce the gloom which thickens round my head; 65
 Burthen’d, on foot, a dreary waste in view,
 Where shall I bend my steps, what path pursue?
 The scoffing Turks will cry, ‘Behold our might!
 We won the trophy from the Champion-knight!
 From him who, reckless of his fame and pride, 70
 Thus idly slept, and thus ignobly died,”
 Girding his loins he gathered from the field,
 His quivered stores, his beamy sword and shield,
 Harness and saddle-gear were o’er him slung.
 Bridle and mail across his shoulders hung. 75
 Then looking round, with anxious eye, to meet,
 The broad impression of his charger’s feet,
 The track he hail’d, and following, onward prest.
 While grief and hope alternate filled his breast.

O’er vale and wild-wood led, he soon descries. 80
 The regal city’s shining turrets rise.
 And when the Champion’s near approach is known,
 The usual homage waits him to the throne.
 The king, on foot, received his welcome guest
 With preferred friendship, and his coming blest: 85
 But Rustem frowned, and with resentment fired,
 Spoke of his wrongs, the plundered steed required.
 “I’ve traced his footsteps to your royal town,
 Here must he be, protected by your crown;
 But if retained, if not from fetters freed, 90
 My vengeance shall o’ertake the felon-deed.”
 “My honored guest!” the wondering King replied—
 “Shall Rustem’s wants or wishes be denied?
 But let not anger, headlong, fierce, and blind,
 O’ercloud the virtues of a generous mind. 95
 If still within the limits of my reign,
 The well known courser shall be thine again:
 For Rakush never can remain concealed,
 No more than Rustem in the battle-field!
 Then cease to nourish useless rage, and share 100
 With joyous heart my hospitable fare.”

The son of Zál now felt his wrath subdued,
 And glad sensations in his soul renewed.
 The ready herald by the King’s command,
 Convened the Chiefs and Warriors of the land; 105
 And soon the banquet social glee restored,
 And China wine-cups glittered on the board;
 And cheerful song, and music’s magic power,
 And sparkling wine, beguiled the festive hour.
 The dulcet draughts o’er Rustem’s senses stole, 110
 And melting strains absorbed his softened soul.
 But when approached the period of repose,
 All, prompt and mindful, from the banquet rose;
 A couch was spread well worthy such a guest,
 Perfumed with rose and musk; and whilst at rest, 115
 In deep sound sleep, the wearied Champion lay,
 Forgot were all the sorrows of the way.

One watch had passed, and still sweet slumber shed
 Its magic power around the hero's head—
 When forth Tahmíneh came—a damsel held 120
 An amber taper, which the gloom dispelled,
 And near his pillow stood; in beauty bright,
 The monarch's daughter struck his wondering sight.
 Clear as the moon, in glowing charms arrayed,
 Her winning eyes the light of heaven displayed; 125
 Her cypress form entranced the gazer's view,
 Her waving curls, the heart, resistless, drew,
 Her eye-brows like the Archer's bended bow;
 Her ringlets, snares; her cheek, the rose's glow,
 Mixed with the lily—from her ear-tips hung 130
 Rings rich and glittering, star-like; and her tongue,
 And lips, all sugared sweetness—pearls the while
 Sparkled within a mouth formed to beguile.
 Her presence dimmed the stars, and breathing round
 Fragrance and joy, she scarcely touched the ground, 135
 So light her step, so graceful—every part
 Perfect, and suited to her spotless heart.

Rustem, surprised, the gentle maid addressed,
 And asked what lovely stranger broke his rest.
 “What is thy name,” he said—“what dost thou seek 140
 Amidst the gloom of night? Fair vision, speak!”

“O thou,” she softly sigh'd, “of matchless fame!
 With pity hear, Tahmíneh is my name!
 The pangs of love my anxious heart employ,
 And flattering promise long-expected joy; 145
 No curious eye has yet these features seen,
 My voice unheard, beyond the sacred screen.
 How often have I listened with amaze,
 To thy great deeds, enamoured of thy praise;
 How oft from every tongue I've heard the strain, 150
 And thought of thee—and sighed, and sighed again.
 The ravenous eagle, hovering o'er his prey,
 Starts at thy gleaming sword and flies away:
 Thou art the slayer of the Demon brood,
 And the fierce monsters of the echoing wood. 155
 Where'er thy mace is seen, shrink back the bold,
 Thy javelin's flash all tremble to behold.
 Enchanted with the stories of thy fame,
 My fluttering heart responded to thy name;
 And whilst their magic influence I felt, 160
 In prayer for thee devotedly I knelt;
 And fervent vowed, thus powerful glory charms,
 No other spouse should bless my longing arms.
 Indulgent heaven propitious to my prayer,
 Now brings thee hither to reward my care. 165
 Túrán's dominions thou hast sought, alone,
 By night, in darkness—thou, the mighty one!
 O claim my hand, and grant my soul's desire;
 Ask me in marriage of my royal sire;
 Perhaps a boy our wedded love may crown, 170
 Whose strength like thine may gain the world's renown.

Nay more—for Samengán will keep my word—
Rakush to thee again shall be restored.”

The damsel thus her ardent thought expressed,
And Rustem’s heart beat joyous in his breast, 175
Hearing her passion—not a word was lost,
And Rakush safe, by him still valued most;
He called her near; with graceful step she came,
And marked with throbbing pulse his kindled flame.

And now a Múbid, from the Champion-knight, 180
Requests the royal sanction to the rite;
O’erjoyed, the King the honoured suit approves,
O’erjoyed to bless the doting child he loves,
And happier still, in showering smiles around,
To be allied to warrior so renowned. 185

When the delighted father, doubly blest,
Resigned his daughter to his glorious guest,
The people shared the gladness which it gave,
The union of the beauteous and the brave.
To grace their nuptial day—both old and young, 190
The hymeneal gratulations sung:
“May this young moon bring happiness and joy,
And every source of enmity destroy.”
The marriage-bower received the happy pair,
And love and transport shower’d their blessings 195

Ere from his lofty sphere the morn had thrown
His glittering radiance, and in splendour shone,
The mindful Champion, from his sinewy arm,
His bracelet drew, the soul-ennobling charm;
And, as he held the wondrous gift with pride, 200
He thus address’d his love-devoted bride!

“Take this,” he said, “and if, by gracious heaven,
A daughter for thy solace should be given,
Let it among her ringlets be displayed,
And joy and honour will await the maid; 205

But should kind fate increase the nuptial-joy,
And make thee mother of a blooming boy,
Around his arm this magic bracelet bind,
To fire with virtuous deeds his ripening mind;
The strength of Sám will nerve his manly form, 210

In temper mild, in valour like the storm;
His not the dastard fate to shrink, or turn
From where the lions of the battle burn;
To him the soaring eagle from the sky
Will stoop, the bravest yield to him, or fly; 215

Thus shall his bright career imperious claim
The well-won honours of immortal fame!”
Ardent he said, and kissed her eyes and face,
And lingering held her in a fond embrace.

When the bright sun his radiant brow displayed, 220
And earth in all its loveliest hues arrayed,
The Champion rose to leave his spouse’s side,
The warm affections of his weeping bride.
For her, too soon the winged moments flew,

Too soon, alas! the parting hour she knew; 225
 Clasped in his arms, with many a streaming tear,
 She tried, in vain, to win his deafen'd ear;
 Still tried, ah fruitless struggle! to impart,
 The swelling anguish of her bursting heart.

The father now with gratulations due 230
 Rustem approaches, and displays to view
 The fiery war-horse—welcome as the light
 Of heaven, to one immersed in deepest night;
 The Champion, wild with joy, fits on the rein,
 And girds the saddle on his back again; 235
 Then mounts, and leaving sire and wife behind,
 Onward to Sístán rushes like the wind.

But when returned to Zábúl's friendly shade,
 None knew what joys the Warrior had delayed;
 Still, fond remembrance, with endearing thought, 240
 Oft to his mind the scene of rapture brought.

When nine slow-circling months had roll'd away,
 Sweet-smiling pleasure hailed the brightening day—
 A wondrous boy Tahmíneh's tears suppress,
 And lull'd the sorrows of her heart to rest; 245

To him, predestined to be great and brave,
 The name Sohráb his tender mother gave;
 And as he grew, amazed, the gathering throng,
 View'd his large limbs, his sinews firm and strong;
 His infant years no soft endearment claimed: 250

Athletic sports his eager soul inflamed;
 Broad at the chest and taper round the loins,
 Where to the rising hip the body joins;
 Hunter and wrestler; and so great his speed,
 He could overtake, and hold the swiftest steed. 255

His noble aspect, and majestic grace,
 Betrayed the offspring of a glorious race.
 How, with a mother's ever anxious love,
 Still to retain him near her heart she strove!
 For when the father's fond inquiry came, 260

Cautious, she still concealed his birth and name,
 And feign'd a daughter born, the evil fraught
 With misery to avert—but vain the thought;
 Not many years had passed, with downy flight,

Ere he, Tahmíneh's wonder and delight, 265
 With glistening eye, and youthful ardour warm,
 Filled her foreboding bosom with alarm.

"O now relieve my heart!" he said, "declare,
 From whom I sprang and breathe the vital air.
 Since, from my childhood I have ever been, 270

Amidst my play-mates of superior mien;
 Should friend or foe demand my father's name,
 Let not my silence testify my shame!
 If still concealed, you falter, still delay,
 A mother's blood shall wash the crime away." 275

"This wrath forego," the mother answering cried,
 "And joyful hear to whom thou art allied.
 A glorious line precedes thy destined birth,
 The mightiest heroes of the sons of earth.

The deeds of Sám remotest realms admire, 280
And Zál, and Rustem thy illustrious sire!”

In private, then, she Rustem’s letter placed
Before his view, and brought with eager haste
Three sparkling rubies, wedges three of gold,
From Persia sent—“Behold,” she said, “behold 285
Thy father’s gifts, will these thy doubts remove
The costly pledges of paternal love!
Behold this bracelet charm, of sovereign power
To baffle fate in danger’s awful hour;
But thou must still the perilous secret keep, 290
Nor ask the harvest of renown to reap;
For when, by this peculiar signet known,
Thy glorious father shall demand his son,
Doomed from her only joy in life to part,
O think what pangs will rend thy mother’s heart!— 295
Seek not the fame which only teems with woe;
Afrásiyáb is Rustem’s deadliest foe!
And if by him discovered, him I dread,
Revenge will fail upon thy guiltless head.”

The youth replied: “In vain thy sighs and tears, 300
The secret breathes and mocks thy idle fears.
No human power can fate’s decrees control,
Or check the kindled ardour of my soul.
Then why from me the bursting truth conceal?
My father’s foes even now my vengeance feel; 305
Even now in wrath my native legions rise,
And sounds of desolation strike the skies;
Káuś himself, hurled from his ivory throne,
Shall yield to Rustem the imperial crown,
And thou, my mother, still in triumph seen, 310
Of lovely Persia hailed the honoured queen!
Then shall Túrán unite beneath my hand,
And drive this proud oppressor from the land!
Father and Son, in virtuous league combined,
No savage despot shall enslave mankind; 315
When Sun and Moon o’er heaven refulgent blaze,
Shall little stars obtrude their feeble rays?”

He paused, and then: “O mother, I must now
My father seek, and see his lofty brow;
Be mine a horse, such as a prince demands, 320
Fit for the dusty field, a warrior’s hands;
Strong as an elephant his form should be,
And chested like the stag, in motion free,
And swift as bird, or fish; it would disgrace
A warrior bold on foot to show his face.” 325

The mother, seeing how his heart was bent,
His day-star rising in the firmament,
Commands the stables to be searched to find
Among the steeds one suited to his mind;
Pressing their backs he tries their strength and nerve, 330
Bent double to the ground their bellies curve;
Not one, from neighbouring plain and mountain brought,

Equals the wish with which his soul is fraught;
 Fruitless on every side he anxious turns,
 Fruitless, his brain with wild impatience burns, 335
 But when at length they bring the destined steed,
 From Rakush bred, of lightning's winged speed,
 Fleet, as the arrow from the bow-string flies,
 Fleet, as the eagle darting through the skies,
 Rejoiced he springs, and, with a nimble bound, 340
 Vaults in his seat, and wheels the courser round;
 "With such a horse—thus mounted, what remains?
 Káús, the Persian King, no longer reigns!"
 High flushed he speaks—with youthful pride elate,
 Eager to crush the Monarch's glittering state; 345
 He grasps his javelin with a hero's might,
 And pants with ardour for the field of fight.

Soon o'er the realm his fame expanding spread,
 And gathering thousands hasten'd to his aid.
 His Grand-sire, pleased, beheld the warrior-train 350
 Successive throng and darken all the plain;
 And bounteously his treasures he supplied,
 Camels, and steeds, and gold.—In martial pride,
 Sohráb was seen—a Grecian helmet graced
 His brow—and costliest mail his limbs embraced. 355

Afrásiyáb now hears with ardent joy,
 The bold ambition of the warrior-boy,
 Of him who, perfumed with the milky breath
 Of infancy, was threatening war and death,
 And bursting sudden from his mother's side, 360
 Had launched his bark upon the perilous tide.

The insidious King sees well the tempting hour,
 Favouring his arms against the Persian power,
 And thence, in haste, the enterprise to share,
 Twelve thousand veterans selects with care; 365
 To Húmán and Bármán the charge consigns,
 And thus his force with Samengán combines;
 But treacherous first his martial chiefs he prest,
 To keep the secret fast within their breast:—
 "For this bold youth must not his father know, 370
 Each must confront the other as his foe—
 Such is my vengeance! With unhallowed rage,
 Father and Son shall dreadful battle wage!
 Unknown the youth shall Rustem's force withstand,
 And soon o'erwhelm the bulwark of the land. 375
 Rustem removed, the Persian throne is ours,
 An easy conquest to confederate powers;
 And then, secured by some propitious snare,
 Sohráb himself our galling bonds shall wear.
 Or should the Son by Rustem's falchion bleed, 380
 The father's horror at that fatal deed,
 Will rend his soul, and 'midst his sacred grief,
 Káús in vain will supplicate relief."

The tutored chiefs advance with speed, and bring
 Imperial presents to the future king; 385

In stately pomp the embassy proceeds;
 Ten loaded camels, ten unrivalled steeds,
 A golden crown, and throne, whose jewels bright
 Gleam in the sun, and shed a sparkling light,
 A letter too the crafty tyrant sends, 390
 And fraudulent thus the glorious aim commends.—
 “If Persia’s spoils invite thee to the field,
 Accept the aid my conquering legions yield;
 Led by two Chiefs of valour and renown,
 Upon thy head to place the kingly crown.” 395

Elate with promised fame, the youth surveys
 The regal vest, the throne’s irradiant blaze,
 The golden crown, the steeds, the sumptuous load
 Of ten strong camels, craftily bestowed;
 Salutes the Chiefs, and views on every side, 400
 The lengthening ranks with various arms supplied.
 The march begins—the brazen drums resound,
 His moving thousands hide the trembling ground;
 For Persia’s verdant land he wields the spear,
 And blood and havoc mark his groaning rear. 405

To check the Invader’s horror-spreading course,
 The barrier-fort opposed unequal force;
 That fort whose walls, extending wide, contained
 The stay of Persia, men to battle trained.
 Soon as Hujír the dusky crowd descried, 410
 He on his own presumptuous arm relied,
 And left the fort; in mail with shield and spear,
 Vaunting he spoke—“What hostile force is here?
 What Chieftain dares our war-like realms invade?”
 “And who art thou?” Sohráb indignant said, 415
 Rushing towards him with undaunted look—
 “Hast thou, audacious! nerve and soul to brook
 The crocodile in fight, that to the strife
 Singly thou comest, reckless of thy life?”

To this the foe replied—“A Turk and I 420
 Have never yet been bound in friendly tie;
 And soon thy head shall, severed by my sword,
 Gladden the sight of Persia’s mighty lord,
 While thy torn limbs to vultures shall be given,
 Or bleach beneath the parching blast of heaven.” 425

The youthful hero laughing hears the boast,
 And now by each continual spears are tost,
 Mingling together; like a flood of fire
 The boaster meets his adversary’s ire;
 The horse on which he rides, with thundering pace, 430
 Seems like a mountain moving from its base;
 Sternly he seeks the stripling’s loins to wound,
 But the lance hurtless drops upon the ground;
 Sohráb, advancing, hurls his steady spear
 Full on the middle of the vain Hujír, 435
 Who staggers in his seat. With proud disdain
 The youth now flings him headlong on the plain,
 And quick dismounting, on his heaving breast

Triumphant stands, his Khunjer firmly prest,
 To strike the head off—but the blow was stayed—Trembling,
 for life, the craven boaster prayed. 440
 That mercy granted eased his coward mind,
 Though, dire disgrace, in captive bonds confined,
 And sent to Húmán, who amazed beheld
 How soon Sohráb his daring soul had quelled. 445

When Gúrd-afríd, a peerless warrior-dame,
 Heard of the conflict, and the hero's shame,
 Groans heaved her breast, and tears of anger flowed,
 Her tulip cheek with deeper crimson glowed;
 Speedful, in arms magnificent arrayed, 450
 A foaming palfrey bore the martial maid;
 The burnished mail her tender limbs embraced,
 Beneath her helm her clustering locks she placed;
 Poised in her hand an iron javelin gleamed,
 And o'er the ground its sparkling lustre streamed; 455
 Accoutred thus in manly guise, no eye
 However piercing could her sex descry;
 Now, like a lion, from the fort she bends,
 And 'midst the foe impetuously descends;
 Fearless of soul, demands with haughty tone, 460
 The bravest chief, for war-like valour known,
 To try the chance of fight. In shining arms,
 Again Sohráb the glow of battle warms;
 With scornful smiles, "Another deer!" he cries,
 "Come to my victor-toils, another prize!" 465
 The damsel saw his noose insidious spread,
 And soon her arrows whizzed around his head;
 With steady skill the twanging bow she drew,
 And still her pointed darts unerring flew;
 For when in forest sports she touched the string, 470
 Never escaped even bird upon the wing;
 Furious he burned, and high his buckler held,
 To ward the storm, by growing force impell'd;
 And tilted forward with augmented wrath,
 But Gúrd-áfríd aspires to cross his path; 475
 Now o'er her back the slacken'd bow resounds;
 She grasps her lance, her goaded courser bounds,
 Driven on the youth with persevering might—
 Unconquer'd courage still prolongs the fight;
 The stripling Chief shields off the threaten'd blow, 480
 Reins in his steed, then rushes on the foe;
 With outstretch'd arm, he bending backwards hung,
 And, gathering strength, his pointed javelin flung;
 Firm through her girdle belt the weapon went,
 And glancing down the polish'd armour rent. 485
 Staggering, and stunned by his superior force,
 She almost tumbled from her foaming horse,
 Yet unsubdued, she cut the spear in two,
 And from her side the quivering fragment drew,
 Then gain'd her seat, and onward urged her steed, 490
 But strong and fleet Sohráb arrests her speed:
 Strikes off her helm, and sees—a woman's face,
 Radiant with blushes and commanding grace!
 Thus undeceived, in admiration lost,

- He cries, "A woman, from the Persian host! 495
 If Persian damsels thus in arms engage,
 Who shall repel their warrior's fiercer rage?"
 Then from his saddle thong—his noose he drew,
 And round her waist the twisted loop he threw—
 "Now seek not to escape," he sharply said, 500
 "Such is the fate of war, unthinking maid!
 And, as such beauty seldom swells our pride,
 Vain thy attempt to cast my toils aside."
- In this extreme, but one resource remained,
 Only one remedy her hope sustained— 505
 Expert in wiles each siren-art she knew,
 And thence exposed her blooming face to view;
 Raising her full black orbs, serenely bright,
 In all her charms she blazed before his sight;
 And thus addressed Sohráb—"O warrior brave, 510
 Hear me, and thy imperilled honour save,
 These curling tresses seen by either host,
 A woman conquered, whence the glorious boast?
 Thy startled troops will know, with inward grief,
 A woman's arm resists their towering chief, 515
 Better preserve a warrior's fair renown,
 And let our struggle still remain unknown,
 For who with wanton folly would expose
 A helpless maid, to aggravate her woes;
 The fort, the treasure, shall thy toils repay, 520
 The chief, and garrison, thy will obey,
 And thine the honours of this dreadful day."
- Raptured he gazed, her smiles resistless move
 The wildest transports of ungoverned love.
 Her face disclosed a paradise to view, 525
 Eyes like the fawn, and cheeks of rosy hue—
 Thus vanquished, lost, unconscious of her aim,
 And only struggling with his amorous flame,
 He rode behind, as if compelled by fate,
 And heedless saw her gain the castle-gate. 530
- Safe with her friends, escaped from brand and spear,
 Smiling she stands, as if unknown to fear.
 —The father now, with tearful pleasure wild,
 Clasps to his heart his fondly-foster'd child;
 The crowding warriors round her eager bend, 535
 And grateful prayers to favouring heaven ascend.
- Now from the walls, she, with majestic air,
 Exclaims: "Thou warrior of Túrán! forbear,
 Why vex thy soul, and useless strife demand!
 Go, and in peace enjoy thy native land." 540
 Stern he rejoins: "Thou beauteous tyrant! say,
 Though crown'd with charms, devoted to betray,
 When these proud walls, in dust and ruins laid,
 Yield no defence, and thou a captive maid,
 Will not repentance through thy bosom dart, 545
 And sorrow soften that disdainful heart?"

Quick she replied: "O'er Persia's fertile fields
 The savage Turk in vain his falchion wields;
 When King Káu's this bold invasion hears,
 And mighty Rustem clad in arms appears! 550
 Destruction wide will glut the slippery plain,
 And not one man of all thy host remain.
 Alas! that bravery, high as thine, should meet
 Amidst such promise, with a sure defeat,
 But not a gleam of hope remains for thee, 555
 Thy wondrous valour cannot keep thee free.
 Avert the fate which o'er thy head impends,
 Return, return, and save thy martial friends!"

Thus to be scorned, defrauded of his prey,
 With victory in his grasp—to lose the day! 560
 Shame and revenge alternate filled his mind;
 The suburb-town to pillage he consigned,
 And devastation—not a dwelling spared;
 The very owl was from her covert scared;
 Then thus: "Though luckless in my aim to-day, 565
 To-morrow shall behold a sterner fray;
 This fort, in ashes, scattered o'er the plain."
 He ceased—and turned towards his troops again;
 There, at a distance from the hostile power,
 He brooding waits the slaughter-breathing hour. 570

Meanwhile the sire of Gúrd-afríd, who now
 Governed the fort, and feared the warrior's vow;
 Mournful and pale, with gathering woes opprest,
 His distant Monarch trembling thus address.
 But first invoked the heavenly power to shed 575
 Its choicest blessings o'er his royal head.
 "Against our realm with numerous foot and horse,
 A stripling warrior holds his ruthless course.
 His lion-breast unequalled strength betrays,
 And o'er his mien the sun's effulgence plays: 580
 Sohráb his name; like Sám Suwár he shows,
 Or Rustem terrible amidst his foes.
 The bold Hujír lies vanquished on the plain,
 And drags a captive's ignominious chain;
 Myriads of troops besiege our tottering wall, 585
 And vain the effort to suspend its fall.
 Haste, arm for fight, this Tartar-power withstand,
 Let sweeping Vengeance lift her flickering brand;
 Rustem alone may stem the roaring wave,
 And, prompt as bold, his groaning country save. 590
 Meanwhile in flight we place our only trust,
 Ere the proud ramparts crumble in the dust."

Swift flies the messenger through secret ways,
 And to the King the dreadful tale conveys,
 Then passed, unseen, in night's concealing shade, 595
 The mournful heroes and the warrior maid.

Soon as the sun with vivifying ray,
 Gleams o'er the landscape, and renews the day;
 The flaming troops the lofty walls surround,

With thundering crash the bursting gates resound. 600
 Already are the captives bound, in thought,
 And like a herd before the conqueror brought;
 Sohráb, terrific o'er the ruin, views
 His hopes deceived, but restless still pursues.
 An empty fortress mocks his searching eye, 605
 No steel-clad chiefs his burning wrath defy;
 No warrior-maid reviving passion warms,
 And soothes his soul with fondly-valued charms.
 Deep in his breast he feels the amorous smart,
 And hugs her image closer to his heart. 610
 "Alas! that Fate should thus invidious shroud
 The moon's soft radiance in a gloomy cloud;
 Should to my eyes such winning grace display,
 Then snatch the enchanter of my soul away!
 A beauteous roe my toils enclosed in vain, 615
 Now I, her victim, drag the captive's chain;
 Strange the effects that from her charms proceed,
 I gave the wound, and I afflicted bleed!
 Vanquished by her, I mourn the luckless strife;
 Dark, dark, and bitter, frowns my morn of life. 620
 A fair unknown my tortured bosom rends,
 Withers each joy, and every hope suspends."

Impassioned thus Sohráb in secret sighed,
 And sought, in vain, o'er-mastering grief to hide. 625
 Can the heart bleed and throb from day to day,
 And yet no trace its inmost pangs betray?
 Love scorns control, and prompts the labouring sigh,
 Pales the red lip, and dims the lucid eye;
 His look alarmed the stern Túránian Chief,
 Closely he mark'd his heart-corroding grief;— 630
 And though he knew not that the martial dame,
 Had in his bosom lit the tender flame;
 Full well he knew such deep repinings prove,
 The hapless thraldom of disastrous love. 635
 Full well he knew some idol's musky hair,
 Had to his youthful heart become a snare,
 But still unnoted was the gushing tear,
 Till haply he had gained his private ear:—
 "In ancient times, no hero known to fame,
 Not dead to glory e'er indulged the flame; 640
 Though beauty's smiles might charm a fleeting hour,
 The heart, unsway'd, repelled their lasting power.
 A warrior Chief to trembling love a prey?
 What! weep for woman one inglorious day?
 Canst thou for love's effeminate control, 645
 Barter the glory of a warrior's soul?
 Although a hundred damsels might be gained,
 The hero's heart shall still be free, unchained.
 Thou art our leader, and thy place the field
 Where soldiers love to fight with spear and shield; 650
 And what hast thou to do with tears and smiles,
 The silly victim to a woman's wiles?
 Our progress, mark! from far Túrán we came,
 Through seas of blood to gain immortal fame;
 And wilt thou now the tempting conquest shun, 655

When our brave arms this Barrier-fort have won?
 Why linger here, and trickling sorrows shed,
 Till mighty Káús thunders o'er thy head!
 Till Tús, and Gíw, and Gúdarz, and Báhrám,
 And Rustem brave, Ferámurz, and Rehám, 660
 Shall aid the war! A great emprise is thine,
 At once, then, every other thought resign;
 For know the task which first inspired thy zeal,
 Transcends in glory all that love can feel. 665
 Rise, lead the war, prodigious toils require
 Unyielding strength, and unextinguished fire;
 Pursue the triumph with tempestuous rage,
 Against the world in glorious strife engage,
 And when an empire sinks beneath thy sway
 (O quickly may we hail the prosperous day), 670
 The fickle sex will then with blooming charms,
 Adoring throng to bless thy circling arms!"

Húmán's warm speech, the spirit-stirring theme,
 Awoke Sohráb from his inglorious dream.
 No more the tear his faded cheek bedewed, 675
 Again ambition all his hopes renewed:
 Swell'd his bold heart with unforgotten zeal,
 The noble wrath which heroes only feel;
 Fiercely he vowed at one tremendous stroke,
 To bow the world beneath the tyrant's yoke! 680
 "Afrásiyáb," he cried, "shall reign alone,
 The mighty lord of Persia's gorgeous throne!"

Burning, himself, to rule this nether sphere,
 These welcome tidings charmed the despot's ear. 685
 Meantime Káús, this dire invasion known,
 Had called his chiefs around his ivory throne:
 There stood Gurgín, and Báhrám, and Gushwád,
 And Tús, and Gíw, and Gúdarz, and Ferhád;
 To them he read the melancholy tale,
 Gust'hem had written of the rising bale; 690
 Besought their aid and prudent choice, to form
 Some sure defence against the threatening storm.
 With one consent they urge the strong request,
 To summon Rustem from his rural rest.—
 Instant a warrior-delegate they send, 695
 And thus the King invites his patriot-friend,

"To thee all praise, whose mighty arm alone,
 Preserves the glory of the Persian throne!
 Lo! Tartar hordes our happy realms invade;
 The tottering state requires thy powerful aid; 700
 A youthful Champion leads the ruthless host,
 His savage country's widely-rumoured boast.
 The Barrier-fortress sinks beneath his sway,
 Hujír is vanquished, ruin tracks his way;
 Strong as a raging elephant in fight, 705
 No arm but thine can match his furious might.
 Mázinderán thy conquering prowess knew;
 The Demon-king thy trenchant falchion slew,
 The rolling heavens, abash'd with fear, behold

Thy biting sword, thy mace adorned with gold! 710
 Fly to the succour of a King distress'd,
 Proud of thy love, with thy protection blest.
 When o'er the nation dread misfortunes lower,
 Thou art the refuge, thou the saving power.
 The chiefs assembled claim thy patriot vows, 715
 Give to thy glory all that life allows;
 And while no whisper breathes the direful tale,
 O, let thy Monarch's anxious prayers prevail."

Closing the fragrant page o'ercome with dread,
 The afflicted King to Gíw, the warrior, said:— 720
 "Go, bind the saddle on thy fleetest horse,
 Outstrip the tempest in thy rapid course,
 To Rustem swift his country's woes convey,
 Too true art thou to linger on the way;
 Speed, day and night—and not one instant wait, 725
 Whatever hour may bring thee to his gate."

Followed no pause—to Gíw enough was said,
 Nor rest, nor taste of food, his speed delayed.
 And when arrived, where Zábul's bowers exhale
 Ambrosial sweets and scent the balmy gale, 730
 The sentinel's loud voice in Rustem's ear,
 Announced a messenger from Persia, near;
 The Chief himself amidst his warriors stood,
 Dispensing honours to the brave and good,
 And soon as Gíw had joined the martial ring, 735
 (The sacred envoy of the Persian King),
 He, with becoming loyalty inspired,
 Asked what the monarch, what the state required;
 But Gíw, apart, his secret mission told—
 The written page was speedily unrolled. 740

Struck with amazement, Rustem—"Now on earth
 A warrior-knight of Sám's excelling worth?
 Whence comes this hero of the prosperous star?
 I know no Turk renowned, like him, in war;
 He bears the port of Rustem too, 'tis said, 745
 Like Sám, like Narímán, a warrior bred!
 He cannot be my son, unknown to me;
 Reason forbids the thought—it cannot be!
 At Samengán, where once affection smiled,
 To me Tahmíneh bore her only child, 750
 That was a daughter?" Pondering thus he spoke,
 And then aloud—"Why fear the invader's yoke?
 Why trembling shrink, by coward thoughts dismayed,
 Must we not all in dust, at length, be laid?
 But come, to Nírum's palace, haste with me, 755
 And there partake the feast—from sorrow free;
 Breathe, but awhile—ere we our toils renew,
 And moisten the parched lip with needful dew.
 Let plans of war another day decide,
 We soon shall quell this youthful hero's pride. 760
 The force of fire soon flutters and decays
 When ocean, swelled by storms, its wrath displays.
 What danger threatens! whence the dastard fear!

Rest, and at leisure share a warrior's cheer."

In vain the Envoy prest the Monarch's grief; 765
 The matchless prowess of the stripling chief;
 How brave Hujír had felt his furious hand;
 What thickening woes beset the shuddering land.
 But Rustem, still, delayed the parting day,
 And mirth and feasting rolled the hours away; 770
 Morn following morn beheld the banquet bright,
 Music and wine prolonged the genial rite;
 Rapt by the witchery of the melting strain,
 No thought of Káús touch'd his swimming brain.

The trumpet's clang, on fragrant breezes borne, 775
 Now loud salutes the fifth revolving morn;
 The softer tones which charm'd the jocund feast,
 And all the noise of revelry, had ceased,
 The generous horse, with rich embroidery deckt,
 Whose gilded trappings sparkling light reflect, 780
 Bears with majestic port the Champion brave,
 And high in air the victor-banners wave.
 Prompt at the martial call, Zúára leads
 His veteran troops from Zábul's verdant meads.

Ere Rustem had approached his journey's end, 785
 Tús, Gúdarz, Gushwád, met their champion-friend
 With customary honours; pleased to bring
 The shield of Persia to the anxious King.
 But foaming wrath the senseless monarch swayed;
 His friendship scorned, his mandate disobeyed, 790
 Beneath dark brows o'er-shadowing deep, his eye
 Red gleaming shone, like lightning through the sky
 And when the warriors met his sullen view,
 Frowning revenge, still more enraged he grew:—
 Loud to the Envoy thus he fiercely cried:— 795
 "Since Rustem has my royal power defied,
 Had I a sword, this instant should his head
 Roll on the ground; but let him now be led
 Hence, and impaled alive." Astounded Gíw
 Shrunk from such treatment of a knight so true; 800
 But this resistance added to the flame,
 And both were branded with revolt and shame;
 Both were condemned, and Tús, the stern decree
 Received, to break them on the felon-tree.
 Could daring insult, thus deliberate given, 805
 Escape the rage of one to frenzy driven?
 No, from his side the nerveless Chief was flung,
 Bent to the ground. Away the Champion sprung;
 Mounted his foaming horse, and looking round—
 His boiling wrath thus rapid utterance found:— 810
 "Ungrateful King, thy tyrant acts disgrace
 The sacred throne, and more, the human race;
 Midst clashing swords thy recreant life I saved,
 And am I now by Tús contemptuous braved?
 On me shall Tús, shall Káús dare to frown? 815
 On me, the bulwark of the regal crown?
 Wherefore should fear in Rustem's breast have birth,

Káús, to me, a worthless clod of earth!
 Go, and thyself Sohráb's invasion stay,
 Go, seize the plunderers growling o'er their prey! 820
 Wherefore to others give the base command?
 Go, break him on the tree with thine own hand.
 Know, thou hast roused a warrior, great and free,
 Who never bends to tyrant Kings like thee!
 Was not this untired arm triumphant seen, 825
 In Misser, Rúm, Mázinderán, and Chín!
 And must I shrink at thy imperious nod!
 Slave to no Prince, I only bow to God.
 Whatever wrath from thee, proud King! may fall,
 For thee I fought, and I deserve it all. 830
 The regal sceptre might have graced my hand,
 I kept the laws, and scorned supreme command.
 When Kai-kobád and Alberz mountain strayed,
 I drew him thence, and gave a warrior's aid;
 Placed on his brows the long-contested crown, 835
 Worn by his sires, by sacred right his own;
 Strong in the cause, my conquering arms prevailed,
 Wouldst thou have reign'd had Rustem's valour failed
 When the White Demon raged in battle-fray,
 Wouldst thou have lived had Rustem lost the day?" 840
 Then to his friends: "Be wise, and shun your fate,
 Fly the wide ruin which o'erwhelms the state;
 The conqueror comes—the scourge of great and small,
 And vultures, following fast, will gorge on all.
 Persia no more its injured Chief shall view"— 845
 He said, and sternly from the court withdrew.

The warriors now, with sad forebodings wrung,
 Torn from that hope to which they proudly clung,
 On Gúdarz rest, to soothe with gentle sway,
 The frantic King, and Rustem's wrath allay. 850
 With bitter grief they wail misfortune's shock,
 No shepherd now to guard the timorous flock.
 Gúdarz at length, with boding cares imprest,
 Thus soothed the anger in the royal breast.
 "Say, what has Rustem done, that he should be 855
 Impaled upon the ignominious tree?
 Degrading thought, unworthy to be bred
 Within a royal heart, a royal head.
 Hast thou forgot when near the Caspian-wave,
 Defeat and ruin had appalled the brave, 860
 When mighty Rustem struck the dreadful blow,
 And nobly freed thee from the savage foe?
 Did Demons huge escape his flaming brand?
 Their reeking limbs bestrew'd the slippery strand.
 Shall he for this resign his vital breath? 865
 What! shall the hero's recompense be death?
 But who will dare a threatening step advance,
 What earthly power can bear his withering glance?
 Should he to Zábul fired with wrongs return,
 The plunder'd land will long in sorrow mourn! 870
 This direful presage all our warriors feel,
 For who can now oppose the invader's steel;
 Thus is it wise thy champion to offend,

To urge to this extreme thy warrior-friend?
 Remember, passion ever scorns control, 875
 And wisdom's mild decrees should rule a Monarch's soul."
 Káús, relenting, heard with anxious ear,
 And groundless wrath gave place to shame and fear;
 "Go then," he cried, "his generous aid implore,
 And to your King the mighty Chief restore!" 880

When Gúdarz rose, and seized his courser's rein,
 A crowd of heroes followed in his train.
 To Rustem, now (respectful homage paid),
 The royal prayer he anxious thus conveyed.
 "The King, repentant, seeks thy aid again, 885
 Grieved to the heart that he has given thee pain;
 But though his anger was unjust and strong,
 Thy country still is guiltless of the wrong,
 And, therefore, why abandoned thus by thee?
 Thy help the King himself implores through me." 890
 Rustem rejoined: "Unworthy the pretence,
 And scorn and insult all my recompense?
 Must I be galled by his capricious mood?
 I, who have still his firmest champion stood?
 But all is past, to heaven alone resigned, 895
 No human cares shall more disturb my mind!"
 Then Gúdarz thus (consummate art inspired
 His prudent tongue, with all that zeal required);
 "When Rustem dreads Sohráb's resistless power,
 Well may inferiors fly the trying hour! 900
 The dire suspicion now pervades us all,
 Thus, unavenged, shall beauteous Persia fall!
 Yet, generous still, avert the lasting shame,
 O, still preserve thy country's glorious fame!
 Or wilt thou, deaf to all our fears excite, 905
 Forsake thy friends, and shun the pending fight?
 And worse, O grief! in thy declining days,
 Forfeit the honours of thy country's praise?"
 This artful censure set his soul on fire,
 But patriot firmness calm'd his burning ire; 910
 And thus he said—"Inured to war's alarms,
 Did ever Rustem shun the din of arms?
 Though frowns from Káús I disdain to bear,
 My threatened country claims a warrior's care."
 He ceased, and prudent joined the circling throng, 915
 And in the public good forgot the private wrong.

From far the King the generous Champion viewed,
 And rising, mildly thus his speech pursued:—
 "Since various tempers govern all mankind,
 Me, nature fashioned of a froward mind; 920
 And what the heavens spontaneously bestow,
 Sown by their bounty must for ever grow.
 The fit of wrath which burst within me, soon
 Shrunk up my heart as thin as the new moon;
 Else had I deemed thee still my army's boast, 925
 Source of my regal power, beloved the most,
 Unequaled. Every day, remembering thee,
 I drain the wine cup, thou art all to me;

I wished thee to perform that lofty part,
 Claimed by thy valour, sanctioned by my heart; 930
 Hence thy delay my better thoughts suppress,
 And boisterous passions revelled in my breast;
 But when I saw thee from my Court retire
 In wrath, repentance quenched my burning ire.
 O, let me now my keen contrition prove, 935
 Again enjoy thy fellowship and love:
 And while to thee my gratitude is known,
 Still be the pride and glory of my throne.”

Rustem, thus answering said:—“Thou art the King,
 Source of command, pure honour’s sacred spring; 940
 And here I stand to follow thy behest,
 Obedient ever—be thy will expressed,
 And services required—Old age shall see
 My loins still bound in fealty to thee.”

To this the King:—“Rejoice we then to-day,
 And on the morrow marshal our array.” 945
 The monarch quick commands the feast of joy,
 And social cares his buoyant mind employ,
 Within a bower, beside a crystal spring,
 Where opening flowers, refreshing odours fling, 950
 Cheerful he sits, and forms the banquet scene,
 In regal splendour on the crowded green;
 And as around he greets his valiant bands,
 Showers golden presents from his bounteous hands;
 Voluptuous damsels trill the sportive lay, 955
 Whose sparkling glances beam celestial day;
 Fill’d with delight the heroes closer join,
 And quaff till midnight cups of generous wine.

Soon as the Sun had pierced the veil of night,
 And o’er the prospect shed his earliest light, 960
 Káuś, impatient, bids the clarions sound,
 The sprightly notes from hills and rocks rebound;
 His treasure gates are opened:—and to all
 A largess given; obedient to the call,
 His subjects gathering crowd the mountain’s brow, 965
 And following thousands shade the vales below;
 With shields, in armor, numerous legions bend;
 And troops of horse the threatening lines extend.
 Beneath the tread of heroes fierce and strong,
 By war’s tumultuous fury borne along, 970
 The firm earth shook: the dust, in eddies driven,
 Whirled high in air, obscured the face of heaven;
 Nor earth, nor sky appeared—all, seeming lost,
 And swallowed up by that wide-spreading host.
 The steely armour glitter’d o’er the fields, 975
 And lightnings flash’d from gold emblazoned shields;
 Thou wouldst have said, the clouds had burst in showers,
 Of sparkling amber o’er the martial powers.
 Thus, close embodied, they pursued their way,
 And reached the Barrier-fort in terrible array. 980

The legions of Túrán, with dread surprise,

Saw o'er the plain successive myriads rise;
 And showed them to Sohráb; he, mounting high
 The fort, surveyed them with a fearless eye;
 To Húmán, who, with withering terror pale, 985
 Had marked their progress through the distant vale,
 He pointed out the sight, and ardent said:—
 “Dispel these woe-fraught broodings from thy head,
 I wage the war, Afrásiyáb! for thee,
 And make this desert seem a rolling sea.” 990
 Thus, while amazement every bosom quell'd,
 Sohráb, unmoved, the coming storm beheld,
 And boldly gazing on the camp around,
 Raised high the cup with wine nectareous crowned:
 O'er him no dreams of woe insidious stole, 995
 No thought but joy engaged his ardent soul.

The Persian legions had restrained their course,
 Tents and pavilions, countless foot and horse,
 Clothed all the spacious plain, and gleaming threw
 Terrific splendours on the gazer's view. 1000
 But when the Sun had faded in the west,
 And night assumed her ebon-coloured vest,
 The mighty Chief approached the sacred throne,
 And generous thus made danger all his own:
 “The rules of war demand a previous task, 1005
 To watch this dreadful foe I boldly ask;
 With wary step the wondrous youth to view,
 And mark the heroes who his path pursue.”
 The King assents: “The task is justly thine,
 Favourite of heaven, inspired by power divine.” 1010
 In Turkish habit, secretly arrayed,
 The lurking Champion wandered through the shade
 And, cautious, standing near the palace gate,
 Saw how the chiefs were ranged in princely state.

What time Sohráb his thoughts to battle turned, 1015
 And for the first proud fruits of conquest burned,
 His mother called a warrior to his aid,
 And Zinda-ruzm his sister's call obeyed.
 To him Tahmineh gave her only joy,
 And bade him shield the bold adventurous boy: 1020
 “But, in the dreadful strife, should danger rise,
 Present my child before his father's eyes!
 By him protected, war may rage in vain,
 Though he may never bless these arms again!”
 This guardian prince sat on the stripling's right, 1025
 Viewing the imperial banquet with delight.
 Húmán and Bármán, near the hero placed,
 In joyous pomp the full assembly graced;
 A hundred valiant Chiefs begirt the throne,
 And, all elate, were chaunting his renown. 1030
 Closely concealed, the gay and splendid scene,
 Rustem contemplates with astonished mien;
 When Zind, retiring, marks the listener nigh,
 Watching the festal train with curious eye;
 And well he knew, amongst his Tartar host, 1035
 Such towering stature not a Chief could boast—

“What spy is here, close shrouded by the night?
 Art thou afraid to face the beams of light?”
 But scarcely from his lips these words had past,
 Ere, fell'd to earth, he groaning breathed his last; 1040
 Unseen he perish'd, fate decreed the blow,
 To add fresh keenness to a parent's woe.

Meantime Sohráb, perceiving the delay
 In Zind's return, looked round him with dismay;
 The seat still vacant—but the bitter truth, 1045
 Full soon was known to the distracted youth;
 Full soon he found that Zinda-ruzm was gone,
 His day of feasting and of glory done;
 Speedful towards the fatal spot he ran,
 Where slept in bloody vest the slaughtered man. 1050

The lighted torches now displayed the dead,
 Stiff on the ground his graceful limbs were spread;
 Sad sight to him who knew his guardian care,
 Now doom'd a kinsman's early loss to bear;
 Anguish and rage devour his breast by turns, 1055
 He vows revenge, then o'er the warrior mourns:
 And thus exclaims to each afflicted Chief:—
 “No time, to-night, my friends, for useless grief;
 The ravenous wolf has watched his helpless prey,
 Sprung o'er the fold, and borne its flower away; 1060
 But if the heavens my lifted arm befriend,
 Upon the guilty shall my wrath descend—
 Unsheathed, this sword shall dire revenge pursue,
 And Persian blood the thirsty land bedew.”
 Frowning he paused, and check'd the spreading woe, 1065
 Resumed the feast, and bid the wine-cup flow!

The valiant Gíw was sentinel that night,
 And marking dimly by the dubious light,
 A warrior form approach, he claps his hands,
 With naked sword and lifted shield he stands, 1070
 To front the foe; but Rustem now appears,
 And Gíw the secret tale astonished hears;
 From thence the Champion on the Monarch waits.
 The power and splendour of Sohráb relates:
 “Circled by Chiefs this glorious youth was seen, 1075
 Of lofty stature and majestic mien;
 No Tartar region gave the hero birth:
 Some happier portion of the spacious earth;
 Tall, as the graceful cypress he appears;
 Like Sám, the brave, his warrior-front he rears!” 1080
 Then having told how, while the banquet shone,
 Unhappy Zind had sunk, without a groan;
 He forms his conquering bands in close array,
 And, cheer'd by wine, awaits the coming day.

When now the Sun his golden buckler raised, 1085
 And genial light through heaven diffusive blazed,
 Sohráb in mail his nervous limbs attired,
 For dreadful wrath his soul to vengeance fired;
 With anxious haste he bent the yielding cord,

- Ring within ring, more fateful than the sword; 1090
 Around his brows a regal helm he bound;
 His dappled steed impatient stamp the ground.
 Thus armed, ascending where the eye could trace
 The hostile force, and mark each leader's place,
 He called Hujír, the captive Chief addressed, 1095
 And anxious thus, his soul's desire expressed:
 "A prisoner thou, if freedom's voice can charm,
 And dungeon darkness fill thee with alarm,
 That freedom merit, shun severest woe,
 And truly answer what I ask to know! 1100
 If rigid truth thy ready speech attend,
 Honours and wealth shall dignify my friend."
- "Obedient to thy wish," Hujír replied,
 "Truth thou shalt hear, whatever chance betide;
 For what on earth to praise has better claim? 1105
 Falsehood but leads to sorrow and to shame!"
- "Then say, what heroes lead the adverse host,
 Where they command, what dignities they boast;
 Say, where does Káuś hold his kingly state,
 Where Túś, and Gúdarz, on his bidding wait; 1110
 Gíw, Gust'hem, and Báhrám—all known to thee,
 And where is mighty Rustem, where is he?
 Look round with care, their names and power display
 Or instant death shall end thy vital day."
- "Where yonder splendid tapestries extend, 1115
 And o'er pavilions bright infolding bend,
 A throne triumphal shines with sapphire rays,
 And golden suns upon the banners blaze;
 Full in the centre of the hosts—and round
 The tent a hundred elephants are bound, 1120
 As if, in pomp, he mocked the power of fate;
 There royal Káuś holds his kingly state.
- "In yonder tent which numerous guards protect,
 Where front and rear illustrious Chiefs collect;
 Where horsemen wheeling seem prepared for fight, 1125
 Their golden armour glittering in the light;
 Túś lifts his banners, deck'd with royal pride,
 Feared by the brave, the soldier's friend and guide.
- "That crimson tent where spear-men frowning stand,
 And steel-clad veterans form a threatening band, 1130
 Holds mighty Gúdarz, famed for martial fire,
 Of eighty valiant sons the valiant sire;
 Yet strong in arms, he shuns inglorious ease,
 His lion-banners floating in the breeze.
- "But mark, that green pavilion; girt around 1135
 By Persian nobles, speaks the Chief renowned;
 Fierce on the standard, worked with curious art,
 A hideous dragon writhing seems to start;
 Throned in his tent the warrior's form is seen,
 Towering above the assembled host between! 1140

A generous horse before him snorts and neighs,
 The trembling earth the echoing sound conveys.
 Like him no Champion ever met my eyes,
 No horse like that for majesty and size;
 What Chief illustrious bears a port so high? 1145
 Mark, how his standard flickers through the sky!”

Thus ardent spoke Sohráb. Hujír dismayed,
 Paused ere reply the dangerous truth betrayed.
 Trembling for Rustem's life the captive groaned;
 Basely his country's glorious boast disowned, 1150
 And said the Chief from distant China came—
 Sohráb abrupt demands the hero's name;
 The name unknown, grief wrings his aching heart,
 And yearning anguish speeds her venom'd dart;
 To him his mother gave the tokens true, 1155
 He sees them all, and all but mock his view.
 When gloomy fate descends in evil hour,
 Can human wisdom bribe her favouring power?
 Yet, gathering hope, again with restless mien
 He marks the Chiefs who crowd the warlike scene. 1160

“Where numerous heroes, horse and foot, appear,
 And brazen trumpets thrill the listening ear,
 Behold the proud pavilion of the brave!
 With wolves emboss'd the silken banners wave.
 The throne's bright gems with radiant lustre glow, 1165
 Slaves rank'd around with duteous homage bow.
 What mighty Chieftain rules his cohorts there?
 His name and lineage, free from guile, declare!”

“Gíw, son of Gúdarz, long a glorious name,
 Whose prowess even transcends his father's fame.” 1170

“Mark yonder tent of pure and dazzling white,
 Whose rich brocade reflects a quivering light;
 An ebon seat surmounts the ivory throne;
 There frowns in state a warrior of renown.
 The crowding slaves his awful nod obey, 1175
 And silver moons around his banners play;
 What Chief, or Prince, has grasped the hostile sword?
 Friburz, the son of Persia's mighty lord.”
 Again: “These standards show one champion more,
 Upon their centre flames the savage boar; 1180
 The saffron-hued pavilion bright ascends,
 Whence many a fold of tasselled fringe depends;
 Who there presides?”

“Guráz, from heroes sprung,
 Whose praise exceeds the power of mortal tongue.” 1185

Thus, anxious, he explored the crowded field,
 Nor once the secret of his birth revealed;
 Heaven will'd it so. Pressed down by silent grief,
 Surrounding objects promised no relief.
 This world to mortals still denies repose, 1190
 And life is still the scene of many woes.

Again his eye, instinctive turned, descried
 The green pavilion, and the warrior's pride.
 Again he cries: "O tell his glorious name;
 Yon gallant horse declares the hero's fame!" 1195
 But false Hujír the aspiring hope repelled,
 Crushed the fond wish, the soothing balm withheld,
 "And why should I conceal his name from thee?
 His name and title are unknown to me."

Then thus Sohráb—"In all that thou hast said, 1200
 No sign of Rustem have thy words conveyed;
 Thou sayest he leads the Persian host to arms,
 With him has battle lost its boisterous charms?
 Of him no trace thy guiding hand has shown;
 Can power supreme remain unmark'd, unknown?" 1205

"Perhaps returned to Zábul's verdant bowers,
 He undisturbed enjoys his peaceful hours,
 The vernal banquets may constrain his stay,
 And rural sports invite prolonged delay."

"Ah! say not thus; the Champion of the world, 1210
 Shrink from the kindling war with banners furled!
 It cannot be! Say where his lightnings dart,
 Show me the warrior, all thou know'st impart;
 Treasures uncounted shall be thy reward,
 Death changed to life, my friendship more than shared. 1215
 Dost thou not know what, in the royal ear,
 The Múbid said—befitting Kings to hear?
 'Untold, a secret is a jewel bright,
 Yet profitless whilst hidden from the light;
 But when revealed, in words distinctly given, 1220
 It shines refulgent as the sun through heaven.'"

To him, Hujír evasive thus replies:
 "Through all the extended earth his glory flies!
 Whenever dangers round the nation close,
 Rustem approaches, and repels its foes; 1225
 And shouldst thou see him mix in mortal strife,
 Thou'dst think 'twere easier to escape with life
 From tiger fell, or demon—or the fold
 Of the chafed dragon, than his dreadful hold—
 When fiercest battle clothes the fields with fire, 1230
 Before his rage embodied hosts retire!"

"And where didst thou encountering armies see?
 Why Rustem's praise so proudly urge to me?
 Let us but meet and thou shalt trembling know,
 How fierce that wrath which bids my bosom glow: 1235
 If living flames express his boundless ire,
 O'erwhelming waters quench consuming fire!
 And deepest darkness, glooms of ten-fold night,
 Fly from the piercing beams of radiant light."

Hujír shrunk back with undissembled dread, 1240
 And thus communing with himself, he said—
 "Shall I, regardless of my country, guide

To Rustem's tent this furious homicide?
 And witness there destruction to our host?
 The bulwark of the land for ever lost! 1245
 What Chief can then the Tartar power restrain!
 Káu's dethroned, the mighty Rustem slain!
 Better a thousand deaths should lay me low,
 Than, living, yield such triumph to the foe. 1250
 For in this struggle should my blood be shed,
 No foul dishonour can pursue me, dead;
 No lasting shame my father's age oppress,
 Whom eighty sons of martial courage bless!
 They for their brother slain, incensed will rise,
 And pour their vengeance on my enemies." 1255
 Then thus aloud—"Can idle words avail?
 Why still of Rustem urge the frequent tale?
 Why for the elephant-bodied hero ask?
 Thee, he will find—no uncongenial task. 1260
 Why seek pretences to destroy my life?
 Strike, for no Rustem views th' unequal strife!"

Sohráb confused, with hopeless anguish mourned,
 Back from the lofty walls he quick returned,
 And stood amazed.

Now war and vengeance claim, 1265
 Collected thought and deeds of mighty name;
 The jointed mail his vigorous body clasps,
 His sinewy hand the shining javelin grasps;
 Like a mad elephant he meets the foe,
 His steed a moving mountain—deeply glow 1270
 His cheeks with passionate ardour, as he flies
 Resistless onwards, and with sparkling eyes,
 Full on the centre drives his daring horse—
 The yielding Persians fly his furious course;
 As the wild ass impetuous springs away, 1275
 When the fierce lion thunders on his prey.
 By every sign of strength and martial power,
 They think him Rustem in his direst hour;
 On Káu's now his proud defiance falls,
 Scornful to him the stripling warrior calls: 1280
 "And why art thou misnamed of royal strain?
 What work of thine befits the tented plain?
 This thirsty javelin seeks thy coward breast;
 Thou and thy thousands doomed to endless rest.
 True to my oath, which time can never change, 1285
 On thee, proud King! I hurl my just revenge.
 The blood of Zind inspires my burning hate,
 And dire resentment hurries on thy fate;
 Whom canst thou send to try the desperate strife?
 What valiant Chief, regardless of his life? 1290
 Where now can Friburz, Tús, Gíw, Gúdarz, be,
 And the world-conquering Rustem, where is he?"

No prompt reply from Persian lip ensued—
 Then rushing on, with demon-strength endued,
 Sohráb elate his javelin waved around, 1295
 And hurled the bright pavilion to the ground;

With horror Káuś feels destruction nigh,
 And cries: "For Rustem's needful succour fly!
 This frantic Turk, triumphant on the plain,
 Withers the souls of all my warrior train." 1300
 That instant Túś the mighty Champion sought,
 And told the deeds the Tartar Chief had wrought;
 "'Tis ever thus, the brainless Monarch's due!
 Shame and disaster still his steps pursue!"
 This saying, from his tent he soon descried, 1305
 The wild confusion spreading far and wide;
 And saddled Rakush—whilst, in deep dismay,
 Girgín incessant cried—"Speed, speed, away."
 Rehám bound on the mace, Túś promptly ran,
 And buckled on the broad Burgustuwán. 1310
 Rustem, meanwhile, the thickening tumult hears
 And in his heart, untouched by human fears,
 Says: "What is this, that feeling seems to stun!
 This battle must be led by Ahirmun,
 The awful day of doom must have begun." 1315
 In haste he arms, and mounts his bounding steed,
 The growing rage demands redoubled speed;
 The leopard's skin he o'er his shoulders throws,
 The regal girdle round his middle glows.
 High wave his glorious banners; broad revealed, 1320
 The pictured dragons glare along the field
 Borne by Zúára. When, surprised, he views
 Sohráb, endued with ample breast and thews,
 Like Sám Suwár, he beckons him apart;
 The youth advances with a gallant heart, 1325
 Willing to prove his adversary's might,
 By single combat to decide the fight;
 And eagerly, "Together brought," he cries,
 "Remote from us be foemen, and allies,
 And though at once by either host surveyed, 1330
 Ours be the strife which asks no mortal aid."

Rustem, considerate, view'd him o'er and o'er,
 So wondrous graceful was the form he bore,
 And frankly said: "Experience flows with age,
 And many a foe has felt my conquering rage; 1335
 Much have I seen, superior strength and art
 Have borne my spear thro' many a demon's heart;
 Only behold me on the battle plain,
 Wait till thou see'st this hand the war sustain,
 And if on thee should changeful fortune smile, 1340
 Thou needst not fear the monster of the Nile!
 But soft compassion melts my soul to save,
 A youth so blooming with a mind so brave!"

The generous speech Sohráb attentive heard,
 His heart expanding glowed at every word: 1345
 "One question answer, and in answering show,
 That truth should ever from a warrior flow;
 Art thou not Rustem, whose exploits sublime,
 Endear his name thro' every distant clime?"

"I boast no station of exalted birth, 1350
 No proud pretensions to distinguished worth;

To him inferior, no such powers are mine,
No offspring I of Nírum's glorious line!"

The prompt denial damp't his filial joy,
All hope at once forsook the Warrior-boy, 1355
His opening day of pleasure, and the bloom
Of cherished life, immersed in shadowy gloom.
Perplexed with what his mother's words implied;—
A narrow space is now prepared, aside,
For single combat. With disdainful glance 1360
Each boldly shakes his death-devoting lance,
And rushes forward to the dubious fight;
Thoughts high and brave their burning souls excite;
Now sword to sword; continuous strokes resound,
Till glittering fragments strew the dusty ground. 1365
Each grasps his massive club with added force,
The folding mail is rent from either horse;
It seemed as if the fearful day of doom
Had, clothed in all its withering terrors, come.
Their shattered corslets yield defence no more— 1370
At length they breathe, defiled with dust and gore;
Their gasping throats with parching thirst are dry,
Gloomy and fierce they roll the lowering eye,
And frown defiance. Son and Father driven
To mortal strife! are these the ways of Heaven? 1375
The various swarms which boundless ocean breeds,
The countless tribes which crop the flowery meads,
All know their kind, but hapless man alone
Has no instinctive feeling for his own!
Compell'd to pause, by every eye surveyed, 1380
Rustem, with shame, his wearied strength betrayed;
Foil'd by a youth in battle's mid career,
His groaning spirit almost sunk with fear;
Recovering strength, again they fiercely meet;
Again they struggle with redoubled heat; 1385
With bended bows they furious now contend;
And feather'd shafts in rattling showers descend;
Thick as autumnal leaves they strew the plain,
Harmless their points, and all their fury vain.
And now they seize each other's girdle-band; 1390
Rustem, who, if he moved his iron hand,
Could shake a mountain, and to whom a rock
Seemed soft as wax, tried, with one mighty stroke,
To hurl him thundering from his fiery steed,
But Fate forbids the gallant youth should bleed; 1395
Finding his wonted nerves relaxed, amazed
That hand he drops which never had been raised
Uncrowned with victory, even when demons fought,
And pauses, wildered with despairing thought.
Sohráb again springs with terrific grace, 1400
And lifts, from saddle-bow, his ponderous mace;
With gather'd strength the quick-descending blow
Wounds in its fall, and stuns the unwary foe;
Then thus contemptuous: "All thy power is gone;
Thy charger's strength exhausted as thy own; 1405
Thy bleeding wounds with pity I behold;
O seek no more the combat of the bold!"

Rustem to this reproach made no reply,
 But stood confused—meanwhile, tumultuously
 The legions closed; with soul-appalling force, 1410
 Troop rushed on troop, o'erwhelming man and horse;
 Sohráb, incensed, the Persian host engaged,
 Furious along the scattered lines he raged;
 Fierce as a wolf he rode on every side,
 The thirsty earth with streaming gore was dyed. 1415
 Midst the Túránians, then, the Champion sped,
 And like a tiger heaped the fields with dead.
 But when the Monarch's danger struck his thought,
 Returning swift, the stripling youth he sought;
 Grieved to the soul, the mighty Champion view'd 1420
 His hands and mail with Persian blood imbrued;
 And thus exclaimed with lion-voice—"O say,
 Why with the Persians dost thou war to-day?
 Why not with me alone decide the fight,
 Thou'rt like a wolf that seek'st the fold by night." 1425

To this Sohráb his proud assent expressed—
 And Rustem, answering, thus the youth addressed.
 "Night-shadows now are thickening o'er the plain,
 The morrow's sun must see our strife again;
 In wrestling let us then exert our might!" 1430
 He said, and eve's last glimmer sunk in night

Thus as the skies a deeper gloom displayed,
 The stripling's life was hastening into shade!

The gallant heroes to their tents retired,
 The sweets of rest their wearied limbs required: 1435
 Sohráb, delighted with his brave career,
 Describes the fight in Húmán's anxious ear:
 Tells how he forced unnumbered Chiefs to yield,
 And stood himself the victor of the field!
 "But let the morrow's dawn," he cried, "arrive, 1440
 And not one Persian shall the day survive;
 Meanwhile let wine its strengthening balm impart,
 And add new zeal to every drooping heart."
 The valiant Gíw with Rustem pondering stood,
 And, sad, recalled the scene of death and blood; 1445
 Grief and amazement heaved the frequent sigh,
 And almost froze the crimson current dry.
 Rustem, oppressed by Gíw's desponding thought,
 Amidst his Chiefs the mournful Monarch sought;
 To him he told Sohráb's tremendous sway, 1450
 The dire misfortunes of this luckless day;
 Told with what grasping force he tried, in vain,
 To hurl the wondrous stripling to the plain:
 "The whispering zephyr might as well aspire
 To shake a mountain—such his strength and fire. 1455
 But night came on—and, by agreement, we
 Must meet again to-morrow—who shall be
 Victorious, Heaven knows only:—for by Heaven,
 Victory or death to man is ever given."

This said, the King, o'erwhelmed in deep despair, 1460
Passed the dread night in agony and prayer.

The Champion, silent, joined his bands at rest,
And spurned at length despondence from his breast;
Removed from all, he cheered Zúára's heart,
And nerved his soul to bear a trying part:— 1465

“Ere early morning gilds the ethereal plain,
In martial order range my warrior-train;
And when I meet in all his glorious pride,
This valiant Turk whom late my rage defied, 1470

Should fortune's smiles my arduous task requite,
Bring them to share the triumph of my might;
But should success the stripling's arm attend,
And dire defeat and death my glories end,
To their loved homes my brave associates guide;
Let bowery Zábúl all their sorrows hide— 1475

Comfort my venerable father's heart;
In gentlest words my heavy fate impart.
The dreadful tidings to my mother bear,
And soothe her anguish with the tenderest care;
Say, that the will of righteous Heaven decreed, 1480

That thus in arms her mighty son should bleed.
Enough of fame my various toils acquired,
When warring demons, bathed in blood, expired.
Were life prolonged a thousand lingering years,
Death comes at last and ends our mortal fears; 1485

Kirshásp, and Sám, and Narímán, the best
And bravest heroes, who have ever blest
This fleeting world, were not endued with power,
To stay the march of fate one single hour;
The world for them possessed no fixed abode, 1490

The path to death's cold regions must be trod;
Then, why lament the doom ordained for all?
Thus Jemshíd fell, and thus must Rustem fall.”

When the bright dawn proclaimed the rising day,
The warriors armed, impatient of delay; 1495

But first Sohráb, his proud confederate nigh,
Thus wistful spoke, as swelled the boding sigh—
“Now, mark my great antagonist in arms!
His noble form my filial bosom warms; 1500

My mother's tokens shine conspicuous here,
And all the proofs my heart demands, appear;
Sure this is Rustem, whom my eyes engage!
Shall I, O grief! provoke my Father's rage?
Offended Nature then would curse my name,
And shuddering nations echo with my shame.” 1505

He ceased, then Húmán: “Vain, fantastic thought,
Oft have I been where Persia's Champion fought;
And thou hast heard, what wonders he performed,
When, in his prime, Mázinderán was stormed;
That horse resembles Rustem's, it is true, 1510

But not so strong, nor beautiful to view.”
Sohráb now buckles on his war attire,
His heart all softness, and his brain all fire;

Around his lips such smiles benignant played,
 He seemed to greet a friend, as thus he said:— 1515
 “Here let us sit together on the plain,
 Here, social sit, and from the fight refrain;
 Ask we from heaven forgiveness of the past,
 And bind our souls in friendship that may last;
 Ours be the feast—let us be warm and free, 1520
 For powerful instinct draws me still to thee;
 Fain would my heart in bland affection join,
 Then let thy generous ardour equal mine;
 And kindly say, with whom I now contend—
 What name distinguished boasts my warrior-friend! 1525
 Thy name unfit for champion brave to hide,
 Thy name so long, long sought, and still denied;
 Say, art thou Rustem, whom I burn to know?
 Ingenuous say, and cease to be my foe!”

Sternly the mighty Champion cried, “Away— 1530
 Hence with thy wiles—now practised to delay;
 The promised struggle, resolute, I claim,
 Then cease to move me to an act of shame.”
 Sohráb rejoined—“Old man! thou wilt not hear
 The words of prudence uttered in thine ear; 1535
 Then, Heaven! look on.”

Preparing for the shock,
 Each binds his charger to a neighbouring rock;
 And girds his loins, and rubs his wrists, and tries
 Their suppleness and force, with angry eyes; 1540
 And now they meet—now rise, and now descend,
 And strong and fierce their sinewy arms extend;
 Wrestling with all their strength they grasp and strain,
 And blood and sweat flow copious on the plain;
 Like raging elephants they furious close; 1545
 Commutual wounds are given, and wrenching blows.
 Sohráb now clasps his hands, and forward springs
 Impatiently, and round the Champion clings;
 Seizes his girdle belt, with power to tear
 The very earth asunder; in despair 1560
 Rustem, defeated, feels his nerves give way,
 And thundering falls. Sohráb bestrides his prey:
 Grim as the lion, prowling through the wood,
 Upon a wild ass springs, and pants for blood.
 His lifted sword had lopt the gory head, 1565
 But Rustem, quick, with crafty ardour said:—
 “One moment, hold! what, are our laws unknown?
 A Chief may fight till he is twice o’erthrown;
 The second fall, his recreant blood is spilt,
 These are our laws, avoid the menaced guilt.” 1570

Proud of his strength, and easily deceived,
 The wondering youth the artful tale believed;
 Released his prey, and, wild as wind or wave,
 Neglecting all the prudence of the brave,
 Turned from the place, nor once the strife renewed, 1575
 But bounded o’er the plain and other cares pursued,

As if all memory of the war had died,
All thoughts of him with whom his strength was tried.

Húmán, confounded at the stripling's stay,
Went forth, and heard the fortune of the day; 1580
Amazed to find the mighty Rustem freed,
With deepest grief he wailed the luckless deed.
"What! loose a raging lion from the snare,
And let him growling hasten to his lair?
Bethink thee well; in war, from this unwise, 1585
This thoughtless act what countless woes may rise;
Never again suspend the final blow,
Nor trust the seeming weakness of a foe!"
"Hence with complaint," the dauntless youth replied,
"To-morrow's contest shall his fate decide." 1590

When Rustem was released, in altered mood
He sought the coolness of the murmuring flood;
There quenched his thirst; and bathed his limbs, and prayed,
Beseeching Heaven to yield its strengthening aid.
His pious prayer indulgent Heaven approved, 1595
And growing strength through all his sinews moved;
Such as erewhile his towering structure knew,
When his bold arm unconquered demons slew.
Yet in his mien no confidence appeared,
No ardent hope his wounded spirits cheered. 1600

Again they met. A glow of youthful grace,
Diffused its radiance o'er the stripling's face,
And when he saw in renovated guise,
The foe so lately mastered; with surprise,
He cried—"What! rescued from my power, again 1605
Dost thou confront me on the battle plain?
Or, dost thou, wearied, draw thy vital breath,
And seek, from warrior bold, the shaft of death?
Truth has no charms for thee, old man; even now,
Some further cheat may lurk upon thy brow; 1610
Twice have I shown thee mercy, twice thy age
Hath been thy safety—twice it soothed my rage."
Then mild the Champion: "Youth is proud and vain!
The idle boast a warrior would disdain;
This aged arm perhaps may yet control, 1615
The wanton fury that inflames thy soul!"

Again, dismounting, each the other viewed
With sullen glance, and swift the fight renewed;
Clenched front to front, again they tug and bend,
Twist their broad limbs as every nerve would rend; 1620
With rage convulsive Rustem grasps him round;
Bends his strong back, and hurls him to the ground;
Him, who had deemed the triumph all his own;
But dubious of his power to keep him down,
Like lightning quick he gives the deadly thrust, 1625
And spurns the Stripling weltering in the dust.
—Thus as his blood that shining steel imbrues,
Thine too shall flow, when Destiny pursues;
For when she marks the victim of her power,

A thousand daggers speed the dying hour. 1630
 Writhing with pain Sohráb in murmurs sighed—
 And thus to Rustem—“Vaunt not, in thy pride;
 Upon myself this sorrow have I brought,
 Thou but the instrument of fate—which wrought
 My downfall; thou are guiltless—guiltless quite; 1635
 O! had I seen my father in the fight,
 My glorious father! Life will soon be o'er,
 And his great deeds enchant my soul no more!
 Of him my mother gave the mark and sign,
 For him I sought, and what an end is mine! 1640
 My only wish on earth, my constant sigh,
 Him to behold, and with that wish I die.
 But hope not to elude his piercing sight,
 In vain for thee the deepest glooms of night;
 Couldst thou through Ocean's depths for refuge fly, 1645
 Or midst the star-beams track the upper sky!
 Rustem, with vengeance armed, will reach thee there,
 His soul the prey of anguish and despair.”

An icy horror chills the Champion's heart,
 His brain whirls round with agonizing smart; 1650
 O'er his wan cheek no gushing sorrows flow,
 Senseless he sinks beneath the weight of woe;
 Relieved at length, with frenzied look, he cries:
 “Prove thou art mine, confirm my doubting eyes!
 For I am Rustem!” Piercing was the groan, 1655
 Which burst from his torn heart—as wild and lone,
 He gazed upon him. Dire amazement shook
 The dying youth, and mournful thus he spoke:
 “If thou art Rustem, cruel is thy part,
 No warmth paternal seems to fill thy heart; 1660
 Else hadst thou known me when, with strong desire,
 I fondly claimed thee for my valiant sire;
 Now from my body strip the shining mail,
 Untie these bands, ere life and feeling fail;
 And on my arm the direful proof behold! 1665
 Thy sacred bracelet of refulgent gold!
 When the loud brazen drums were heard afar,
 And, echoing round, proclaimed the pending war,
 Whilst parting tears my mother's eyes o'erflowed,
 This mystic gift her bursting heart bestowed: 1670
 ‘Take this,’ she said, ‘thy father's token wear,
 And promised glory will reward thy care.’
 The hour is come, but fraught with bitterest woe,
 We meet in blood to wail the fatal blow.”

The loosened mail unfolds the bracelet bright, 1675
 Unhappy gift! to Rustem's wildered sight,
 Prostrate he falls—“By my unnatural hand,
 My son, my son is slain—and from the land
 Uprooted.”—Frantic, in the dust his hair
 He rends in agony and deep despair; 1680
 The western sun had disappeared in gloom,
 And still, the Champion wept his cruel doom;
 His wondering legions marked the long delay,
 And, seeing Rakush riderless astray,

- The rumour quick to Persia's Monarch spread, 1685
 And there described the mighty Rustem dead.
 Káu's, alarmed, the fatal tidings hears;
 His bosom quivers with increasing fears.
 "Speed, speed, and see what has befallen to-day
 To cause these groans and tears—what fatal fray! 1690
 If he be lost, if breathless on the ground,
 And this young warrior, with the conquest crowned—
 Then must I, humbled, from my kingdom torn,
 Wander like Jemshíd, through the world forlorn."
- The army roused, rushed o'er the dusty plain, 1695
 Urged by the Monarch to revenge the slain;
 Wild consternation saddened every face,
 Tú's winged with horror sought the fatal place,
 And there beheld the agonizing sight—
 The murderous end of that unnatural fight. 1700
 Sohráb, still breathing, hears the shrill alarms,
 His gentle speech suspends the clang of arms:
 "My light of life now fluttering sinks in shade,
 Let vengeance sleep, and peaceful vows be made.
 Beseech the King to spare this Tartar host, 1705
 For they are guiltless, all to them is lost;
 I led them on, their souls with glory fired,
 While mad ambition all my thoughts inspired.
 In search of thee, the world before my eyes,
 War was my choice, and thou the sacred prize; 1710
 With thee, my sire! in virtuous league combined,
 No tyrant King should persecute mankind.
 That hope is past—the storm has ceased to rave—
 My ripening honours wither in the grave;
 Then let no vengeance on my comrades fall, 1715
 Mine was the guilt, and mine the sorrow, all;
 How often have I sought thee—oft my mind
 Figured thee to my sight—o'erjoyed to find
 My mother's token; disappointment came,
 When thou denied thy lineage and thy name; 1720
 Oh! still o'er thee my soul impassioned hung,
 Still to my father fond affection clung!
 But fate, remorseless, all my hopes withstood,
 And stained thy reeking hands in kindred blood."
- His faltering breath protracted speech denied: 1725
 Still from his eye-lids flowed a gushing tide;
 Through Rustem's soul redoubled horror ran,
 Heart-rending thoughts subdued the mighty man,
 And now, at last, with joy-illumined eye,
 The Zábul bands their glorious Chief descry; 1730
 But when they saw his pale and haggard look,
 Knew from what mournful cause he gazed and shook,
 With downcast mien they moaned and wept aloud;
 While Rustem thus addressed the weeping crowd
 "Here ends the war! let gentle peace succeed, 1735
 Enough of death, I—I have done the deed!"
 Then to his brother, groaning deep, he said—
 "O what a curse upon a parent's head!
 But go—and to the Tartar say—no more,

Let war between us steep the earth with gore." 1740
 Zúára flew and wildly spoke his grief,
 To crafty Húmán, the Túránian Chief,
 Who, with dissembled sorrow, heard him tell
 The dismal tidings which he knew too well;
 "And who," he said, "has caused these tears to flow? 1745
 Who, but Hujír? He might have stayed the blow,
 But when Sohráb his Father's banners sought;
 He still denied that here the Champion fought;
 He spread the ruin, he the secret knew,
 Hence should his crime receive the vengeance due!" 1750
 Zúára, frantic, breathed in Rustem's ear,
 The treachery of the captive Chief, Hujír;
 Whose headless trunk had weltered on the strand,
 But prayers and force withheld the lifted hand.
 Then to his dying son the Champion turned, 1755
 Remorse more deep within his bosom burned;
 A burst of frenzy fired his throbbing brain;
 He clenched his sword, but found his fury vain;
 The Persian Chiefs the desperate act repress,
 And tried to calm the tumult in his breast: 1760
 Thus Gúdarz spoke—"Alas! wert thou to give
 Thyself a thousand wounds, and cease to live;
 What would it be to him thou sorrowest o'er?
 It would not save one pang—then weep no more;
 For if removed by death, O say, to whom 1765
 Has ever been vouchsafed a different doom?
 All are the prey of death—the crowned, the low,
 And man, through life, the victim still of woe."
 Then Rustem: "Fly! and to the King relate,
 The pressing horrors which involve my fate; 1770
 And if the memory of my deeds e'er swayed
 His mind, O supplicate his generous aid;
 A sovereign balm he has whose wondrous power,
 All wounds can heal, and fleeting life restore;
 Swift from his tent the potent medicine bring." 1775
 —But mark the malice of the brainless King!
 Hard as the flinty rock, he stern denies
 The healthful draught, and gloomy thus replies:
 "Can I forgive his foul and slanderous tongue?
 The sharp disdain on me contemptuous flung? 1780
 Scorned 'midst my army by a shameless boy,
 Who sought my throne, my sceptre to destroy!
 Nothing but mischief from his heart can flow,
 Is it, then, wise to cherish such a foe?
 The fool who warms his enemy to life, 1785
 Only prepares for scenes of future strife."

Gúdarz, returning, told the hopeless tale—
 And thinking Rustem's presence might prevail;
 The Champion rose, but ere he reached the throne,
 Sohráb had breathed the last expiring groan. 1790

Now keener anguish rack'd the father's mind,
 Reft of his son, a murderer of his kind;
 His guilty sword distained with filial gore,
 He beat his burning breast, his hair he tore;

- The breathless corse before his shuddering view, 1795
 A shower of ashes o'er his head he threw;
 "In my old age," he cried, "what have I done?
 Why have I slain my son, my innocent son!
 Why o'er his splendid dawning did I roll
 The clouds of death—and plunge my burthened soul 1800
 In agony? My son! from heroes sprung;
 Better these hands were from my body wrung;
 And solitude and darkness, deep and drear,
 Fold me from sight than hated linger here.
 But when his mother hears, with horror wild, 1805
 That I have shed the life-blood of her child,
 So nobly brave, so dearly loved, in vain,
 How can her heart that rending shock sustain?"
- Now on a bier the Persian warriors place
 The breathless Youth, and shade his pallid face; 1810
 And turning from that fatal field away,
 Move towards the Champion's home in long array.
 Then Rustem, sick of martial pomp and show,
 Himself the spring of all this scene of woe,
 Doomed to the flames the pageantry he loved, 1815
 Shield, spear, and mace, so oft in battle proved;
 Now lost to all, encompassed by despair;
 His bright pavilion crackling blazed in air;
 The sparkling throne the ascending column fed;
 In smoking fragments fell the golden bed; 1820
 The raging fire red glimmering died away,
 And all the Warrior's pride in dust and ashes lay.
- Káús, the King, now joins the mournful Chief,
 And tries to soothe his deep and settled grief;
 For soon or late we yield our vital breath, 1825
 And all our worldly troubles end in death!
 "When first I saw him, graceful in his might,
 He looked far other than a Tartar knight;
 Wondering I gazed—now Destiny has thrown
 Him on thy sword—he fought, and he is gone; 1830
 And should even Heaven against the earth be hurled,
 Or fire inwrap in crackling flames the world,
 That which is past—we never can restore,
 His soul has travelled to some happier shore.
 Alas! no good from sorrow canst thou reap, 1835
 Then wherefore thus in gloom and misery weep?"
- But Rustem's mighty woes disdained his aid,
 His heart was drowned in grief, and thus he said:
 "Yes, he is gone! to me for ever lost!
 O then protect his brave unguided host; 1840
 From war removed and this detested place,
 Let them, unharmed, their mountain-wilds retrace;
 Bid them secure my brother's will obey,
 The careful guardian of their weary way,
 To where the Jihún's distant waters stray." 1845
 To this the King: "My soul is sad to see
 Thy hopeless grief—but, since approved by thee,

The war shall cease—though the Túránian brand
Has spread dismay and terror through the land.”

The King, appeased, no more with vengeance burned, 1850
The Tartar legions to their homes returned;
The Persian warriors, gathering round the dead,
Grovelled in dust, and tears of sorrow shed;
Then back to loved Irán their steps the monarch led.

But Rustem, midst his native bands, remained, 1855
And further rites of sacrifice maintained;
A thousand horses bled at his command,
And the torn drums were scattered o'er the sand;
And now through Zábul's deep and bowery groves,
In mournful pomp the sad procession moves. 1860

The mighty Chief on foot precedes the bier;
His Warrior-friends, in grief assembled near:
The dismal cadence rose upon the gale,
And Zál astonished heard the piercing wail; 1865
He and his kindred joined the solemn train;
Hung round the bier and wondering viewed the slain.

“There gaze, and weep!” the sorrowing Father said,
“For there, behold my glorious offspring dead!”
The hoary Sire shrunk backward with surprise,
And tears of blood o'erflowed his aged eyes; 1870

And now the Champion's rural palace gate
Receives the funeral group in gloomy state;
Rúdábeh loud bemoaned the Stripling's doom;
Sweet flower, all drooping in the hour of bloom, 1875
His tender youth in distant bowers had past,
Sheltered at home he felt no withering blast;

In the soft prison of his mother's arms,
Secure from danger and the world's alarms.
O ruthless Fortune! flushed with generous pride,
He sought his sire, and thus unhappy, died. 1880

Rustem again the sacred bier unclosed;
Again Sohráb to public view exposed;
Husbands, and wives, and warriors, old and young,
Struck with amaze, around the body hung, 1885
With garments rent and loosely flowing hair;
Their shrieks and clamours filled the echoing air;
Frequent they cried: “Thus Sám the Champion slept!
Thus sleeps Sohráb!” Again they groaned, and wept.

Now o'er the corpse a yellow robe is spread,
The aloes bier is closed upon the dead; 1890
And, to preserve the hapless hero's name,
Fragrant and fresh, that his unblemished fame
Might live and bloom through all succeeding days,
A mound sepulchral on the spot they raise,
Formed like a charger's hoof. 1895

In every ear
The story has been told—and many a tear,
Shed at the sad recital. Through Túrán,
Afrásiyáb's wide realm, and Samengán,

Deep sunk the tidings—nuptial bower, and bed,
And all that promised happiness, had fled! 1900

But when Tahmíneh heard this tale of woe,
Think how a mother bore the mortal blow!
Distracted, wild, she sprang from place to place;
With frenzied hands deformed her beauteous face; 1905
The musky locks her polished temples crowned.

Furious she tore, and flung upon the ground;
Starting, in agony of grief, she gazed—
Her swimming eyes to Heaven imploring raised;
And groaning cried: “Sole comfort of my life! 1910
Doomed the sad victim of unnatural strife,

Where art thou now with dust and blood defiled?
Thou darling boy, my lost, my murdered child!
When thou wert gone—how, night and lingering day,
Did thy fond mother watch the time away; 1915
For hope still pictured all I wished to see,

Thy father found, and thou returned to me,
Yes—thou, exulting in thy father’s fame!
And yet, nor sire nor son, nor tidings, came:
How could I dream of this? ye met—but how? 1920
That noble aspect—that ingenuous brow,

Moved not a nerve in him—ye met—to part,
Alas! the life-blood issuing from the heart
Short was the day which gave to me delight,
Soon, soon, succeeds a long and dismal night; 1925
On whom shall now devolve my tender care?

Who, loved like thee, my bosom-sorrows share?
Whom shall I take to fill thy vacant place,
To whom extend a mother’s soft embrace?
Sad fate! for one so young, so fair, so brave, 1930
Seeking thy father thus to find a grave.

These arms no more shall fold thee to my breast,
No more with thee my soul be doubly blest;
No, drowned in blood thy lifeless body lies,
For ever torn from these desiring eyes; 1935
Friendless, alone, beneath a foreign sky,

Thy mail thy death-clothes—and thy father, by;
Why did not I conduct thee on the way,
And point where Rustem’s bright pavilion lay?
Thou hadst the tokens—why didst thou withhold 1940
Those dear remembrances—that pledge of gold?

Hadst thou the bracelet to his view restored,
Thy precious blood had never stained his sword.”

The strong emotion choked her panting breath,
Her veins seemed withered by the cold of death: 1945
The trembling matrons hastening round her mourned,
With piercing cries, till fluttering life returned;

Then gazing up, distraught, she wept again,
And frantic, seeing ‘midst her pitying train,
The favourite steed—now more than ever dear, 1950
The hoofs she kissed, and bathed with many a tear;
Clasping the mail Sohráb in battle wore,
With burning lips she kissed it o’er and o’er;
His martial robes she in her arms comprest,

And like an infant strained them to her breast; 1955
 The reins, and trappings, club, and spear, were brought,
 The sword, and shield, with which the Stripling fought,
 These she embraced with melancholy joy,
 In sad remembrance of her darling boy.
 And still she beat her face, and o'er them hung, 1960
 As in a trance—or to them wildly clung—
 Day after day she thus indulged her grief,
 Night after night, disdaining all relief;
 At length worn out—from earthly anguish riven,
 The mother's spirit joined her child in Heaven. 1965

Sikander

Failakús, before his death, placed the crown of sovereignty upon the head of Sikander, and appointed Aristú, who was one of the disciples of the great Aflátún, his vizir. He cautioned him to pursue the path of virtue and rectitude, and to cast from his heart every feeling of vanity and pride; above all he implored him to be just and merciful, and said:—

“Think not that thou art wise, but ignorant,
 And ever listen to advice and counsel;
 We are but dust, and from the dust created;
 And what our lives but helplessness and sorrow!”

Sikander for a time attended faithfully to the instructions of his father, and to the counsel of Aristú, both in public and private affairs.

Upon Sikander's elevation to the throne, Dárá sent an envoy to him to claim the customary tribute, but he received for answer: “The time is past when Rúm acknowledged the superiority of Persia. It is now thy turn to pay tribute to Rúm. If my demand be refused, I will immediately invade thy dominions; and think not that I shall be satisfied with the conquest of Persia alone, the whole world shall be mine; therefore prepare for war.” Dárá had no alternative, not even submission, and accordingly assembled his army, for Sikander was already in full march against him. Upon the confines of Persia the armies came in sight of each other, when Sikander, in the assumed character of an envoy, was resolved to ascertain the exact condition of the enemy. With this view he entered the Persian camp, and Dárá allowing the person whom he supposed an ambassador, to approach, enquired what message the king of Rúm had sent to him. “Hear me!” said the pretended envoy: “Sikander has not invaded thy empire for the exclusive purpose of fighting, but to know its history, its laws, and customs, from personal inspection. His object is to travel through the whole world. Why then should he make war upon thee? Give him but a free passage through thy kingdom, and nothing more is required. However if it be thy wish to proceed to hostilities, he apprehends nothing from the greatness of thy power.” Dárá was astonished at the majestic air and dignity of the envoy, never having witnessed his equal, and he anxiously said:—

“What is thy name, from whom art thou descended?
 For that commanding front, that fearless eye,
 Bespeaks illustrious birth. Art thou indeed
 Sikander, whom my fancy would believe thee,
 So eloquent in speech, in mien so noble?”
 “No!” said the envoy, “no such rank is mine,
 Sikander holds among his numerous host
 Thousands superior to the humble slave
 Who stands before thee. It is not for me
 To put upon myself the air of kings,
 To ape their manners and their lofty state.”

Dárá could not help smiling, and ordered refreshments and wine to be brought. He filled a cup and gave it to the envoy, who drank it off, but did not, according to custom, return the empty goblet to the cup-bearer. The cup-bearer demanded the cup, and Dárá asked the envoy why he did not give it back. “It is the custom in my country,” said the envoy, “when a cup is once given into an ambassador's hands, never to receive it back again.” Dárá was still more amused by this explanation, and presented to him another cup, and successively four, which the envoy did not fail to appropriate severally in the same way. In the evening a feast was held, and Sikander partook of the

delicious refreshments that had been prepared for him; but in the midst of the entertainment one of the persons present recognized him, and immediately whispered to Dárá that his enemy was in his power.

Sikander's sharp and cautious eye now marked
The changing scene, and up he sprang, but first
Snatched the four cups, and rushing from the tent,
Vaulted upon his horse, and rode away.
So instantaneous was the act, amazed
The assembly rose, and presently a troop
Was ordered in pursuit—but night, dark night,
Baffled their search, and checked their eager speed.



IMAGE 6.7: FERDOWSI AND THE THREE GHAZNAVID COURT POETS | Ferdowsi and several other people enjoy a colorful garden with small ponds.

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As soon as he reached his own army, he sent for Aristátalis and his courtiers, and exultingly displayed to them the four golden cups. "These," said he, "have I taken from my enemy, I have taken them from his own table, and before his own eyes. His strength and numbers too I have ascertained, and my success is certain." No time was now lost in arrangements for the battle. The armies engaged, and they fought seven days without a decisive blow being struck. On the eighth, Dárá was compelled to fly, and his legions, defeated and harassed, were pursued by the Rúmís with great slaughter to the banks of the Euphrates. Sikander now returned to take possession of the capital. In the meantime Dárá collected his scattered forces together, and again tried his fortune, but he was again defeated. After his second success, the conqueror devoted himself so zealously to conciliate and win the affections of the people, that they soon ceased to remember their former king with any degree of attachment to his interests. Sikander said to them: "Persia indeed is my inheritance: I am no stranger to you, for I am myself descended from Dáráb; you may therefore safely trust to my justice and paternal care, in everything that concerns your welfare." The result was, that legion after legion united in his cause, and consolidated his power.

When Dárá was informed of the universal disaffection of his army, he said to the remaining friends who were personally devoted to him: "Alas! my subjects have been deluded by the artful dissimulation and skill of Sikander; your next misfortune will be the captivity of your wives and children. Yes, your wives and children will be made the slaves of the conquerors." A

few troops, still faithful to their unfortunate king, offered to make another effort against the enemy, and Dárá was too grateful and too brave to discountenance their enthusiastic fidelity, though with such little chance of success. A fragment of an army was consequently brought into action, and the result was what had been anticipated. Dárá was again a fugitive; and after the defeat, escaped with three hundred men into the neighboring desert. Sikander

captured his wife and family, but magnanimously restored them to the unfortunate monarch, who, destitute of all further hope, now asked for a place of refuge in his own dominions, and for that he offered him all the buried treasure of his ancestors. Sikander, in reply, invited him to his presence; and promised to restore him to his throne, that he might himself be enabled to pursue other conquests; but Dárá refused to go, although advised by his nobles to accept the invitation. "I am willing to put myself to death," said he with emotion, "but I cannot submit to this degradation. I cannot go before him, and thus personally acknowledge his authority over me." Resolved upon this point, he wrote to Faúr, one of the sovereigns of Ind, to request his assistance, and Faúr recommended that he should pay him a visit for the purpose of concerting what measures should be adopted. This correspondence having come to the knowledge of Sikander, he took care that his enemy should be intercepted in whatever direction he might proceed.

Dárá had two ministers, named Mahiyár and Jamúsipár, who, finding that according to the predictions of the astrologers their master would in a few days fall into the hands of Sikander, consulted together, and thought they had better put him to death themselves, in order that they might get into favor with Sikander. It was night, and the soldiers of the escort were dispersed at various distances, and the vizirs were stationed on each side of the king. As they travelled on, Jamúsipár took an opportunity of plunging his dagger into Dárá's side, and Mahiyár gave another blow, which felled the monarch to the ground. They immediately sent the tidings of this event to Sikander, who hastened to the spot, and the opening daylight presented to his view the wounded king.

Dismounting quickly, he in sorrow placed
The head of Dárá on his lap, and wept
In bitterness of soul, to see that form
Mangled with ghastly wounds.

Dárá still breathed; and when he lifted up his eyes and beheld Sikander, he groaned deeply. Sikander said, "Rise up, that we may convey thee to a place of safety, and apply the proper remedies to thy wounds."—"Alas!" replied Dárá, "the time for remedies is past. I leave thee to Heaven, and may thy reign give peace and happiness to the empire."—"Never," said Sikander, "never did I desire to see thee thus mangled and fallen—never to witness this sight! If the Almighty should spare thy life, thou shalt again be the monarch of Persia, and I will go from hence. On my mother's word, thou and I are sons of the same father. It is this brotherly affection which now wrings my heart!" Saying this, the tears chased each other down his cheeks in such abundance that they fell upon the face of Dárá. Again, he said, "Thy murderers shall meet with merited vengeance, they shall be punished to the uttermost." Dárá blessed him, and said, "My end is approaching, but thy sweet discourse and consoling kindness have banished all my grief. I shall now die with a mind at rest. Weep no more—

"My course is finished, thine is scarce begun;
But hear my dying wish, my last request:
Preserve the honour of my family,
Preserve it from disgrace. I have a daughter
Dearer to me than life, her name is Roshung;
Espouse her, I beseech thee—and if Heaven
Should bless thee with a boy, O! let his name be
Isfendiyár, that he may propagate
With zeal the sacred doctrines of Zerdusht,
The Zendavesta, then my soul will be
Happy in Heaven; and he, at Náu-rúz tide,
Will also hold the festival I love,
And at the altar light the Holy Fire;
Nor will he cease his labour, till the faith
Of Lohurásp be everywhere accepted,
And everywhere believed the true religion."

Sikander promised that he would assuredly fulfil the wishes he had expressed, and then Dárá placed the palm of his brother's hand on his mouth, and shortly afterwards expired. Sikander again wept bitterly, and then the body was placed on a golden couch, and he attended it in sorrow to the grave.

After the burial of Dárá, the two ministers, Jamúsipár and Mahiyár, were brought near the tomb, and executed upon the dar.

Just vengeance upon the guilty head,
For they their generous monarch's blood had shed.

Sikander had now no rival to the throne of Persia, and he commenced his government under the most favorable auspices. He continued the same customs and ordinances which were handed down to him, and retained every one in his established rank and occupation. He gladdened the heart by his justice and liberality. Keeping in mind his promise to Dárá, he now wrote to the mother of Roshung, and communicating to her the dying solicitations of the king, requested her to send Roshung to him, that he might fulfil the last wish of his brother. The wife of Dárá immediately complied with the command, and sent her daughter with various presents to Sikander, and she was on her arrival married to the conqueror, acceding to the customs and laws of the empire. Sikander loved her exceedingly, and on her account remained some time in Persia, but he at length determined to proceed into Ind to conquer that country of enchanters and enchantment.

On approaching Ind he wrote to Kaid, summoning him to surrender his kingdom, and received from him the following answer: "I will certainly submit to thy authority, but I have four things which no other person in the world possesses, and which I cannot relinquish. I have a daughter, beautiful as an angel of Paradise, a wise minister, a skilful physician, and a goblet of inestimable value!" Upon receiving this extraordinary reply, Sikander again addressed a letter to him, in which he peremptorily required all these things immediately. Kaid not daring to refuse, or make any attempt at evasion, reluctantly complied with the requisition. Sikander received the minister and the physician with great politeness and attention, and in the evening held a splendid feast, at which he espoused the beautiful daughter of Kaid, and taking the goblet from her hands, drank off the wine with which it was filled. After that, Kaid himself waited upon Sikander, and personally acknowledged his authority and dominion.

Sikander then proceeded to claim the allegiance and homage of Faúr, the king of Kanúj, and wrote to him to submit to his power; but Faúr returned a haughty answer, saying:—

"Kaid Indí is a coward to obey thee,
But I am Faúr, descended from a race
Of matchless warriors; and shall I submit,
And to a Greek!"

Sikander was highly incensed at this bold reply. The force he had now with him amounted to eighty thousand men; that is, thirty thousand Iránians, forty thousand Rúmís, and ten thousand Indís. Faúr had sixty thousand horsemen, and two thousand elephants. The troops of Sikander were greatly terrified at the sight of so many elephants, which gave the enemy such a tremendous superiority. Aristátalís, and some other ingenious counsellors, were requested to consult together to contrive some means of counteracting the power of the war-elephants, and they suggested the construction of an iron horse, and the figure of a rider also of iron, to be placed upon wheels like a carriage, and drawn by a number of horses. A soldier, clothed in iron armor, was to follow the vehicle—his hands and face besmeared with combustible matter, and this soldier, armed with a long staff, was at an appointed signal, to pierce the belly of the horse and also of the rider, previously filled with combustibles, so that when the ignited point came in contact with them, the whole engine would make a tremendous explosion and blaze in the air. Sikander approved of this invention, and collected all the blacksmiths and artisans in the country to construct a thousand machines of this description with the utmost expedition, and as soon as they were completed, he prepared for action. Faúr too pushed forward with his two thousand elephants in advance; but when the Kanújians beheld such a formidable array they were surprised, and Faúr anxiously inquired from his spies what it could be. Upon being told that it was Sikander's artillery, his troops pushed the elephants against the enemy with vigor, at which moment the combustibles were fired by the Rúmís, and the machinery exploding, many elephants were burnt and destroyed, and the remainder, with the troops, fled in confusion. Sikander then encountered Faúr, and after a severe contest, slew him, and became ruler of the kingdom of Kanúj.

After the conquest of Kanúj, Sikander went to Mekka, carrying thither rich presents and offerings. From thence he proceeded to another city, where he was received with great homage by the most illustrious of the nation. He enquired of them if there was anything wonderful or extraordinary in their country, that he might go to see it, and they replied that there were two trees in the kingdom, one a male, the other a female, from which a voice proceeded. The male-tree spoke in the day, and the female-tree in the night, and whoever had a wish, went thither to have his desires accomplished. Sikander immediately repaired to the spot, and approaching it, he hoped in his heart that a considerable part of his life still remained to be enjoyed. When he came under the tree, a terrible sound arose and rung in his ears, and he asked the people present what it meant. The attendant priest said it implied that fourteen years of his life still remained. Sikander, at this interpretation of the prophetic sound, wept and the burning tears

ran down his cheeks. Again he asked, "Shall I return to Rúm, and see my mother and children before I die?" and the answer was, "Thou wilt die at Kashán.

"Nor mother, nor thy family at home
Wilt thou behold again, for thou wilt die,
Closing thy course of glory at Kashán."

Sikander left the place in sorrow, and pursued his way towards Rúm. In his progress he arrived at another city, and the inhabitants gave him the most honorable welcome, representing to him, however, that they were dreadfully afflicted by the presence of two demons or giants, who constantly assailed them in the night, devouring men and goats and whatever came in their way. Sikander asked their names; and they replied, Yájuj and Májuj (Gog and Magog). He immediately ordered a barrier to be erected five hundred yards high, and three hundred yards wide, and when it was finished he went away. The giants, notwithstanding all their efforts, were unable to scale this barrier, and in consequence the inhabitants pursued their occupations without the fear of molestation.

To scenes of noble daring still he turned
His ardent spirit—for he knew not fear.
Still he led on his legions—and now came
To a strange place, where countless numbers met
His wondering view—countless inhabitants
Crowding the city streets, and neighbouring plains;
And in the distance presently he saw
A lofty mountain reaching to the stars.
Onward proceeding, at its foot he found
A guardian-dragon, terrible in form,
Ready with open jaws to crush his victim;
But unappalled, Sikander him beholding
With steady eye, which scorned to turn aside,
Sprang forward, and at once the monster slew.

Ascending then the mountain, many a ridge,
Oft resting on the way, he reached the summit,
Where the dead corpse of an old saint appeared
Wrapt in his grave-clothes, and in gems imbedded.
In gold and precious jewels glittering round,
Seeming to show what man is, mortal man!
Wealth, worldly pomp, the baubles of ambition,
All left behind, himself a heap of dust!

None ever went upon that mountain top,
But sought for knowledge; and Sikander hoped
When he had reached its cloudy eminence,
To see the visions of futurity
Arise from that departed, holy man!
And soon he heard a voice: "Thy time is nigh!
Yet may I thy career on earth unfold.
It will be thine to conquer many a realm,
Win many a crown; thou wilt have many friends
And numerous foes, and thy devoted head
Will be uplifted to the very heavens.
Renowned and glorious shalt thou be; thy name
Immortal; but, alas! thy time is nigh!"
At these prophetic words Sikander wept,
And from that ominous mountain hastened down.

After that Sikander journeyed on to the city of Kashán, where he fell sick, and in a few days, according to the oracle and the prophecy, expired. He had scarcely breathed his last, when Aristú, and Bilniyás the physician, and his family, entered Kashán, and found him dead. They beat their faces, and tore their hair, and mourned for him forty days.

THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

First published ca. 879 C.E.

Middle East and India

The Thousand and One Nights is a collection of mostly Middle Eastern and Indian stories, written in Arabic. Within a frame narrative, it contains numerous stories from different cultures in these regions. The first appearance of a physical fragment of *The Thousand and One Nights* dates from 879 C.E., and the next evidence was mentioned in the 10th century. By the mid-twentieth century, six different forms had been recognized. The French translation in 1704 by Antoine Galland was the first European translation. English translations of the text began in the nineteenth century, and early English translations sanitized parts of the stories. Based on popular oral storytelling traditions, the stories tend to have improvisational, sensuous, and enchanting qualities.

Written by Kyoungnye Kwon

SELECTIONS FROM THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

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Anonymous, translated by Edward William Lane

Introduction

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Praise be to God, the Beneficent King, the Creator of the universe, who hath raised the heavens without pillars, and spread out the earth as abed; and blessing and peace be on the lord of apostles, our lord and our master Moḥammad, and his Family; blessing and peace, enduring and constant, unto the day of judgment.

To proceed:—The lives of former generations are a lesson to posterity; that a man may review the remarkable events which have happened to others, and be admonished; and may consider the history of people of preceding ages, and of all that hath befallen them, and be restrained. Extolled be the perfection of Him who hath thus ordained the history of former generations to be a lesson to those which follow. Such are the Tales of a Thousand and One Nights, with their romantic stories and their fables.

It is related (but God alone is all-knowing, as well as all-wise, and almighty, and all-bountiful,) that there was, in ancient times, a King of the countries of India and China, possessing numerous troops, and guards, and servants, and domestic dependents: and he had two sons; one of whom was a man of mature age; and the other, a youth. Both of these princes were brave horsemen; but especially the elder, who inherited the kingdom of his father; and governed his subjects with such justice that the inhabitants of his country and whole empire loved him. He was called King Shahriyár: his younger brother was named Sháh-Zemán, and was King of Samarkand. The administration of their governments was conducted with rectitude, each of them ruling over his subjects with justice during a period of twenty years with the utmost enjoyment and happiness. After this period, the elder King felt a strong desire to see his brother, and ordered his Wezeer to repair to him and bring him.

Having taken the advice of the Wezeer on this subject, he immediately gave orders to prepare handsome presents, such as horses adorned with gold and costly jewels, and memlooks, and beautiful virgins, and expensive stuffs. He then wrote a letter to his brother, expressive of his great desire to see him; and having sealed it, and given it to the Wezeer, together with the presents above mentioned, he ordered the minister to strain his nerves, and tuck up his skirts, and use all expedition in returning. The Wezeer answered, without delay, I hear and obey; and forthwith prepared for the journey: he packed his baggage, removed the burdens, and made ready all his provisions within three days; and on the fourth day, he took leave of the King Shahriyár, and went forth towards the deserts and wastes. He proceeded night and day; and each of the kings under the authority of King Shahriyár by whose residence he passed came forth to meet him, with costly presents, and gifts of gold and silver, and entertained him three days; after which, on the fourth day, he accompanied him one day's journey, and took leave of him. Thus he continued on his way until he drew near to the city of Samarkand, when he sent forward a messenger to inform King Sháh-Zemán of his approach. The messenger entered the city, inquired the way to the palace, and, introducing himself to the King, kissed the ground before him, and acquainted him with the approach of his brother's Wezeer;



IMAGE 6.8: SHEHERAZADE AND SULTAN SCHARIAR | Sheherazade, the Sultan's most recent wife, tells him one of her many stories.

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upon which Sháh-Zemán ordered the chief officers of his court, and the great men of his kingdom, to go forth a day's journey to meet him; and they did so; and when they met him, they welcomed him, and walked by his stirrups until they returned to the city. The Wezeer then presented himself before the King Sháh-Zemán, greeted him with a prayer for the divine assistance in his favour, kissed the ground before him, and informed him of his brother's desire to see him; after which he handed to him the letter. The King took it, read it, and understood its contents; and answered by expressing his readiness to obey the commands of his brother. But, said he (addressing the Wezeer), I will not go until I have entertained thee three days. Accordingly, he lodged him in a palace befitting his rank, accommodated his troops in tents, and appointed them all things requisite in the way of food and drink: and so they remained three days. On the fourth day, he equipped himself for the journey, made ready his baggage, and collected together costly presents suitable to his brother's dignity.

These preparations being completed, he sent forth his tents and camels and mules and servants and guards, appointed his Wezeer to be governor of the country during his absence, and set out towards his brother's dominions. At midnight, however, he remembered that he had left in his palace an article which he should have brought with him; and having returned to the palace to fetch it, he there beheld his wife sleeping in his bed, and attended by a male negro slave, who had fallen asleep by her side. On beholding this scene, the world became black before his eyes; and he said within himself, If this is the case when I have not departed from the city, what will be the conduct

of this vile woman while I am sojourning with my brother? He then drew his sword, and slew them both in the bed: after which he immediately returned, gave orders for departure, and journeyed to his brother's capital.

Shahriyár, rejoicing at the tidings of his approach, went forth to meet him, saluted him, and welcomed him with the utmost delight. He then ordered that the city should be decorated on the occasion, and sat down to entertain his brother with cheerful conversation: but the mind of King Sháh-Zemán was distracted by reflections upon the conduct of his wife; excessive grief took possession of him; and his countenance became sallow; and his frame, emaciated. His brother observed his altered condition, and, imagining that it was occasioned by his absence from his dominions, abstained from troubling him or asking respecting the cause, until after the lapse of some days, when at length he said to him, O my brother, I perceive that thy body is emaciated, and thy countenance is become sallow. He answered, O brother, I have an internal sore:—and he informed him not of the conduct of his wife which he had witnessed. Shahriyár then said, I wish that thou wouldest go out with me on a hunting excursion; perhaps thy mind might so be diverted:—but he declined; and Shahriyár went alone to the chase.

Now there were some windows in the King's palace commanding a view of his garden; and while his brother was looking out from one of these, a door of the palace was opened, and there came forth from it twenty females and twenty male black slaves; and the King's wife, who was distinguished by extraordinary beauty and elegance, accompanied them to a fountain, where they all disrobed themselves, and sat down together. The King's wife then called out, O Me'sood! and immediately a black slave came to her, and embraced her; she doing the like. So also did the other slaves and the women; and all of them continued revelling together until the close of the day. When Sháh-Zemán beheld this spectacle, he said within himself, By Allah! my affliction is lighter than this! His vexation and grief were alleviated, and he no longer abstained from sufficient food and drink.

When his brother returned from his excursion, and they had saluted each other, and King Shahriyár observed his brother Sháh-Zemán, that his colour had returned, that his face had recovered the flush of health, and that he ate with appetite, after his late abstinence, he was surprised, and said, O my brother, when I saw thee last, thy countenance was sallow, and now thy colour hath returned to thee: acquaint me with thy state.—As to the change of my natural complexion, answered Sháh-Zemán, I will inform thee of its cause; but excuse my explaining to thee the return of my colour.—First, said Shahriyár, relate to me the cause of the change of thy proper complexion, and of thy weakness: let me hear it.—Know then, O my brother, he answered, that when thou sentest thy Wezeer to me to invite me to thy presence, I prepared myself for the journey, and when I had gone forth from the city, I remembered that I had left behind me the jewel that I have given thee; I therefore returned to my palace for it, and there I found my wife sleeping in my bed, and attended by a black male slave; and I killed them both, and came to thee: but my mind was occupied by reflections upon this affair, and this was the cause of the change of my complexion, and of my weakness: now, as to the return of my colour, excuse my informing thee of its cause.—But when his brother heard these words, he said, I conjure thee by Allah that thou acquaint me with the cause of the return of thy colour:—so he repeated to him all that he had seen. I would see this, said Shahriyár, with my own eye.—Then, said Sháh-Zemán, give out that thou art going again to the chase, and conceal thyself here with me, and thou shalt witness this conduct, and obtain ocular proof of it.

Shahriyár, upon this, immediately announced that it was his intention to make another excursion. The troops went out of the city with the tents, and the King followed them; and after he had reposed awhile in the camp, he said to his servants, Let no one come in to me:—and he disguised himself, and returned to his brother in the palace, and sat in one of the windows overlooking the garden; and when he had been there a short time, the women and their mistress entered the garden with the black slaves, and did as his brother had described, continuing so until the hour of the afternoon-prayer.

When King Shahriyár beheld this occurrence, reason fled from his head, and he said to his brother Sháh-Zemán, Arise, and let us travel whither we please, and renounce the regal state, until we see whether such a calamity as this have befallen any other person like unto us; and if not, our death will be preferable to our life. His brother agreed to his proposal, and they went out from a private door of the palace, and journeyed continually, days and nights, until they arrived at a tree in the midst of a meadow, by a spring of water, on the shore of the sea. They drank of this spring, and sat down to rest; and when the day had a little advanced, the sea became troubled before them, and there arose from it a black pillar, ascending towards the sky, and approaching the meadow. Struck with fear at the sight, they climbed up into the tree, which was lofty; and thence they gazed to see what this might be: and behold, it was a Jinnee, of gigantic stature, broad-fronted and bulky, bearing on his head a chest. He landed, and came to the tree into which the two Kings had climbed, and, having seated himself beneath it, opened the chest, and took out of it another box, which he also opened; and there came forth from it a young woman, fair and beautiful, like the shining sun. When the Jinnee cast his eyes upon her, he said, O lady of noble race, whom I carried off on thy wedding-night, I have a desire to sleep a little:—and he placed his head upon her knee, and slept. The damsel then raised her head towards the tree, and saw there the two Kings; upon which she removed the head of the Jinnee from her knee, and, having placed it on the ground, stood under the tree, and made signs to the two Kings, as though she

would say, Come down, and fear not this 'Efreet. They answered her, We conjure thee by Allah that thou excuse us in this matter. But she said, I conjure you by the same that ye come down; and if ye do not, I will rouse this 'Efreet, and he shall put you to a cruel death. So, being afraid, they came down to her; and, after they had remained with her as long as she required, she took from her pocket a purse, and drew out from this a string, upon which were ninety-eight seal-rings; and she said to them, Know ye what are these? They answered, We know not.—The owners of these rings, said she, have, all of them, been admitted to converse with me, like as ye have, unknown to this foolish 'Efreet; therefore, give me your two rings, ye brothers. So they gave her their two rings from their fingers; and she then said to them, This 'Efreet carried me off on my wedding-night, and put me in the box, and placed the box in the chest, and affixed to the chest seven locks, and deposited me, thus imprisoned, in the bottom of the roaring sea, beneath the dashing waves; not knowing that, when one of our sex desires to accomplish any object, nothing can prevent her. In accordance with this, says one of the poets:—

Never trust in women; nor rely upon their vows;
 For their pleasure and displeasure depend upon their passions.
 They offer a false affection; for perfidy lurks within their clothing.
 By the tale of Yoosuf be admonished, and guard against their stratagems.
 Dost thou not consider that Iblees ejected Adam by means of woman?

And another poet says:—

Abstain from censure; for it will strengthen the censured, and increase desire into violent passion.
 If I suffer such passion, my case is but the same as that of many a man before me:
 For greatly indeed to be wondered at is he who hath kept himself safe from women's artifice.

When the two Kings heard these words from her lips, they were struck with the utmost astonishment, and said, one to the other, If this is an 'Efreet, and a greater calamity hath happened unto him than that which hath befallen us, this is a circumstance that should console us:—and immediately they departed, and returned to the city.

As soon as they had entered the palace, Shahriyár caused his wife to be beheaded, and in like manner the women and black slaves; and thenceforth he made it his regular custom, every time that he took a virgin to his bed, to kill her at the expiration of the night. Thus he continued to do during a period of three years; and the people raised an outcry against him, and fled with their daughters, and there remained not a virgin in the city of a sufficient age for marriage. Such was the case when the King ordered the Wezeer to bring him a virgin according to his custom; and the Wezeer went forth and searched, and found none; and he went back to his house enraged and vexed, fearing what the King might do to him.

Now the Wezeer had two daughters; the elder of whom was named Shahrazád; and the younger, Dunyázád. The former had read various books of histories, and the lives of preceding kings, and stories of past generations: it is asserted that she had collected together a thousand books of histories, relating to preceding generations and kings, and works of the poets: and she said to her father on this occasion, Why do I see thee thus changed, and oppressed with solicitude and sorrows? It has been said by one of the poets:—

Tell him who is oppressed with anxiety, that anxiety will not last:
 As happiness passeth away, so passeth away anxiety.

When the Wezeer heard these words from his daughter, he related to her all that had happened to him with regard to the King: upon which she said, By Allah, O my father, give me in marriage to this King: either I shall die, and be a ransom for one of the daughters of the Muslims, or I shall live, and be the cause of their deliverance from him.—I conjure thee by Allah, exclaimed he, that thou expose not thyself to such peril:—but she said, It must be so. Then, said he, I fear for thee that the same will befall thee that happened in the case of the ass and the bull and the husbandman.—And what, she asked, was that, O my father.

Know, O my daughter, said the Wezeer, that there was a certain merchant, who possessed wealth and cattle, and had a wife and children; and God, whose name be exalted, had also endowed him with the knowledge of the languages of beasts and birds. The abode of this merchant was in the country; and he had, in his house, an ass and a bull. When the bull came to the place where the ass was tied, he found it swept and sprinkled; in his manger were sifted barley and sifted cut straw, and the ass was lying at his ease; his master being accustomed only to ride him occasionally, when business required, and soon to return: and it happened, one day, that the merchant overheard the bull saying to the ass, May thy food benefit thee! I am oppressed with fatigue, while thou art enjoying repose: thou eatest sifted barley, and men serve thee; and it is only occasionally that thy master rides thee, and returns; while I

am continually employed in ploughing, and turning the mill.—The ass answered, When thou goest out to the field, and they place the yoke upon thy neck, lie down, and do not rise again, even if they beat thee; or, if thou rise, lie down a second time; and when they take thee back, and place the beans before thee, eat them not, as though thou wert sick: abstain from eating and drinking a day, or two days, or three; and so shalt thou find rest from trouble and labour.—Accordingly, when the driver came to the bull with his fodder, he ate scarcely any of it; and on the morrow, when the driver came again to take him to plough, he found him apparently quite infirm: so the merchant said, Take the ass, and make him draw the plough in his stead all the day. The man did so; and when the ass returned at the close of the day, the bull thanked him for the favour he had conferred upon him by relieving him of his trouble on that day; but the ass returned him no answer, for he repented most grievously. On the next day, the ploughman came again, and took the ass, and ploughed with him till evening; and the ass returned with his neck flayed by the yoke, and reduced to an extreme state of weakness; and the bull looked upon him, and thanked and praised him. The ass exclaimed, I was living at ease, and nought but my meddling hath injured me! Then said he to the bull, Know that I am one who would give thee good advice: I heard our master say, If the bull rise not from his place, take him to the butcher, that he may kill him, and make a *naṭa* of his skin:—I am therefore in fear for thee, and so I have given thee advice; and peace be on thee!—When the bull heard these words of the ass, he thanked him, and said, To-morrow I will go with alacrity:—so he ate the whole of his fodder, and even licked the manger.—Their master, meanwhile, was listening to their conversation.

On the following morning, the merchant and his wife went to the bull's crib, and sat down there; and the driver came, and took out the bull; and when the bull saw his master, he shook his tail, and showed his alacrity by sounds and actions, bounding about in such a manner that the merchant laughed until he fell backwards. His wife, in surprise, asked him, At what dost thou laugh? He answered, At a thing that I have heard and seen; but I cannot reveal it; for if I did, I should die. She said, Thou must inform me of the cause of thy laughter, even if thou die.—I cannot reveal it, said he: the fear of death prevents me.—Thou laughedst only at *me*, she said; and she ceased not to urge and importune him until he was quite overcome and distracted. So he called together his children, and sent for the *Kāḍee* and witnesses, that he might make his will, and reveal the secret to her, and die: for he loved her excessively, since she was the daughter of his paternal uncle, and the mother of his children, and he had lived with her to the age of a hundred and twenty years. Having assembled her family and his neighbours, he related to them his story, and told them that as soon as he revealed his secret he must die; upon which every one present said to her, We conjure thee by Allah that thou give up this affair, and let not thy husband, and the father of thy children, die. But she said, I will not desist until he tell me, though he die for it. So they ceased to solicit her; and the merchant left them, and went to the stable to perform the ablution, and then to return, and tell them the secret, and die.

Now he had a cock, with fifty hens under him, and he had also a dog; and he heard the dog call to the cock, and reproach him, saying, Art thou happy when our master is going to die? The cock asked, How so?—and the dog related to him the story; upon which the cock exclaimed, By Allah! our master has little sense: *I* have *fifty* wives; and I please this, and provoke that; while *he* has but *one* wife, and cannot manage this affair with her: why does he not take some twigs of the mulberry-tree, and enter her chamber, and beat her until she dies or repents? She would never, after that, ask him a question respecting anything.—And when the merchant heard the words of the cock, as he addressed the dog, he recovered his reason, and made up his mind to beat her.—Now, said the Wezeer to his daughter Shahrazád, perhaps I may do to thee as the merchant did to his wife. She asked, And what did he? He answered, He entered her chamber, after he had cut off some twigs of the mulberry-tree, and hidden them there; and then said to her, Come into the chamber, that I may tell thee the secret while no one sees me, and then die:—and when she had entered, he locked the chamber-door upon her, and beat her until she became almost senseless and cried out, I repent:—and she kissed his hands and his feet, and repented, and went out with him; and all the company, and her own family, rejoiced; and they lived together in the happiest manner until death.

When the Wezeer's daughter heard the words of her father, she said to him, It must be as I have requested. So he arrayed her, and went to the King Shahriyár. Now she had given directions to her young sister, saying to her, When I have gone to the King, I will send to request thee to come; and when thou comest to me, and seest a convenient time, do thou say to me, O my sister, relate to me some strange story to beguile our waking hour:—and I will relate to thee a story that shall, if it be the will of God, be the means of procuring deliverance.

Her father, the Wezeer, then took her to the King, who, when he saw him, was rejoiced, and said, Hast thou brought me what I desired? He answered, Yes. When the King, therefore, introduced himself to her, she wept; and he said to her, What aileth thee? She answered, O King, I have a young sister, and I wish to take leave of her. So the King sent to her; and she came to her sister, and embraced her, and sat near the foot of the bed; and after she had waited for a proper opportunity, she said, By Allah! O my sister, relate to us a story to beguile the waking hour of our night. Most willingly, answered Shahrazád, if this virtuous King permit me. And the King, hearing these words, and being restless, was pleased with the idea of listening to the story; and thus, on the first night of the thousand and one, Shahrazád commenced her recitations.

Chapter I

Commencing with the first night, and ending with the part of the third.

The Story of the Merchant and the Jinnee

It has been related to me, O happy King, said Shahrazád, that there was a certain merchant who had great wealth, and traded extensively with surrounding countries; and one day he mounted his horse, and journeyed to a neighbouring country to collect what was due to him, and, the heat oppressing him, he sat under a tree, in a garden, and put his hand into his saddle-bag, and ate a morsel of bread and a date which were among his provisions. Having eaten the date, he threw aside the stone, and immediately there appeared before him an 'Efreet, of enormous height, who, holding a drawn sword in his hand, approached him, and said, Rise, that I may kill thee, as thou hast killed my son. The merchant asked him, How have I killed thy son? He answered, When thou atest the date, and throwest aside the stone, it struck my son upon the chest, and, as fate had decreed against him, he instantly died.

The merchant, on hearing these words, exclaimed, Verily to God we belong, and verily to Him we must return! There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great! If I killed him, I did it not intentionally, but without knowing it; and I trust in thee that thou wilt pardon me.—The Jinnee answered, Thy death is indispensable, as thou hast killed my son:—and so saying, he dragged him, and threw him on the ground, and raised his arm to strike him with the sword. The merchant, upon this, wept bitterly, and said to the Jinnee, I commit my affair unto God, for no one can avoid what He hath decreed:—and he continued his lamentation, repeating the following verses:—

Time consists of two days; this, bright; and that, gloomy: and life, of two moieties; this, safe; and that, fearful.
Say to him who hath taunted us on account of misfortunes, Doth fortune oppose any but the eminent?
Dost thou not observe that corpses float upon the sea, while the precious pearls remain in its furthest depths?
When the hands of time play with us, misfortune is imparted to us by its protracted kiss.
In the heaven are stars that cannot be numbered; but none is eclipsed save the sun and the moon.
How many green and dry trees are on the earth; but none is assailed with stones save that which beareth fruit!
Thou thoughtest well of the days when they went well with thee, and fearest not the evil that destiny was bringing.

—When he had finished reciting these verses, the Jinnee said to him, Spare thy words, for thy death is unavoidable.

Then said the merchant, Know, O 'Efreet, that I have debts to pay, and I have much property, and children, and a wife, and I have pledges also in my possession: let me, therefore, go back to my house, and give to every one his due, and then I will return to thee: I bind myself by a vow and covenant that I will return to thee, and thou shalt do what thou wilt; and God is witness of what I say.—Upon this, the Jinnee accepted his covenant, and liberated him; granting him a respite until the expiration of the year.

The merchant, therefore, returned to his town, accomplished all that was upon his mind to do, paid every one what he owed him, and informed his wife and children of the event which had befallen him; upon hearing which, they and all his family and women wept. He appointed a guardian over his children, and remained with his family until the end of the year; when he took his grave-clothes under his arm, bade farewell to his household and neighbours, and all his relations, and went forth, in spite of himself; his family raising cries of lamentation, and shrieking.

He proceeded until he arrived at the garden before mentioned; and it was the first day of the new year; and as he sat, weeping for the calamity which he expected soon to befall him, a sheykh, advanced in years, approached him, leading a gazelle with a chain attached to its neck. This sheykh saluted the merchant, wishing him a long life, and said to him, What is the reason of thy sitting alone in this place, seeing that it is a resort of the Jinn? The merchant therefore informed him of what had befallen him with the 'Efreet, and of the cause of his sitting there; at which the sheykh, the owner of the gazelle, was astonished, and said, By Allah, O my brother, thy faithfulness is great, and thy story is wonderful! if it were engraved upon the intellect, it would be a lesson to him who would be admonished!—And he sat down by his side, and said, By Allah, O my brother, I will not quit this place until I see what will happen unto thee with this 'Efreet. So he sat down, and conversed with him. And the merchant became almost senseless; fear entered him, and terror, and violent grief, and excessive anxiety. And as the owner of the gazelle sat by his side, lo, a second sheykh approached them, with two black hounds, and inquired of them, after saluting them, the reason of their sitting in that place, seeing that it was a resort of the Jann: and they told him the story from beginning to end. And he had hardly sat down when there approached them a third sheykh, with a dapple mule; and he asked them the same question, which was answered in the same manner.

Immediately after, the dust was agitated, and became an enormous revolving pillar, approaching them from the midst of the desert; and this dust subsided, and behold, the Jinnee, with a drawn sword in his hand; his eyes casting forth sparks of fire. He came to them, and dragged from them the merchant, and said to him, Rise, that I may kill

thee, as thou killedst my son, the vital spirit of my heart. And the merchant wailed and wept; and the three sheykhs also manifested their sorrow by weeping and crying aloud and wailing; but the first sheykh, who was the owner of the gazelle, recovering his self-possession, kissed the hand of the 'Efreet, and said to him, O thou Jinnee, and crown of the kings of the Jánn, if I relate to thee the story of myself and this gazelle, and thou find it to be wonderful, and more so than the adventure of this merchant, wilt thou give up to me a third of thy claim to his blood? He answered, Yes, O sheykh; if thou relate to me the story, and I find it to be as thou hast said, I will give up to thee a third of my claim to his blood.

The Story of the First Sheykh and the Gazelle

Then said the sheykh, Know, O 'Efreet, that this gazelle is the daughter of my paternal uncle, and she is of my flesh and my blood. I took her as my wife when she was young, and lived with her about thirty years; but I was not blessed with a child by her; so I took to me a concubine slave, and by her I was blessed with a male child, like the rising full moon, with beautiful eyes, and delicately-shaped eyebrows, and perfectly-formed limbs; and he grew up by little and little until he attained the age of fifteen years. At this period, I unexpectedly had occasion to journey to a certain city, and went thither with a great stock of merchandise.

Now my cousin, this gazelle, had studied enchantment and divination from her early years; and during my absence, she transformed the youth above mentioned into a calf; and his mother, into a cow; and committed them to the care of the herdsman: and when I returned, after a long time, from my journey, I asked after my son and his mother, and she said, Thy slave is dead, and thy son hath fled, and I know not whither he is gone. After hearing this, I remained for the space of a year with mourning heart and weeping eye, until the Festival of the Sacrifice; when I sent to the herdsman, and ordered him to choose for me a fat cow; and he brought me one, and it was my concubine, whom this gazelle had enchanted. I tucked up my skirts and sleeves, and took the knife in my hand, and prepared myself to slaughter her; upon which she moaned and cried so violently that I left her, and ordered the herdsman to kill and skin her: and he did so, but found in her neither fat nor flesh, nor anything but skin and bone; and I repented of slaughtering her, when repentance was of no avail. I therefore gave her to the herdsman, and said to him, Bring me a fat calf: and he brought me my son, who was transformed into a calf. And when the calf saw me, he broke his rope, and came to me, and fawned upon me, and wailed and cried, so that I was moved with pity for him; and I said to the herdsman, Bring me a cow, and let this—

Here Shahrazád perceived the light of morning, and discontinued the recitation with which she had been allowed thus far to proceed. Her sister said to her, How excellent is thy story! and how pretty! and how pleasant! and how sweet!—but she answered, What is this in comparison with that which I will relate to thee in the next night, if I live, and the King spare me! And the King said, By Allah, I will not kill her until I hear the remainder of her story. Thus they pleasantly passed the night until the morning, when the King went forth to his hall of judgment, and the Wezeer went thither with the grave-clothes under his arm: and the King gave judgment, and invested and displaced, until the close of the day, without informing the Wezeer of that which had happened; and the minister was greatly astonished. The court was then dissolved; and the King returned to the privacy of his palace.

[On the second and each succeeding night, Shahrazád continued so to interest King Shahriyár by her stories as to induce him to defer putting her to death, in expectation that her fund of amusing tales would soon be exhausted; and as this is expressed in the original work in nearly the same words at the close of every night, such repetitions will in the present translation be omitted.]

When the sheykh, continued Shahrazád, observed the tears of the calf, his heart sympathized with him, and he said to the herdsman, Let this calf remain with the cattle—Meanwhile, the Jinnee wondered at this strange story; and the owner of the gazelle thus proceeded.

O lord of the kings of the Jánn, while this happened, my cousin, this gazelle, looked on, and said, Slaughter this calf; for he is fat: but I could not do it; so I ordered the herdsman to take him back; and he took him and went away. And as I was sitting, on the following day, he came to me, and said, O my master, I have to tell thee something that thou wilt be rejoiced to hear; and a reward is due to me for bringing good news. I answered, Well:—and he said, O merchant, I have a daughter who learned enchantment in her youth from an old woman in our family; and yesterday, when thou gavest me the calf, I took him to her, and she looked at him, and covered her face, and wept, and then laughed, and said, O my father, hath my condition become so degraded in thy opinion that thou bringest before me strange men?—Where, said I, are any strange men? and wherefore didst thou weep and laugh? She answered, This calf that is with thee is the son of our master, the merchant, and the wife of our master hath enchanted both him and his mother; and this was the reason of my laughter; but as to the reason of my weeping, it was on account of his mother, because his father had slaughtered her.—And I was excessively astonished at this; and scarcely was I certain that the light of morning had appeared when I hastened to inform thee.

When I heard, O Jinnee, the words of the herdsman, I went forth with him, intoxicated without wine, from the excessive joy and happiness that I received, and arrived at his house, where his daughter welcomed me, and kissed

my hand; and the calf came to me, and fawned upon me. And I said to the herdsman's daughter, Is that true which thou hast said respecting this calf? She answered, Yes, O my master; he is verily thy son, and the vital spirit of thy heart.—O maiden, said I, if thou wilt restore him, all the cattle and other property of mine that thy father hath under his care shall be thine. Upon this, she smiled, and said, O my master, I have no desire for the property unless on two conditions: the first is, that thou shalt marry me to him; and the second, that I shall enchant her who enchanted him, and so restrain her; otherwise, I shall not be secure from her artifice. On hearing, O Jinnee, these her words, I said, And thou shalt have all the property that is under the care of thy father besides; and as to my cousin, even her blood shall be lawful to thee. So, when she heard this, she took a cup, and filled it with water, and repeated a spell over it, and sprinkled with it the calf, saying to him, If God created thee a calf, remain in this form, and be not changed; but if thou be enchanted, return to thy original form, by permission of God, whose name be exalted!—upon which he shook, and became a man; and I threw myself upon him, and said, I conjure thee by Allah that thou relate to me all that my cousin did to thee and to thy mother. So he related to me all that had happened to them both; and I said to him, O my son, God hath given thee one to liberate thee, and to avenge thee:—and I married to him, O Jinnee, the herdsman's daughter; after which, she transformed my cousin into this gazelle. And as I happened to pass this way, I saw this merchant, and asked him what had happened to him; and when he had informed me, I sat down to see the result.—This is my story. The Jinnee said, This is a wonderful tale; and I give up to thee a third of my claim to his blood.

The second sheykh, the owner of the two hounds, then advanced, and said to the Jinnee, If I relate to thee the story of myself and these hounds, and thou find it to be in like manner wonderful, wilt thou remit to me, also, a third of thy claim to the blood of this merchant? The Jinnee answered, Yes.

The Story of the Second Sheykh and the Two Black Hounds

Then said the sheykh, Know, O lord of the kings of the Jánn, that these two hounds are my brothers. My father died, and left to us three thousand pieces of gold; and I opened a shop to sell and buy. But one of my brothers made a journey, with a stock of merchandise, and was absent from us for the space of a year with the caravans; after which, he returned destitute. I said to him, Did I not advise thee to abstain from travelling? But he wept, and said, O my brother, God, to whom be ascribed all might and glory, decreed this event; and there is no longer any profit in these words: I have nothing left. So I took him up into the shop, and then went with him to the bath, and clad him in a costly suit of my own clothing; after which, we sat down together to eat; and I said to him, O my brother, I will calculate the gain of my shop during the year, and divide it, exclusive of the principal, between me and thee. Accordingly, I made the calculation, and found my gain to amount to two thousand pieces of gold; and I praised God, to whom be ascribed all might and glory, and rejoiced exceedingly, and divided the gain in two equal parts between myself and him.—My other brother then set forth on a journey; and after a year, returned in the like condition; and I did unto him as I had done to the former.

After this, when we had lived together for some time, my brothers again wished to travel, and were desirous that I should accompany them; but I would not. What, said I, have ye gained in your travels, that I should expect to gain? They importuned me; but I would not comply with their request; and we remained selling and buying in our shops a whole year. Still, however, they persevered in proposing that we should travel, and I still refused, until after the lapse of six entire years, when at last I consented, and said to them, O my brothers, let us calculate what property we possess. We did so, and found it to be six thousand pieces of gold: and I then said to them, We will bury half of it in the earth, that it may be of service to us if any misfortune befall us, in which case each of us shall take a thousand pieces, with which to traffic. Excellent is thy advice, said they. So I took the money and divided it into two equal portions, and buried three thousand pieces of gold; and of the other half, I gave to each of them a thousand pieces. We then prepared merchandise, and hired a ship, and embarked our goods, and proceeded on our voyage for the space of a whole month, at the expiration of which we arrived at a city, where we sold our merchandise; and for every piece of gold we gained ten.

And when we were about to set sail again, we found, on the shore of the sea, a maiden clad in tattered garments, who kissed my hand, and said to me, O my master, art thou possessed of charity and kindness? If so, I will requite thee for them. I answered, Yes, I have those qualities, though thou requite me not. Then said she, O my master, accept me as thy wife, and take me to thy country; for I give myself to thee: act kindly towards me; for I am one who requires to be treated with kindness and charity, and who will requite thee for so doing; and let not my present condition at all deceive thee. When I heard these words, my heart was moved with tenderness towards her, in order to the accomplishment of a purpose of God, to whom be ascribed all might and glory; and I took her, and clothed her, and furnished for her a place in the ship in a handsome manner, and regarded her with kind and respectful attention.

We then set sail; and I became most cordially attached to my wife, so that, on her account, I neglected the

society of my brothers, who, in consequence, became jealous of me, and likewise envied me my wealth, and the abundance of my merchandise; casting the eyes of covetousness upon the whole of the property. They therefore consulted together to kill me, and take my wealth; saying, Let us kill our brother, and all the property shall be ours:—and the devil made these actions to seem fair in their eyes; so they came to me while I was sleeping by the side of my wife, and took both of us up, and threw us into the sea. But as soon as my wife awoke, she shook herself, and became transformed into a Jinneeyeh. She immediately bore me away, and placed me upon an island, and, for a while, disappeared. In the morning, however, she returned, and said to me, I am thy wife, who carried thee, and rescued thee from death, by permission of God, whose name be exalted. Know that I am a Jinneeyeh: I saw thee, and my heart loved thee for the sake of God; for I am a believer in God and his Apostle, God bless and save him! I came to thee in the condition in which thou sawest me, and thou didst marry me; and see, I have rescued thee from drowning. But I am incensed against thy brothers, and I must kill them.—When I heard her tale, I was astonished, and thanked her for what she had done;—But, said I, as to the destruction of my brothers, it is not what I desire. I then related to her all that had happened between myself and them from first to last; and when she had heard it, she said, I will, this next night, fly to them, and sink their ship, and destroy them. But I said, I conjure thee by Allah that thou do it not; for the author of the proverb saith, O thou benefactor of him who hath done evil, the action that he hath done is sufficient for him:—besides, they are at all events my brothers. She still, however, said, They must be killed;—and I continued to propitiate her towards them: and at last she lifted me up, and soared through the air, and placed me on the roof of my house.

Having opened the doors, I dug up what I had hidden in the earth; and after I had saluted my neighbours, and bought merchandise, I opened my shop. And in the following night, when I entered my house, I found these two dogs tied up in it; and as soon as they saw me, they came to me, and wept, and clung to me; but I knew not what had happened until immediately my wife appeared before me, and said, These are thy brothers. And who, said I, hath done this unto them? She answered, I sent to my sister and she did it; and they shall not be restored until after the lapse of ten years. And I was now on my way to her, that she might restore them, as they have been in this state ten years, when I saw this man, and, being informed of what had befallen him, I determined not to quit the place until I should have seen what would happen between thee and him.—This is my story.—Verily, said the Jinnee, it is a wonderful tale; and I give up to thee a third of the claim that I had to his blood on account of his offence.

Upon this, the third sheykh, the owner of the mule, said to the Jinnee, As to me, break not my heart if I relate to thee nothing more than this:—

The Story of the Third Sheykh and the Mule

The mule that thou seest was my wife: she became enamoured of a black slave; and when I discovered her with him, she took a mug of water, and, having uttered a spell over it, sprinkled me, and transformed me into a dog. In this state, I ran to the shop of a butcher, whose daughter saw me, and, being skilled in enchantment, restored me to my original form, and instructed me to enchant my wife in the manner thou beholdest.—And now I hope that thou wilt remit to me also a third of the merchant's offence. Divinely was he gifted who said,

Sow good, even on an unworthy soil; for it will not be lost wherever it is sown.

When the sheykh had thus finished his story, the Jinnee shook with delight, and remitted the remaining third of his claim to the merchant's blood. The merchant then approached the sheykhs, and thanked them, and they congratulated him on his safety; and each went his way.

But this, said Shahrazád, is not more wonderful than the story of the fisherman. The King asked her, And what is the story of the fisherman? And she related it as follows:—

Chapter II

Commencing with Part of the Third Night, and Ending with Part of the Ninth

The Story of the Fisherman

There was a certain fisherman, advanced in age, who had a wife and three children; and though he was in indigent circumstances, it was his custom to cast his net, every day, no more than four times. One day he went forth at the hour of noon to the shore of the sea, and put down his basket, and cast his net, and waited until it was motionless in the water, when he drew together its strings, and found it to be heavy: he pulled, but could not draw it up: so he took the end of the cord, and knocked a stake into the shore, and tied the cord to it. He then stripped himself, and dived round the net, and continued to pull until he drew it out: whereupon he rejoiced, and put on his clothes; but when he came to examine the net, he found in it the carcass of an ass. At the sight of this he mourned, and

exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great! This is a strange piece of fortune!—And he repeated the following verse:—

O thou who occupiest thyself in the darkness of night, and in peril! Spare thy trouble; for the support of Providence is not obtained by toil!

He then disencumbered his net of the dead ass, and wrung it out; after which he spread it, and descended into the sea, and—exclaiming, In the name of God!—cast it again, and waited till it had sunk and was still, when he pulled it, and found it more heavy and more difficult to raise than on the former occasion. He therefore concluded that it was full of fish: so he tied it, and stripped, and plunged and dived, and pulled until he raised it, and drew it upon the shore; when he found in it only a large jar, full of sand and mud; on seeing which, he was troubled in his heart, and repeated the following words of the poet:—

O angry fate, forbear! or, if thou wilt not forbear, relent!
Neither favour from fortune do I gain, nor profit from the work of my hands,
I came forth to seek my sustenance, but have found it to be exhausted.
How many of the ignorant are in splendour! and how many of the wise, in obscurity!

So saying, he threw aside the jar, and wrung out and cleansed his net; and, begging the forgiveness of God for his impatience, returned to the sea the third time, and threw the net, and waited till it had sunk and was motionless: he then drew it out, and found in it a quantity of broken jars and pots.

Upon this, he raised his head towards heaven, and said, O God, Thou knowest that I cast not my net more than four times; and I have now cast it three times! Then—exclaiming, In the name of God!—he cast the net again into the sea, and waited till it was still; when he attempted to draw it up, but could not, for it clung to the bottom. And he exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God!—and stripped himself again, and dived round the net, and pulled it until he raised it upon the shore; when he opened it, and found in it a bottle of brass, filled with something, and having its mouth closed with a stopper of lead, bearing the impression of the seal of our lord Suleymán. At the sight of this, the fisherman was rejoiced, and said, This I will sell in the copper-market; for it is worth ten pieces of gold. He then shook it, and found it to be heavy, and said, I must open it, and see what is in it, and store it in my bag; and then I will sell the bottle in the copper-market. So he took out a knife, and picked at the lead until he extracted it from the bottle. He then laid the bottle on the ground, and shook it, that its contents might pour out; but there came forth from it nothing but smoke, which ascended towards the sky, and spread over the face of the earth; at which he wondered excessively. And after a little while, the smoke collected together, and was condensed, and then became agitated, and was converted into an 'Efreet, whose head was in the clouds, while his feet rested upon the ground: his head was like a dome: his hands were like winnowing forks; and his legs, like masts: his mouth resembled a cavern: his teeth were like stones; his nostrils, like trumpets; and his eyes, like lamps; and he had dishevelled and dust-coloured hair.

When the fisherman beheld this 'Efreet, the muscles of his sides quivered, his teeth were locked together, his spittle dried up, and he saw not his way. The 'Efreet, as soon as he perceived him, exclaimed, There is no deity but God: Suleymán is the Prophet of God. O Prophet of God, slay me not; for I will never again oppose thee in word, or rebel against thee in deed!—O Márid, said the fisherman, dost thou say, Suleymán is the Prophet of God? Suleymán hath been dead a thousand and eight hundred years; and we are now in the end of time. What is thy history, and what is thy tale, and what was the cause of thy entering this bottle? When the Márid heard these words of the fisherman, he said, There is no deity but God! Receive news, O fisherman!—Of what, said the fisherman, dost thou give me news? He answered, Of thy being instantly put to a most cruel death. The fisherman exclaimed, Thou deservest, for this news, O master of the 'Efreets, the withdrawal of protection from thee, O thou remote! Wherefore wouldst thou kill me? and what requires thy killing me, when I have liberated thee from the bottle, and rescued thee from the bottom of the sea, and brought thee up upon the dry land?—The 'Efreet answered, Choose what kind of death thou wilt die, and in what manner thou shalt be killed.—What is my offence, said the fisherman, that this should be my recompense from thee? The 'Efreet replied, Hear my story, O fisherman.—Tell it then, said the fisherman, and be short in thy words; for my soul hath sunk down to my feet.

Know then, said he, that I am one of the heretical Jinn: I rebelled against Suleymán the son of Dáood: I and Šakhr the Jinnee; and he sent to me his Wezeer, Ásaf the son of Barkhiyà, who came upon me forcibly, and took me to him in bonds, and placed me before him: and when Suleymán saw me, he offered up a prayer for protection against me, and exhorted me to embrace the faith, and to submit to his authority; but I refused; upon which he called for this bottle, and confined me in it, and closed it upon me with the leaden stopper, which he stamped with the Most Great Name: he then gave orders to the Jinn, who carried me away, and threw me into the midst of the

sea. There I remained a hundred years; and I said in my heart, Whosoever shall liberate me, I will enrich him for ever:—but the hundred years passed over me, and no one liberated me: and I entered upon another hundred years; and I said, Whosoever shall liberate me, I will open to him the treasures of the earth;—but no one did so: and four hundred years more passed over me, and I said, Whosoever shall liberate me, I will perform for him three wants:—but still no one liberated me. I then fell into a violent rage, and said within myself, Whosoever shall liberate me now, I will kill him; and only suffer him to choose in what manner he will die. And lo, now thou hast liberated me, and I have given thee thy choice of the manner in which thou wilt die.

When the fisherman had heard the story of the 'Efreet, he exclaimed, O Allah! that I should not have liberated thee but in such a time as this! Then said he to the 'Efreet, Pardon me, and kill me not, and so may God pardon thee; and destroy me not, lest God give power over thee to one who will destroy thee. The Márid answered, I must positively kill thee; therefore choose by what manner of death thou wilt die. The fisherman then felt assured of his death; but he again implored the 'Efreet, saying, Pardon me by way of gratitude for my liberating thee.—Why, answered the 'Efreet, I am not going to kill thee but for that very reason, because thou hast liberated me.—O Sheykh of the 'Efreets, said the fisherman, do I act kindly towards thee, and dost thou recompense me with baseness? But the proverb lieth not that saith,—

We did good to them, and they returned us the contrary; and such, by my life, is the conduct of the wicked.
Thus he who acteth kindly to the undeserving is recompensed in the same manner as the aider of Umm-'Ámir.

The 'Efreet, when he heard these words, answered by saying, Covet not life, for thy death is unavoidable. Then said the fisherman within himself, This is a Jinnee, and I am a man; and God hath given me sound reason; therefore, I will now plot his destruction with my art and reason, like as he hath plotted with his cunning and perfidy. So he said to the 'Efreet, Hast thou determined to kill me? He answered, Yes. Then said he, By the Most Great Name engraved upon the seal of Suleymán, I will ask thee one question; and wilt thou answer it to me truly? On hearing the mention of the Most Great Name, the 'Efreet was agitated, and trembled, and replied, Yes; ask, and be brief. The fisherman then said, How wast thou in this bottle? It will not contain thy hand or thy foot; how then can it contain thy whole body?—Dost thou not believe that I was in it? said the 'Efreet. The fisherman answered, I will never believe thee until I see thee in it. Upon this, the 'Efreet shook, and became converted again into smoke, which rose to the sky, and then became condensed, and entered the bottle by little and little, until it was all enclosed; when the fisherman hastily snatched the sealed leaden stopper, and, having replaced it in the mouth of the bottle, called out to the 'Efreet, and said, Choose in what manner of death thou wilt die. I will assuredly throw thee here into the sea, and build me a house on this spot; and whosoever shall come here, I will prevent his fishing in this place, and will say to him, Here is an 'Efreet, who, to any person that liberates him, will propose various kinds of death, and then give him his choice of one of them. On hearing these words of the fisherman, the 'Efreet endeavoured to escape; but could not, finding himself restrained by the impression of the seal of Suleymán, and thus imprisoned by the fisherman as the vilest and filthiest and least of 'Efreets. The fisherman then took the bottle to the brink of the sea. The 'Efreet exclaimed, Nay! nay!—to which the fisherman answered, Yea, without fail! yea, without fail! The Márid then addressing him with a soft voice and humble manner, said, What dost thou intend to do with me, O fisherman? He answered, I will throw thee into the sea; and if thou hast been there a thousand and eight hundred years, I will make thee to remain there until the hour of judgment. Did I not say to thee, Spare me, and so may God spare thee; and destroy me not, lest God destroy thee? But thou didst reject my petition, and wouldest nothing but treachery; therefore God hath caused thee to fall into my hand, and I have betrayed thee.—Open to me, said the 'Efreet, that I may confer benefits upon thee. The fisherman replied, Thou liest, thou accursed! I and thou are like the Wezeer of King Yoonán and the sage Doobán.—What, said the 'Efreet, was the case of the Wezeer of King Yoonán and the sage Doobán, and what is their story? The fisherman answered as follows:—

The Story of King Yoonán and the Sage of Doobán

Know, O 'Efreet, that there was, in former times, in the country of the Persians, a monarch who was called King Yoonán, possessing great treasures and numerous forces, valiant, and having troops of every description; but he was afflicted with leprosy, which the physicians and sages had failed to remove; neither their potions, nor powders, nor ointments were of any benefit to him; and none of the physicians was able to cure him. At length there arrived at the city of this king a great sage, stricken in years, who was called the sage Doobán: he was acquainted with ancient Greek, Persian, modern Greek, Arabic, and Syriac books, and with medicine and astrology, both with respect to their scientific principles and the rules of their practical applications for good and evil; as well as the properties of plants, dried and fresh, the injurious and the useful: he was versed in the wisdom of the philosophers, and embraced a knowledge of all the medical and other sciences.

After this sage had arrived in the city, and remained in it a few days, he heard of the case of the King, of the leprosy with which God had afflicted him, and that the physicians and men of science had failed to cure him. In consequence of this information, he passed the next night in deep study; and when the morning came, and diffused its light, and the sun saluted the Ornament of the Good, he attired himself in the richest of his apparel, and presented himself before the King. Having kissed the ground before him, and offered up a prayer for the continuance of his power and happiness, and greeted him in the best manner he was able, he informed him who he was, and said, O King, I have heard of the disease which hath attacked thy person, and that many of the physicians are unacquainted with the means of removing it; and I will cure thee without giving thee to drink any potion, or anointing thee with ointment. When King Yoonán heard his words, he wondered, and said to him, How wilt thou do this? By Allah, if thou cure me, I will enrich thee and thy children's children, and I will heap favours upon thee, and whatever thou shalt desire shall be thine, and thou shalt be my companion and my friend.—He then bestowed upon him a robe of honour, and other presents, and said to him, Wilt thou cure me of this disease without potion or ointment? He answered, Yes; I will cure thee without any discomfort to thy person. And the King was extremely astonished, and said, O Sage, at what time, and on what day, shall that which thou hast proposed to me be done? Hasten it, O my Son.—He answered, I hear and obey.

He then went out from the presence of the King, and hired a house, in which he deposited his books, and medicines, and drugs. Having done this, he selected certain of his medicines and drugs, and made a goff-stick, with a hollow handle, into which he introduced them; after which he made a ball for it, skilfully adapted; and on the following day, after he had finished these, he went again to the King, and kissed the ground before him, and directed him to repair to the horse-course, and to play with the ball and goff-stick. The King, attended by his Emeers and Chamberlains and Wezeers, went thither, and, as soon as he arrived there, the sage Doobán presented himself before him, and handed to him the goff-stick, saying, Take this goff-stick, and grasp it thus, and ride along the horse-course, and strike the ball with it with all thy force, until the palm of thy hand and thy whole body become moist with perspiration, when the medicine will penetrate into thy hand, and pervade thy whole body; and when thou hast done this, and the medicine remains in thee, return to thy palace, and enter the bath, and wash thyself, and sleep: then shalt thou find thyself cured: and peace be on thee. So King Yoonán took the goff-stick from the sage, and grasped it in his hand, and mounted his horse; and the ball was thrown before him, and he urged his horse after it until he overtook it, when he struck it with all his force; and when he had continued this exercise as long as was necessary, and bathed and slept, he looked upon his skin, and not a vestige of the leprosy remained: it was clear as white silver. Upon this he rejoiced exceedingly; his heart was dilated, and he was full of happiness.

On the following morning he entered the council-chamber, and sat upon his throne; and the Chamberlains and great officers of his court came before him. The sage Doobán also presented himself; and when the King saw him, he rose to him in haste, and seated him by his side. Services of food were then spread before them, and the sage ate with the King, and remained as his guest all the day; and when the night approached, the King gave him two thousand pieces of gold, besides dresses of honour and other presents, and mounted him on his own horse, and so the sage returned to his house. And the King was astonished at his skill; saying, This man hath cured me by an external process, without anointing me with ointment: by Allah, this is consummate science; and it is incumbent on me to bestow favours and honours upon him, and to make him my companion and familiar friend as long as I live. He passed the night happy and joyful on account of his recovery, and when he awoke, he went forth again, and sat upon his throne; the officers of his court standing before him, and the Emeers and Wezeers sitting on his right hand and on his left; and he called for the sage Doobán, who came, and kissed the ground before him; and the King rose, and seated him by his side, and ate with him, and greeted him with compliments: he bestowed upon him again a robe of honour and other presents, and, after conversing with him till the approach of night, gave orders that five other robes of honour should be given to him, and a thousand pieces of gold; and the sage departed, and returned to his house.

Again, when the next morning came, the King went as usual to his council-chamber, and the Emeers and Wezeers and Chamberlains surrounded him. Now there was, among his Wezeers, one of ill aspect, and of evil star; sordid, avaricious, and of an envious and malicious disposition; and when he saw that the King had made the sage Doobán his friend, and bestowed upon him these favours, he envied him this distinction, and meditated evil against him; agreeably with the adage which saith, There is no one void of envy;—and another, which saith, Tyranny lurketh in the soul: power manifesteth it, and weakness concealeth it. So he approached the King, and kissed the ground before him, and said, O King of the age, thou art he whose goodness extendeth to all men, and I have an important piece of advice to give thee: if I were to conceal it from thee, I should be a base-born wretch: therefore, if thou order me to impart it, I will do so. The King, disturbed by these words of the Wezeer, said, What is thy advice? He answered, O glorious King, it hath been said, by the ancients, He who looketh not to results, fortune will not attend him:—now I have seen the King in a way that is not right; since he hath bestowed favours upon his enemy, and upon him who desireth the downfall of his dominion: he hath treated him with kindness, and honoured him with

the highest honours, and admitted him to the closest intimacy: I therefore fear, for the King, the consequence of this conduct.—At this the King was troubled, and his countenance changed; and he said, Who is he whom thou regardest as mine enemy, and to whom I shew kindness? He replied, O King, if thou hast been asleep, awake! I allude to the sage Doobán.—The King said, He is my intimate companion, and the dearest of men in my estimation; for he restored me by a thing that I merely held in my hand, and cured me of my disease which the physicians were unable to remove, and there is not now to be found one like to him in the whole world, from west to east. Wherefore, then, dost thou utter these words against him? I will, from this day, appoint him a regular salary and maintenance, and give him every month a thousand pieces of gold; and if I gave him a share of my kingdom it were but a small thing to do unto him. I do not think that thou hast said this from any other motive than that of envy. If I did what thou desirest, I should repent after it, as the man repented who killed his parrot.

The Story of the Husband and the Parrot

There was a certain merchant, of an excessively jealous disposition, having a wife endowed with perfect beauty, who had prevented him from leaving his home; but an event happened which obliged him to make a journey; and when he found his doing so to be indispensable, he went to the market in which birds were sold, and bought a parrot, which he placed in his house to act as a spy, that, on his return, she might inform him of what passed during his absence; for this parrot was cunning and intelligent, and remembered whatever she heard. So, when he had made his journey, and accomplished his business, he returned, and caused the parrot to be brought to him, and asked her respecting the conduct of his wife. She answered, Thy wife has a lover, who visited her every night during thy absence:—and when the man heard this, he fell into a violent rage, and went to his wife, and gave her a severe beating.

The woman imagined that one of the female slaves had informed him of what had passed between her and her paramour during his absence: she therefore called them together, and made them swear; and they all swore that they had not told their master anything of the matter; but confessed that they had heard the parrot relate to him what had passed. Having thus established, on the testimony of the slaves, the fact of the parrot's having informed her husband of her intrigue, she ordered one of these slaves to grind with a hand-mill under the cage, another to sprinkle water from above, and a third to move a mirror from side to side, during the next night on which her husband was absent; and on the following morning, when the man returned from an entertainment at which he had been present, and inquired again of the parrot what had passed that night during his absence, the bird answered, O my master, I could neither see nor hear anything, on account of the excessive darkness, and thunder, and lightning, and rain. Now this happened during summer: so he said to her, What strange words are these? It is now summer, when nothing of what thou hast described ever happens.—The parrot, however, swore by Allah the Great that what she had said was true; and that it had so happened: upon which the man, not understanding the case, nor knowing the plot, became violently enraged, and took out the bird from the cage, and threw her down upon the ground with such violence that he killed her.

But after some days, one of his female slaves informed him of the truth; yet he would not believe it, until he saw his wife's paramour going out from his house; when he drew his sword, and slew the traitor by a blow on the back of his neck: so also did he to his treacherous wife; and thus both of them went, laden with the sin which they had committed, to the fire; and the merchant discovered that the parrot had informed him truly of what she had seen; and he mourned grievously for her loss.

When the Wezeer heard these words of King Yoonán, he said, O King of great dignity, what hath this crafty sage—this man from whom nought but mischief proceedeth—done unto me, that I should be his enemy, and speak evil of him, and plot with thee to destroy him? I have informed thee respecting him in compassion for thee, and in fear of his despoiling thee of thy happiness; and if my words be not true, destroy me, as the Wezeer of Es-Sindibád was destroyed.—The King asked, How was that? And the Wezeer thus answered:—

The Story of the Envious Wezeer and the Prince and the Ghooleh

The King above mentioned had a son who was ardently fond of the chase; and he had a Wezeer whom he charged to be always with this son wherever he went. One day the son went forth to hunt, and his father's Wezeer was with him; and as they rode together, they saw a great wild beast; upon which the Wezeer exclaimed to the Prince, Away after this wild beast! The King's son pursued it until he was out of the sight of his attendants, and the beast also escaped from before his eyes in the desert; and while the Prince wandered in perplexity, not knowing whither to direct his course, he met in his way a damsel, who was weeping. He said to her, Who art thou?—and she answered, I am a daughter of one of the kings of India; I was in the desert, and slumber overtook me, and I fell from my horse in a state of insensibility, and being thus separated from my attendants, I lost my way. The Prince, on hearing this, pitied her forlorn state, and placed her behind him on his horse; and as they proceeded, they passed by a ruin, and the damsel said to him, O my master, I would alight here for a little while. The Prince therefore lifted her

from his horse at this ruin; but she delayed so long to return, that he wondered wherefore she had loitered so, and entering after her, without her knowledge, perceived that she was a Ghooleh, and heard her say, My children, I have brought you to-day a fat young man:—on which they exclaimed, Bring him in to us, O mother! that we may fill our stomachs with his flesh. When the Prince heard their words, he felt assured of destruction; the muscles of his sides quivered, and fear overcame him, and he retreated. The Ghooleh then came forth, and, seeing that he appeared alarmed and fearful, and that he was trembling, said to him, Wherefore dost thou fear? He answered, I have an enemy of whom I am in fear. The Ghooleh said, Thou assertest thyself to be the son of the King. He replied, Yes.—Then, said she, wherefore dost thou not give some money to thine enemy, and so conciliate him? He answered, He will not be appeased with money, nor with anything but life; and therefore do I fear him: I am an injured man. She then said to him, If thou be an injured man, as thou affirmest, beg aid of God against thine oppressor, and He will avert from thee his mischievous design, and that of every other person whom thou fearest. Upon this, therefore, the Prince raised his head towards heaven, and said, O thou who answerest the distressed when he prayeth to Thee, and dispellest evil, assist me, and cause mine enemy to depart from me; for Thou art able to do whatsoever Thou wilt!—and the Ghooleh no sooner heard his prayer, than she departed from him. The Prince then returned to his father, and informed him of the conduct of the Wezeer; upon which the King gave orders that the minister should be put to death.

Continuation of the Story of King Yoonán and the Safe Doobán

And thou, O King, continued the Wezeer of King Yoonán, if thou trust in this sage, he will kill thee in the foulest manner. If thou continue to bestow favours upon him, and to make him thine intimate companion, he will plot thy destruction. Dost thou not see that he hath cured thee of the disease by external means, by a thing that thou heldest in thy hand? Therefore thou art not secure against his killing thee by a thing that thou shalt hold in the same manner.—King Yoonán answered, Thou hast spoken truth: the case is as thou hast said, O faithful Wezeer: it is probable that this sage came as a spy to accomplish my death; and if he cured me by a thing I held in my hand, he may destroy me by a thing that I may smell: what then, O Wezeer, shall be done respecting him? The Wezeer answered, Send to him immediately, and desire him to come hither; and when he is come, strike off his head, and so shalt thou avert from thee his evil design, and be secure from him. Betray him before he betray thee.—The King said, Thou hast spoken right.

Immediately, therefore, he sent for the sage, who came, full of joy, not knowing what the Compassionate had decreed against him, and addressed the King with these words of the poet:—

If I fail any day to render thee due thanks, tell me for whom I have composed my verse and prose.
 Thou hast loaded me with favours unsolicited, bestowed without delay on thy part, or excuse.
 How then should I abstain from praising thee as thou deservest, and lauding thee both with my heart and voice?
 Nay, I will thank thee for thy benefits conferred upon me: they are light upon my tongue, though weighty to my back.

Knowest thou, said the King, wherefore I have summoned thee? The sage answered, None knoweth what is secret but God, whose name be exalted! Then said the King, I have summoned thee that I may take away thy life. The sage, in the utmost astonishment at this announcement, said, O King, wherefore wouldst thou kill me, and what offence hath been committed by me? The King answered, It hath been told me that thou art a spy, and that thou hast come hither to kill me: but I will prevent thee by killing thee first:—and so saying, he called out to the executioner, Strike off the head of this traitor, and relieve me from his wickedness,—Spare me, said the sage, and so may God spare thee; and destroy me not, lest God destroy thee.—And he repeated these words several times, like as I did, O 'Efreet; but thou wouldst not let me go, desiring to destroy me.

King Yoonán then said to the sage Doobán, I shall not be secure unless I kill thee; for thou curedst me by a thing that I held in my hand, and I have no security against thy killing me by a thing that I may smell, or by some other means.—O King, said the sage, is this my recompense from thee? Dost thou return evil for good?—The King answered, Thou must be slain without delay. When the sage, therefore, was convinced that the King intended to put him to death, and that his fate was inevitable, he lamented the benefit that he had done to the undeserving. The executioner then advanced, and bandaged his eyes, and, having drawn his sword, said, Give permission. Upon this the sage wept, and said again, Spare me, and so may God spare thee; and destroy me not, lest God destroy thee! Wouldst thou return me the recompense of the crocodile?—What, said the King, is the story of the crocodile? The sage answered, I cannot relate it while in this condition; but I conjure thee by Allah to spare me, and so may He spare thee. And he wept bitterly. Then one of the chief officers of the King arose, and said, O King, give up to me the blood of this sage; for we have not seen him commit any offence against thee; nor have we seen him do aught but cure thee of thy disease, which wearied the other physicians and sages. The King answered, Ye know not the reason wherefore I would kill the sage: it is this, that if I suffered him to live, I should myself inevitably perish; for he who

cured me of the disease under which I suffered by a thing that I held in my hand, may kill me by a thing that I may smell; and I fear that he would do so, and would receive an appointment on account of it; seeing that it is probable he is a spy who hath come hither to kill me; I must therefore kill him, and then shall I feel myself safe.—The sage then said again, Spare me, and so may God spare thee; and destroy me not, lest God destroy thee.

But he now felt certain, O 'Efreet, that the King would put him to death, and that there was no escape for him; so he said, O King, if my death is indispensable, grant me some respite, that I may return to my house, and acquit myself of my duties, and give directions to my family and neighbours to bury me, and dispose of my medical books; and among my books is one of most especial value, which I offer as a present to thee, that thou mayest treasure it in thy library.—And what, said the King, is this book? He answered, It contains things not to be enumerated; and the smallest of the secret virtues that it possesses is this; that, when thou hast cut off my head, if thou open this book, and count three leaves, and then read three lines on the page to the left, the head will speak to thee, and answer whatever thou shalt ask. At this the King was excessively astonished, and shook with delight, and said to him, O Sage, when I have cut off thy head will it speak? He answered, Yes, O King; and this is a wonderful thing.

The King then sent him in the custody of guards; and the sage descended to his house, and settled all his affairs on that day; and on the following day he went up to the court: and the Emeers and Wezeers, and Chamberlains and Deputies, and all the great officers of the state, went thither also: and the court resembled a flower-garden. And when the sage had entered, he presented himself before the King, bearing an old book, and a small pot containing a powder: and he sat down, and said, Bring me a tray. So they brought him one; and he poured out the powder into it, and spread it. He then said, O King, take this book, and do nothing with it until thou hast cut off my head; and when thou hast done so, place it upon this tray, and order some one to press it down upon the powder; and when this is done, the blood will be stanch'd: then open the book. As soon as the sage had said this, the King gave orders to strike off his head; and it was done. The King then opened the book, and found that its leaves were stuck together; so he put his finger to his mouth, and moistened it with his spittle, and opened the first leaf, and the second, and the third; but the leaves were not opened without difficulty. He opened six leaves, and looked at them; but found upon them no writing. So he said, O Sage, there is nothing written in it. The head of the sage answered, Turn over more leaves. The King did so; and in a little while, the poison penetrated into his system; for the book was poisoned; and the King fell back, and cried out, The poison hath penetrated into me!—and upon this, the head of the sage Doobán repeated these verses:—

They made use of their power, and used it tyrannically; and soon it became as though it never had existed.

Had they acted equitably, they had experienced equity; but they oppressed; wherefore fortune oppressed them with calamities and trials.

Then did the case itself announce to them, This is the reward of your conduct, and fortune is blameless.

And when the head of the sage Doobán had uttered these words, the King immediately fell down dead.

Continuation of the Story of the Fisherman

Now, O 'Efreet, continued the fisherman, know that if King Yoonán had spared the sage Doobán, God had spared him; but he refused, and desired his destruction; therefore God destroyed him: and thou, O 'Efreet, if thou hadst spared me, God had spared thee, and I had spared thee; but thou desiredst my death; therefore will I put thee



IMAGE 6.9: THE STORY OF SEYF OL-MOLÛK AND BADI`OL-JAMÁL | This Indian manuscript with illustrations shares a common tale with *The Thousand and One Nights*.

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to death imprisoned in this bottle, and will throw thee here into the sea. The Márid, upon this, cried out, and said, I conjure thee by Allah, O fisherman, that thou do it not: spare me in generosity, and be not angry with me for what I did; but if I have done evil, do thou good, according to the proverb,—O thou benefactor of him who hath done evil, the action that he hath done is sufficient for him:—do not therefore as Umámeh did to ‘Átikeh.—And what, said the fisherman, was their case? The ‘Efreet answered, This is not a time for telling stories, when I am in this prison; but when thou liberatest me, I will relate to thee their case. The fisherman said, Thou must be thrown into the sea, and there shall be no way of escape for thee from it; for I endeavoured to propitiate thee, and humbled myself before thee, yet thou wouldest nothing but my destruction, though I had committed no offence to deserve it, and had done no evil to thee whatever, but only good, delivering thee from thy confinement; and when thou didst thus unto me, I perceived that thou wast radically corrupt: and I would have thee know, that my motive for throwing thee into this sea, is, that I may acquaint with thy story every one that shall take thee out, and caution him against thee, that he may cast thee in again: thus shalt thou remain in this sea to the end of time, and experience varieties of torment.—The ‘Efreet then said, Liberate me, for this is an opportunity for thee to display humanity; and I vow to thee that I will never do thee harm; but, on the contrary, will do thee a service that shall enrich thee for ever.

Upon this the fisherman accepted his covenant that he would not hurt him, but that he would do him good; and when he had bound him by oaths and vows, and made him swear by the Most Great Name of God, he opened to him; and the smoke ascended until it had all come forth, and then collected together, and became, as before, an ‘Efreet of hideous form. The ‘Efreet then kicked the bottle into the sea. When the fisherman saw him do this, he made sure of destruction, and said, This is no sign of good:—but afterwards he fortified his heart, and said, O ‘Efreet, God, whose name be exalted, hath said, Perform the covenant, for the covenant shall be inquired into:—and thou has covenanted with me, and sworn that thou wilt not act treacherously towards me; therefore, if thou so act, God will recompense thee; for He is jealous; He respiteth, but suffereth not to escape; and remember that I said to thee as said the sage Doobán to King Yoonán, Spare me, and so may God spare thee.

The ‘Efreet laughed, and, walking on before him, said, O fisherman, follow me. The fisherman did so, not believing in his escape, until they had quitted the neighbourhood of the city, and ascended a mountain, and descended into a wide desert tract, in the midst of which was a lake of water. Here the ‘Efreet stopped, and ordered the fisherman to cast his net and take some fish; and the fisherman, looking into the lake, saw in it fish of different colours, white and red and blue and yellow; at which he was astonished; and he cast his net, and drew it in, and found in it four fish, each fish of a different colour from the others, at the sight of which he rejoiced. The ‘Efreet then said to him, Take them to the Sulţán, and present them to him, and he will give thee what will enrich thee; and for the sake of God accept my excuse, for, at present, I know no other way of rewarding thee, having been in the sea a thousand and eight hundred years, and not seen the surface of the earth until now: but take not fish from the lake more than once each day: and now I commend thee to the care of God.—Having thus said, he struck the earth with his feet, and it clove asunder, and swallowed him.

The fisherman then went back to the city, wondering at all that had befallen him with the ‘Efreet, and carried the fish to his house; and he took an earthen bowl, and, having filled it with water, put the fish into it; and they struggled in the water: and when he had done this, he placed the bowl upon his head, and repaired to the King’s palace, as the ‘Efreet had commanded him, and, going up unto the King, presented to him the fish; and the King was excessively astonished at them, for he had never seen any like them in the course of his life; and he said, Give these fish to the slave cook-maid. This maid had been sent as a present to him by the King of the Greeks, three days before; and he had not yet tried her skill. The Wezeer, therefore, ordered her to fry the fish, and said to her, O maid, the King saith unto thee, I have not reserved my tear but for the time of my difficulty:—to-day, then, gratify us by a specimen of thy excellent cookery, for a person hath brought these fish as a present to the Sulţán. After having thus charged her, the Wezeer returned, and the King ordered him to give the fisherman four hundred pieces of gold: so the Wezeer gave them to him; and he took them in his lap, and returned to his home and his wife, joyful and happy, and bought what was needful for his family.

Such were the events that befell the fisherman: now we must relate what happened to the maid.—She took the fish, and cleaned them, and arranged them in the frying-pan, and left them until one side was cooked, when she turned them upon the other side; and lo, the wall of the kitchen clove asunder, and there came forth from it a damsel of tall stature, smooth-cheeked, of perfect form, with eyes adorned with *koĥl*, beautiful in countenance, and with heavy, swelling hips; wearing a *koofeeyeh* interwoven with blue silk; with rings in her ears, and bracelets on her wrists, and rings set with precious jewels on her fingers; and in her hand was a rod of Indian cane: and she dipped the end of the rod in the frying-pan, and said, O fish, are ye remaining faithful to your covenant? At the sight of this, the cook-maid fainted. The damsel then repeated the same words a second and a third time; after which the fish raised their heads from the frying-pan, and answered, Yes, yes. They then repeated the following verse:—

If thou return, we return; and if thou come, we come; and if thou forsake, we verily do the same.

And upon this the damsel overturned the frying-pan, and departed by the way she had entered, and the wall of the kitchen closed up again. The cook-maid then arose, and beheld the four fish burnt like charcoal; and she exclaimed, In his first encounter his staff broke!—and as she sat reproaching herself, she beheld the Wezeer standing at her head; and he said to her, Bring the fish to the Sulţán:—and she wept, and informed him of what had happened.

The Wezeer was astonished at her words, and exclaimed, This is indeed a wonderful event;—and he sent for the fisherman, and when he was brought, he said to him, O fisherman, thou must bring to us four fish like those which thou broughtest before. The fisherman accordingly went forth to the lake, and threw his net, and when he had drawn it in he found in it four fish as before; and he took them to the Wezeer, who went with them to the maid, and said to her, Rise, and fry them in my presence, that I may witness this occurrence. The maid, therefore, prepared the fish, and put them in the frying-pan, and they had remained but a little while, when the wall clove asunder, and the damsel appeared, clad as before, and holding the rod; and she dipped the end of the rod in the frying-pan, and said, O fish, O fish, are ye remaining faithful to your old covenant? Upon which they raised their heads, and answered as before; and the damsel overturned the frying-pan with the rod, and returned by the way she had entered, and the wall closed up again.

The Wezeer then said, This is an event which cannot be concealed from the King:—so he went to him, and informed him of what had happened in his presence; and the King said, I must see this with my own eyes. He sent, therefore, to the fisherman, and commanded him to bring four fish like the former; granting him a delay of three days. And the fisherman repaired to the lake, and brought the fish thence to the King, who ordered again that four hundred pieces of gold should be given to him; and then, turning to the Wezeer, said to him, Cook the fish thyself here before me. The Wezeer answered, I hear and obey. He brought the frying-pan, and, after he had cleaned the fish, threw them into it; and as soon as he had turned them, the wall clove asunder, and there came forth from it a negro, in size like a bull, or like one of the tribe of Ád, having in his hand a branch of a green tree; and he said, with a clear but terrifying voice, O fish, O fish, are ye remaining faithful to your old covenant? Upon which they raised their heads, and answered as before, Yes, yes:

If thou return, we return; and if thou come, we come; and if thou forsake, we verily do the same.

The black then approached the frying-pan, and overturned it with the branch, and the fish became like charcoal, and he went away as he had come.

When he had thus disappeared from before their eyes, the King said, This is an event respecting which it is impossible to keep silence, and there must, undoubtedly, be some strange circumstance connected with these fish. He then ordered that the fisherman should be brought before him, and when he had come, he said to him, Whence came these fish? The fisherman answered, From a lake between four mountains behind this mountain which is without thy city. The King said to him, How many days' journey distant? He answered, O our lord the Sulţán, a journey of half-an-hour. And the Sulţán was astonished, and ordered his troops to go out immediately with him and the fisherman, who began to curse the 'Efreet. They proceeded until they had ascended the mountain, and descended into a wide desert tract which they had never before seen in their whole lives; and the Sulţán and all the troops wondered at the sight of this desert, which was between four mountains, and at the fish, which were of four colours, red and white and yellow and blue. The King paused in astonishment, and said to the troops, and to the other attendants who were with him, Hath any one of you before seen this lake in this place? They all answered, No. Then said the King, By Allah, I will not enter my city, nor will I sit upon my throne, until I know the true history of this lake, and of its fish. And upon this he ordered his people to encamp around these mountains; and they did so. He then called for the Wezeer, who was a well-informed, sensible, prudent, and learned man; and when he had presented himself before him, he said to him, I desire to do a thing with which I will acquaint thee; and it is this:—I have resolved to depart alone this night, to seek for information respecting this lake and its fish: therefore, sit thou at the door of my pavilion, and say to the Emeers and Wezeers and Chamberlains, The Sulţán is sick, and hath commanded me not to allow any person to go in unto him:—and acquaint no one with my intention.

The Wezeer was unable to oppose his design; so the King disguised himself, and slung on his sword, and withdrew himself from the midst of his troops. He journeyed the whole of the night, until the morning, and proceeded until the heat became oppressive to him: he then paused to rest; after which he again proceeded the remainder of the day and the second night until the morning, when there appeared before him, in the distance, something black, at the sight of which he rejoiced, and said, Perhaps I shall there find some person who will inform me of the history of the lake and its fish. And when he approached this black object, he found it to be a palace built of black stones, and overlaid with iron; and one of the leaves of its doors was open, and the other shut. The King was glad,

and he stood at the door, and knocked gently, but heard no answer; he knocked a second and a third time, but again heard no answer: then he knocked a fourth time, and with violence; but no one answered. So he said, It is doubtless empty:—and he took courage, and entered from the door into the passage, and cried out, saying, O inhabitants of the palace, I am a stranger and a traveller! have ye any provision? And he repeated these words a second and a third time; but heard no answer. And upon this he fortified his heart, and emboldened himself, and proceeded from the passage into the midst of the palace; but he found no one there, and only saw that it was furnished, and that there was, in the centre of it, a fountain with four lions of red gold, which poured forth the water from their mouths, like pearls and jewels: around this were birds; and over the top of the palace was extended a net which prevented their flying out. At the sight of these objects he was astonished, and he was grieved that he saw no person there whom he could ask for information respecting the lake, and the fish, and the mountains, and the palace. He then sat down between the doors, reflecting upon these things; and as he thus sat, he heard a voice of lamentation from a sorrowful heart, chanting these verses:—

O fortune, thou pitiest me not, nor releasest me! See my heart is straitened between affliction and peril!
Will not you [O my wife] have compassion on the mighty whom love hath abased, and the wealthy who is reduced to indigence?

We were jealous even of the zephyr which passed over you: but when the divine decree is issued, the eye becometh blind!

What resource hath the archer when, in the hour of conflict, he desireth to discharge the arrow, but findeth his bow-string broken.

And when troubles are multiplied upon the noble-minded, where shall he find refuge from fate and from destiny?

When the Sulṭān heard this lamentation, he sprang upon his feet, and, seeking the direction whence it proceeded, found a curtain suspended before the door of a chamber; and he raised it, and beheld behind it a young man sitting on a couch raised to the height of a cubit from the floor. He was a handsome youth, well-shaped, and of eloquent speech, with shining forehead, and rosy cheek, marked with a mole resembling ambergris. The King was rejoiced at seeing him, and saluted him; and the young man (who remained sitting, and was clad with a vest of silk, embroidered with gold, but who exhibited traces of grief) returned his salutation, and said to him, O my master, excuse my not rising.—O youth! said the King, inform me respecting the lake, and its fish of various colours, and respecting this palace, and the reason of thy being alone in it, and of thy lamentation. When the young man heard these words, tears trickled down his cheeks, and he wept bitterly. And the King was astonished, and said to him, What causeth thee to weep, O youth? He answered, How can I refrain from weeping, when this is my state?—and so saying, he stretched forth his hand, and lifted up the skirts of his clothing; and lo, half of him, from his waist to the soles of his feet, was stone; and from his waist to the hair of his head, he was like other men. He then said, Know, O King, that the story of the fish is extraordinary; if it were engraved upon the intellect, it would be a lesson to him who would be admonished:—and he related as follows:—

The Story of the Young King of the Black Islands

My father was king of the city which was here situate: his name was Maḥmūd, and he was lord of the Black Islands, and of the four mountains. After a reign of seventy years, he died, and I succeeded to his throne; whereupon I took as my wife the daughter of my uncle; and she loved me excessively, so that when I absented myself from her, she would neither eat nor drink till she saw me again. She remained under my protection five years. After this, she went one day to the bath; and I had commanded the cook to prepare the supper, and entered this palace, and slept in my usual place. I had ordered two maids to fan me; and one of them sat at my head, and the other at my feet; but I was restless, because my wife was not with me; and I could not sleep. My eyes were closed, but my spirit was awake; and I heard the maid at my head say to her at my feet, O Meṣ'oodēh, verily our lord is unfortunate in his youth, and what a pity is it that it should be passed with our depraved, wicked mistress!—Perdition to unfaithful wives! replied the other: but (added she) such a person as our lord, so endowed by nature, is not suited to this profligate woman, who passes every night absent from his bed.—Verily, rejoined she at my head, our lord is careless in not making any inquiry respecting her.—Wo to thee! said the other: hath our lord any knowledge of her conduct, or doth she leave him to his choice? Nay, on the contrary, she contriveth to defraud him by means of the cup of wine which he drinketh every night before he sleepeth, putting benj into it; in consequence of which he sleepeth so soundly that he knoweth not what happeneth, nor whither she goeth, nor what she doeth; for, after she hath given him the wine to drink, she dresseth herself, and goeth out from him, and is absent until daybreak, when she returneth to him, and burneth a perfume under his nose, upon which he awaketh from his sleep.

When I heard this conversation of the maids, the light became darkness before my face, and I was hardly con-

scious of the approach of night, when my cousin returned from the bath. The table was prepared, and we ate, and sat a while drinking our wine as usual. I then called for the wine which I was accustomed to drink before I lay down to sleep, and she handed to me the cup; but I turned away, and, pretending to drink it as I was wont to do, poured it into my bosom, and immediately lay down: upon which she said, Sleep on; I wish that thou wouldst never wake again! By Allah, I abhor thee, and abhor thy person, and my soul is weary of thy company!—She then arose, and attired herself in the most magnificent of her apparel, and, having perfumed herself, and slung on a sword, opened the door of the palace, and went out. I got up immediately, and followed her until she had quitted the palace, and passed through the streets of the city, and arrived at the city-gates, when she pronounced some words that I understood not; whereupon the locks fell off, and the gates opened, and she went out, I still following her, without her knowledge. Thence she proceeded to a space among the mounds, and arrived at a strong edifice, in which was a *ḳubbeh* constructed of mud, with a door, which she entered. I then climbed upon the roof of the *ḳubbeh*, and, looking down upon her through an aperture, saw that she was visiting a black slave, whose large lips, one of which overlapped the other, gathered up the sand from the pebbly floor, while he lay, in a filthy and wet condition, upon a few stalks of sugar-cane.

She kissed the ground before this slave; and he raised his head towards her, and said, Wo to thee! Wherefore hast thou remained away until this hour? The other blacks have been here drinking wine, and each of them has gone away with his mistress; and I refused to drink on thy account.—She answered, O my master, and beloved of my heart, knowest thou not that I am married to my cousin, and that I abhor every man who resembles him, and hate myself while I am in his company? If I did not fear to displease thee, I would reduce the city to ruins, so that the owl and the raven should cry in it, and would transport its stones beyond Mount *Ḳáf*.—Thou liest, thou infamous woman, replied the slave; and I swear by the generosity of the blacks (and if I speak not truth, may our valour be as the valour of the whites), that if thou loiter as thou hast now done till this hour, I will no longer give thee my company, nor approach thy person, thou faithless one! Dost thou inconvenience me for the sake of thine own pleasure, thou filthy wretch, and vilest of the whites?—When I heard (continued the King) their words, and witnessed what passed between them, the world became dark before my face, and I knew not where I was.—My cousin still stood weeping, and abasing herself before him, and said, O my beloved, and treasure of my heart, there remaineth to me none but thee for whom I care, and if thou cast me off, alas for me! O my beloved! O light of mine eye!—Thus she continued to weep, and to humble herself before him, until he became pacified towards her; upon which she rejoiced, and arose, and, having disrobed herself, said to him, O my master, hast thou here anything that thy maid may eat? He answered, Uncover the dough-pan; it contains some cooked rats' bones: eat of them, and pick them; and take this earthen pot: thou wilt find in it some *boozah* to drink. So she arose, and ate and drank, and washed her hands; after which she lay down by the side of the slave, upon the stalks of sugar-cane, and covered herself with his tattered clothes and rags.

When I saw her do this, I became unconscious of my existence, and, descending from the roof of the *ḳubbeh*, entered, and took the sword from the side of my cousin, with the intention of killing them both. I struck the slave upon his neck, and thought that he was killed; but the blow, which I gave with the view of severing his head, only cut the gullet and skin and flesh; and when I thought that I had killed him, he uttered a loud snore, upon which my cousin started up, and as soon as I had gone, took the sword, and returned it to its scabbard, and came back to the city and to the palace, and lay down again in my bed, in which she remained until the morning.

On the following day, I observed that my cousin had cut off her hair, and put on the apparel of mourning; and she said to me, O my cousin, blame me not for what I do; for I have received news that my mother is dead, and that my father hath been slain in a holy war, and that one of my two brothers hath died of a poisonous sting, and the other by the fall of a house: it is natural, therefore, that I should weep and mourn. On hearing these words, I abstained from upbraiding her, and said, Do what seemeth fit to thee; for I will not oppose thee. Accordingly, she continued mourning and weeping and wailing a whole year; after which she said to me, I have a desire to build for myself, in thy palace, a tomb, with a *ḳubbeh*, that I may repair thither alone to mourn, and I will call it the House of Lamentations. I replied, Do what thou seest fit. So she built for herself a house for mourning, with a *ḳubbeh* in the middle of it, like the tomb of a saint; after which she removed thither the slave, and there she lodged him. He was in a state of excessive weakness, and unable to render her any service, though he drank wine; and from the day on which I had wounded him, he had never spoken; yet he remained alive, because the appointed term of his life had not expired. My cousin every day visited him in this tomb early and late, to weep and mourn over him, and took to him wine to drink, and boiled meats; and thus she continued to do, morning and evening, until the expiration of the second year, while I patiently suffered her, till one day, I entered her apartment unawares, and found her weeping, and slapping her face, and repeating these verses:—

I have lost my existence among mankind since your absence; for my heart loveth none but you.
Take my body, then, in mercy, to the place where you are laid; and there bury me by your side:

And if, at my grave, you utter my name, the moaning of my bones shall answer to your call.

As soon as she had finished the recitation of these verses, I said to her, holding my drawn sword in my hand, This is the language of those faithless women who renounce the ties of affinity, and regard not lawful fellowship!—and I was about to strike her with the sword, and had lifted up my arm to do so, when she rose—for she knew that it was I who had wounded the slave—and, standing before me, pronounced some words which I understood not, and said, May God, by means of my enchantment, make thee to be half of stone, and half of the substance of man!—whereupon I became as thou seest, unable to move, neither dead nor alive; and when I had been reduced to this state, she enchanted the city and its markets and fields. The inhabitants of our city were of four classes; Muslims, and Christians, and Jews, and Magians; and she transformed them into fish: the white are the Muslims; the red, the Magians; the blue, the Christians; and the yellow, the Jews. She transformed, also, the four islands into four mountains, and placed them around the lake; and from that time she has continued every day to torture me, inflicting upon me a hundred lashes with a leathern whip, until the blood flows from my wounds; after which she puts on my upper half a vest of hair-cloth, beneath these garments.—Having said thus, the young man wept, and ejaculating the following verses:—

Give me patience, O Allah, to bear what Thou decreest! I will be patient, if so I may obtain thine approval.

I am straitened, indeed, by the calamity that hath befallen me: but the Family of the favoured Prophet shall intercede for me!

Upon this, the King, looking towards the young man, said to him, O youth, thou hast increased my anxiety. And where (he added) is this woman?—The young man answered, She is in the tomb where the slave is lying, in the *ḳubbeh*; and every day, before she visits him, she strips me of my clothing, and inflicts upon me a hundred lashes with the whip, while I weep and cry out, unable to move so as to repulse her. After thus torturing me, she repairs early to the slave, with the wine and boiled meat.—By Allah, O youth, said the King, I will do thee an act of kindness for which I shall be remembered, and a favour which historians shall record in a biography after me.

He then sat and conversed with him until the approach of night, upon which he arose, and waited till the first dawn of day, when he took off his clothes, and slung on his sword, and went to the place where the slave lay. After remarking the candles and lamps, and perfumes and ointments, he approached the slave, and with a blow of his sword slew him: he then carried him on his back, and threw him into a well which he found in the palace, and, returning to the *ḳubbeh*, clad himself with the slave's clothes, and lay down with the drawn sword by his side. Soon after, the vile enchantress went to her cousin, and, having pulled off his clothes, took the whip, and beat him, while he cried, Ah! it is enough for me to be in this state! Have pity on me then!—Didst thou shew pity to me, she exclaimed, and didst thou spare my lover?—She then put on him the hair-cloth vest and his outer garments, and repaired to the slave with a cup of wine, and a bowl of boiled meat. Entering the tomb, she wept and wailed, exclaiming, O my master, answer me! O my master, speak to me!—and poured forth her lamentation in the words of this verse:—

How long shall this aversion and harshness continue? Sufficient is the evil which my passion hath brought upon me!

Then, weeping as before, she exclaimed again, O my master, answer me, and speak to me! Upon this the King, speaking in a low voice, and adapting his tongue to the pronunciation of the blacks, ejaculated, Ah! Ah! there is no strength nor power but in God! On hearing these words, she screamed with joy, and fell down in a swoon; and when she recovered, she exclaimed, Possibly my master is restored to health! The King, again lowering his voice, as if from weakness, replied, Thou profligate wretch, thou deservest not that I should address thee.—Wherefore? said she. He answered, Because all the day long thou tormentest thy husband, while he calleth out, and imploreth the aid of God, so that thou hast prevented my sleeping from the commencement of darkness until morning: thy husband hath not ceased to humble himself, and to imprecate vengeance upon thee, till he hath distracted me; and had it not been for this, I had recovered my strength: this it is which hath prevented my answering thee.—Then, with thy permission, she replied, I will liberate him from his present sufferings.—Liberate him, said the King, and give us ease.

She replied, I hear and obey;—and immediately arose, and went out from the *ḳubbeh* to the palace, and, taking a cup, filled it with water, and pronounced certain words over it, upon which it began to boil like a cauldron. She then sprinkled some of it upon her cousin, saying, By virtue of what I have uttered, be changed from thy present state to that in which thou wast at first!—and instantly he shook, and stood upon his feet, rejoicing in his liberation, and exclaimed, I testify that there is no deity but God, and that Moḥammad is God's Apostle; God bless and save him! She then said to him, Depart, and return not hither, or I will kill thee:—and she cried out in his face: so he departed from before her, and she returned to the *ḳubbeh*, and said, O my master, come forth to me that I may behold thee. He replied, with a weak voice, What hast thou done? Thou hast relieved me from the branch, but hast not relieved me from the root.—O my beloved, she said, and what is the root? He answered, The people of this city,

and of the four islands: every night, at the middle hour, the fish raise their heads, and imprecate vengeance upon me and upon thee; and this is the cause that preventeth the return of vigour to my body; therefore, liberate them, and come, and take my hand, and raise me; for vigour hath already in part returned to me.

On hearing these words of the King, whom she imagined to be the slave, she said to him with joy, O my master, on my head and my eye! In the name of Allah!—and she sprang up, full of happiness, and hastened to the lake, where, taking a little of its water, she pronounced over it some unintelligible words, whereupon the fish became agitated, and raised their heads, and immediately became converted into men as before. Thus was the enchantment removed from the inhabitants of the city, and the city became repopled, and the market-streets re-erected, and every one returned to his occupation: the mountains also became changed into islands as they were at the first. The enchantress then returned immediately to the King, whom she still imagined to be the slave, and said to him, O my beloved, stretch forth thy honoured hand, that I may kiss it.—Approach me, said the King in a low voice. So she drew near to him; and he, having his keen-edged sword ready in his hand, thrust it into her bosom, and the point protruded from her back: he then struck her again, and clove her in twain, and went forth.

He found the young man who had been enchanted waiting his return, and congratulated him on his safety; and the young prince kissed his hand, and thanked him. The King then said to him, Wilt thou remain in thy city, or come with me to my capital?—O King of the age, said the young man, dost thou know the distance that is between thee and thy city? The King answered, Two days and a half.—O King, replied the young man, if thou hast been asleep, awake: between thee and thy city is a distance of a year's journey to him who travelleth with diligence; and thou camest in two days and a half only because the city was enchanted: but, O King, I will never quit thee for the twinkling of an eye. The King rejoiced at his words, and said, Praise be to God, who hath in his beneficence given thee to me: thou art my son; for during my whole life, I have never been blest with a son:—and they embraced each other, and rejoiced exceedingly. They then went together into the palace, where the King who had been enchanted informed the officers of his court that he was about to perform the holy pilgrimage: so they prepared for him everything that he required; and he departed with the Sulṭán; his heart burning with reflections upon his city, because he had been deprived of the sight of it for the space of a year.

He set forth, accompanied by fifty memlooks, and provided with presents, and they continued their journey night and day for a whole year, after which they drew near to the city of the Sulṭán, and the Wezeer and the troops, who had lost all hope of his return, came forth to meet him. The troops, approaching him, kissed the ground before him, and congratulated him on his safe return; and he entered the city, and sat upon the throne. He then acquainted the Wezeer with all that had happened to the young King; on hearing which, the Wezeer congratulated the latter, also, on his safety; and when all things were restored to order, the Sulṭán bestowed presents upon a number of his subjects, and said to the Wezeer, Bring to me the fisherman who presented to me the fish. So he sent to this fisherman, who had been the cause of the restoration of the inhabitants of the enchanted city, and brought him; and the King invested him with a dress of honour, and inquired of him respecting his circumstances, and whether he had any children. The fisherman informed him that he had a son and two daughters; and the King, on hearing this, took as his wife one of the daughters, and the young prince married the other. The King also conferred upon the son the office of treasurer. He then sent the Wezeer to the city of the young prince, the capital of the Black Islands, and invested him with its sovereignty, despatching with him the fifty memlooks who had accompanied him thence, with numerous robes of honour to all the Emeers: and the Wezeer kissed his hands, and set forth on his journey; while the Sulṭán and the young prince remained. And as to the fisherman, he became the wealthiest of the people of his age; and his daughters continued to be the wives of the Kings until they died.

But this (added Shahrazád) is not more wonderful than what happened to the porter.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF USAMAH IBN MUNQIDH

Usamah Ibn Munqidh (July 4, 1095 – November 17, 1188)

Composed 1175

Syria/Islam

Poet, courtier, diplomat, warrior, and eye-witness to a tumultuous period in Middle Eastern history, Usamah Ibn Munqidh lived a life full of adventure, political intrigue, and religious conflict, much of which is recorded in his *Autobiography*, or, as it is also known, *The Book of Learning by Example*. He was the nephew of Nasr, ruler of the fortress town Shaizar in what is present day Syria. As a young man, he was encouraged by his father to memorize the Quran and lead a life of religious devotion. The record of Shaizar during his early and middle years, however, is one of incessant warfare with Byzantines and Crusaders. Exiled permanently in 1137 due to court intrigue, Usamah travelled the Middle East extensively, serving as a courtier and diplomat for various Muslim rulers; the Autobiogra-

phy was dedicated to Saladin, the first sultan of Egypt and Syria. Chiefly known among Arab readers today for his poetry, including *Kitab al-'Asa* ("Book of the Staff"), *Lubab al-Adab* ("Kernels of Refinement"), Usamah is frequently cited by Western sources as a participant and witness to the Second Crusades, with the Crusades (1145-1149) being a largely unsuccessful military campaign that led to the fall of Jerusalem. His sharply critical portraits of the Franks as illiterate brutes and sensualists in the *Autobiography* preserves a vivid record of the European crusaders from the perspective of a highly literate and cultured Islamic observer, although recent scholars suggest that Usamah was not above using exaggeration to entertain his Muslim audience.

Questions to consider while reading this selection:

1. What are some of the practices of the Franks that Usamah considers barbaric or uncivilized?
2. What do these examples tell us about the Franks?
3. What does Usamah's account reveal about Muslim culture at the time?

Written by Doug Thomson

USMAH IBN MUNQIDH (1095-1188): AUTOBIOGRAPHY, EXCERPTS ON THE FRANKS

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Usmah Ibn Munqidh, edited by Paul Halsall

Usamah (1095-1188), was a Muslim warrior and courtier, who fought against the Crusaders with Saladin. Yet as a resident of the area around Palestine, he also had a chance to befriend a number of them. His autobiography dates from around 1175.

Mysterious are the works of the Creator, the author of all things! When one comes to recount cases regarding the Franks, he cannot but glorify Allah (exalted is he!) and sanctify him, for he sees them as animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, but nothing else; just as animals have only the virtues of strength and carrying loads. I shall now give some instances of their doings and their curious mentality.

In the army of King Fulk, son of Fulk, was a Frankish reverend knight who had just arrived from their land in order to make the holy pilgrimage and then return home. He was of my intimate fellowship and kept such constant company with me that he began to call me "my brother." Between us were mutual bonds of amity and friendship. When he resolved to return by sea to his homeland, he said to me:

My brother, I am leaving for my country and I want you to send with me thy son (my son, who was then fourteen years old, was at that time in my company) to our country, where he can see the knights and learn wisdom and chivalry. When he returns, he will be like a wise man.

Thus there fell upon my ears words which would never come out of the head of a sensible man; for even if my son were to be taken captive, his captivity could not bring him a worse misfortune than carrying him into the lands of the Franks. However, I said to the man:

By thy life, this has exactly been my idea. But the only thing that prevented me from carrying it out was the fact that his grandmother, my mother, is so fond of him and did not this time let him come out with me until she exacted an oath from me to the effect that I would return him to her.

Thereupon he asked, "Is thy mother still alive?" "Yes," I replied. "Well," said he, "disobey her not." A case illustrating their curious medicine is the following:

The lord of al-Munaytirah wrote to my uncle asking him to dispatch a physician to treat certain sick persons among his people. My uncle sent him a Christian physician named Thabit. Thabit was absent but ten days when he returned. So we said to him, "How quickly has thou healed thy patients!" He said:

They brought before me a knight in whose leg an abscess had grown; and a woman afflicted with imbecility. To the knight I applied a small poultice until the abscess opened and became well; and the woman I put on diet and made her humor wet. Then a Frankish physician came to them and said, "This man knows nothing about treating them." He then said to the knight, "Which wouldst thou prefer, living with one leg or dying with two?" The latter replied, "Living with one leg." The physician said, "Bring me a strong knight and a sharp ax." A knight came with the ax. And I was standing by. Then the physician laid the leg of the patient on a block of wood and bade the knight strike his leg with the ax and chop it off at one blow. Accordingly he struck it-while I was looking on-one blow, but the leg was not severed. He dealt another blow, upon which the marrow of the leg flowed out and the patient died on the spot. He then examined the woman and said, "This is a woman in whose head there is a devil which has possessed her. Shave off her hair." Accordingly they shaved it off and the woman began once more to eat their ordinary diet-garlic and mustard. Her imbecility took a turn for the worse. The physician then said, "The devil has

penetrated through her head." He therefore took a razor, made a deep cruciform incision on it, peeled off the skin at the middle of the incision until the bone of the skull was exposed and rubbed it with salt. The woman also expired instantly. Thereupon I asked them whether my services were needed any longer, and when they replied in the negative I returned home, having learned of their medicine what I knew not before.

I have, however, witnessed a case of their medicine which was quite different from that.

The king of the Franks had for treasurer a knight named Bernard, who (may Allah's curse be upon him!) was one of the most accursed and wicked among the Franks. A horse kicked him in the leg, which was subsequently infected and which opened in fourteen different places. Every time one of these cuts would close in one place, another would open in another place. All this happened while I was praying for his perdition. Then came to him a Frankish physician and removed from the leg all the ointments which were on it and began to wash it with very strong vinegar. By this treatment all the cuts were healed and the man became well again. He was up again like a devil. Another case illustrating their curious medicine is the following: In Shayzar we had an artisan named abu-al-Fath, who had a boy whose neck was afflicted with scrofula. Every time a part of it would close, another part would open. This man happened to go to Antioch on business of his, accompanied by his son. A Frank noticed the boy and asked his father about him. Abu-al-Fath replied, "This is my son." The Frank said to him, "Wilt thou swear by thy religion that if I prescribe to you a medicine which will cure thy boy, thou wilt charge nobody fees for prescribing it thyself? In that case, I shall prescribe to you a medicine which will cure the boy." The man took the oath and the Frank said:

Take uncrushed leaves of glasswort, burn them, then soak the ashes in olive oil and sharp vinegar. Treat the scrofula with them until the spot on which it is growing is eaten up. Then take burnt lead, soak it in ghee butter and treat him with it. That will cure him.

The father treated the boy accordingly, and the boy was cured. The sores closed and the boy returned to his normal condition of health.

I have myself treated with this medicine many who were afflicted with such disease, and the treatment was successful in removing the cause of the complaint.

The Franks are void of all zeal and jealousy. One of them may be walking along with his wife. He meets another man who takes the wife by the hand and steps aside to converse with her while the husband is standing on one side waiting for his wife to conclude the conversation. If she lingers too long for him, he leaves her alone with the conversant and goes away.

Here is an illustration which I myself witnessed:

When I used to visit Nablus, I always took lodging with a man named Mu'izz, whose home was a lodging house for the Muslims. The house had windows which opened to the road, and there stood opposite to it on the other side of the road a house belonging to a Frank who sold wine for the merchants. He would take some wine in a bottle and go around announcing it by shouting, "So and so, the merchant, has just opened a cask full of this wine. He who wants to buy some of it will find it in such and such a place." The Frank's pay for the announcement made would be the wine in that bottle. One day this Frank went home and found a man with his wife in the same bed. He asked him, "What could have made you enter into my wife's room?" The man replied, "I was tired, so I went in to rest." "But how," asked he, "didst thou get into my bed?" The other replied, "I found a bed that was spread, so I slept in it." "But," said he, "my wife was sleeping together with you!" The other replied, "Well, the bed is hers. How could I therefore have prevented her from using her own bed?"

"By the truth of my religion," said the husband, "if thou shouldst do it again, thou and I would have a quarrel." Such was for the Frank the entire expression of his disapproval and the limit of his jealousy. . . .

Another illustration: I entered the public bath in Sur [Tyre] and took my place in a secluded part. One of my servants thereupon said to me, "There is with us in the bath a woman." When I went out, I sat on one of the stone benches and behold! the woman who was in the bath had come out all dressed and was standing with her father just opposite me. But I could not be sure that she was a woman. So I said to one of my companions, "By Allah, see if this is a woman," by which I meant that he should ask about her. But he went, as I was looking at him, lifted the end of her robe and looked carefully at her. Thereupon her father turned toward me and said, "This is my daughter. Her mother is dead and she has nobody to wash her hair. So I took her in with me to the bath and washed her head." I replied, "Thou hast well done! This is something for which thou shalt be rewarded [by Allah]!"

I once went in the company of al-Amir Mu'in-al-Din (may Allah's mercy rest upon his soul!) to Jerusalem. We stopped at Nablus. There a blind man, a Muslim, who was still young and was well dressed, presented himself

before al-amir carrying fruits for him and asked permission to be admitted into his service in Damascus. The amir consented. I inquired about this man and was informed that his mother had been married to a Frank whom she had killed. Her son used to practice ruses against the Frankish pilgrims and cooperate with his mother in assassinating them. They finally brought charges against him and tried his case according to the Frankish way of procedure.

They installed a huge cask and filled it with water. Across it they set a board of wood. They then bound the arms of the man charged with the act, tied a rope around his shoulders and dropped him into the cask, their idea being that in case he was innocent, he would sink in the water and they would then lift him up with the rope so that he might not die in the water; and in case he was guilty, he would not sink in the water. This man did his best to sink when they dropped him into the water, but he could not do it. So he had to submit to their sentence against him--may Allah's curse be upon them! They pierced his eyeballs with red-hot awls.

Later this same man arrived in Damascus. Al-Amir Mu'in-al-Din (may Allah's mercy rest upon his soul!) assigned him a stipend large enough to meet all his needs and said to a slave of his, "Conduct him to Burhan-al-Din al-Balkhi (may Allah's mercy rest upon his soul!) and ask him on my behalf to order somebody to teach this man the Koran and something of Muslim jurisprudence." Hearing that, the blind man remarked, "May triumph and victory be thine! But this was never my thought..... What didst thou think I was going to do for thee?" asked Mu'in-al-Din. The blind man replied, "I thought thou wouldst give me a horse, a mule and a suit of armor and make me a knight." Mu'in-al-Din then said, "I never thought that a blind man could become a knight."

Among the Franks are those who have become acclimatized and have associated long with the Muslims. These are much better than the recent comers from the Frankish lands. But they constitute the exception and cannot be treated as a rule.

Here is an illustration. I dispatched one of my men to Antioch on business. There was in Antioch at that time al-Ra'is Theodoros Sophianos, to whom I was bound by mutual ties of amity. His influence in Antioch was supreme. One day he said to my man, "I am invited by a friend of mine who is a Frank. Thou shouldst come with me so that thou mayest see their fashions." My man related the story in the following words:

I went along with him and we came to the home of a knight who belonged to the old category of knights who came with the early expeditions of the Franks. He had been by that time stricken off the register and exempted from service, and possessed in Antioch an estate on the income of which he lived. The knight presented an excellent table, with food extraordinarily clean and delicious. Seeing me abstaining from food, he said, "Eat, be of good cheer! I never eat Frankish dishes, but I have Egyptian women cooks and never eat except their cooking. Besides, pork never enters my home." I ate, but guardedly, and after that we departed.

As I was passing in the market place, a Frankish woman all of a sudden hung to my clothes and began to mutter words in their language, and I could not understand what she was saying. This made me immediately the center of a big crowd of Franks. I was convinced that death was at hand. But all of a sudden that same knight approached. On seeing me, he came and said to that woman, "What is the matter between you and this Muslim?" She replied, "This is he who has killed my brother Hurso." This Hurso was a knight in Afimiyah who was killed by someone of the army of Hamah. The Christian knight shouted at her, saying, "This is a bourgeois (i.e., a merchant) who neither fights nor attends a fight." He also yelled at the people who had assembled, and they all dispersed. Then he took me by the hand and went away. Thus the effect of that meal was my deliverance from certain death.*

China

This chapter introduces two types of representative works from the Chinese period from roughly the fifth century to the fifteenth century, a period that corresponds to the European Middle Age (although it should be noted that the European periodization is not accurate for non-European cultures). There are many noteworthy works from China during this period. Selected in this chapter are poetry from the Tang dynasty (618-960 C.E.) and vernacular fiction that emerged from the late phase of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 C.E.) and the early phase of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 C.E.).

It is often said that the Tang dynasty was the golden age in Chinese literary history, and poetry was the most glorious literary form of the time. The verse forms of the past were refined, and new poetic forms developed. One new form perfected early in the dynasty, which consists of eight lines of five or seven syllables in accordance with tonal patterns, is called *lüshi* (“regulated verse”). Another poetic form popular during the period was the *jueju* (“truncated verse”), which is a shortened version of the *lüshi*. Du Fu (712-770 C.E.) and Li Bo (701-762 C.E.) from the Tang dynasty are considered the greatest poets in China. Du Fu, who was a high official in the 740s, was highly erudite, and he excelled in all verse forms, but his mastery was the best in the *lüshi*. When he was young, he flirted with Daoism and travelled with Li Bo, whom he strongly admired. Li Bo, on the other hand, did not sustain a high-ranking position but instead spent a lot of time wandering. Li Bo expressed his Daoist worldview in his deliberately older and freer verse forms, avoiding the *lüshi*. Other renowned poets during the Tang dynasty include Wang Wei (701-761 C.E.) and Bai Juyi (772-846 C.E.). The Tang dynasty was a period of economic growth and prosperity, and culturally, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism continued to be influential.

The next major dynasty was the Song dynasty, during which literary productivity increased enormously, thanks to the improvement of printing (invented in the eighth century) and to the establishment of public schools throughout the empire. All the literary genres in verse and prose continued to develop during this period. The Song dynasty was later absorbed by the Yuan (or Mongol) dynasty. During the Yuan dynasty, dramatic literature blossomed, possibly catalyzed by Indian and Iranian theatre models available in this period. Many writers turned to playwriting, especially the musical drama of four or five acts along with prologue, epilogue, and songs. Between the late Yuan dynasty and the early Ming dynasty, particularly noteworthy are the works of fiction in the vernacular. *Sanguozhi yanyi* (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Shuihuzhuan* (*The Water Margin*), both acclaimed as masterpieces of the historical and picaresque (an early novelistic form of adventure narrative) genres, have been controversially attributed to Luo Guanzhong (ca. 1330-1400 C.E.). *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is set at the end of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.) and the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 C.E.). All through the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties, Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism continued to be influential, especially increasingly in the new mixtures of these three thoughts.

As already indicated above, the selections in this chapter, Li Bo’s poems and Luo Guanzhong’s *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, are good examples of the Tang dynasty and the Yuan/Ming dynasties, respectively. It will be useful to situate these works in their historical and cultural contexts and examine the unique characteristics pertaining to each genre.

AS YOU READ, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Can you point out connections between Daoism and Li Bo’s poems? (Feel free to consult the video resource about Daoism below.)



IMAGE 7.1: KUBLAI KHAN | Portrait of Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, emperor of China.

Author: Anige of Nepal
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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- Select specific poems by Li Bo and develop your own interpretive thesis statement for each poem, along with supporting ideas.
- Do some quick research about major events in the Han dynasty, the Three Kingdoms period, and the Yuan/Ming dynasties, and examine how Luo's work incorporates elements of earlier and contemporary history and culture.
- What philosophical, religious, political, and personal values do you think Luo's work conveys?

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

- Go to the following website for an educational video about Daoism:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZiasFYQsJ8>
- Go to the following websites for Chinese history and its timeline:
<http://archive.artsmia.org/art-of-asia/history/dynasty-ming.cfm.html>
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13017882>

Written by Kyoungnye Kwon



IMAGE 7.2: EIGHTY SEVEN CELESTIALS | Artwork by Wu Daozi depicting many angelic people walking along a path.

Author: Wu Daozi
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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SELECTED POEMS

Li Bo (701-762 C.E.)

Composed ca. 716-762 C.E.

China

Li Bo is regarded as China's greatest poet, along with Du Fu. His name is also spelled Li Bai, Li Po, and Li Pai. His courtesy name is Taibai and his literary name is Qinglian Jushi. There are about a thousand extant poems by Li Bo, and many of them are written in older poetic forms, less regulated than those developed during the Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.). Also unorthodox is his incorporation of colloquial language and folk songs into his poetry. Importantly, Li Bo's poetic world expresses Daoist views, emphasizing "the (Daoist) Way" and celebrating a free and wandering life. Buddhism (especially Chan Buddhism) is also essential to understanding Li Bo's poems. On a side note, he is well known for his love of alcohol and wrote many poems about drinking. A popular legend says that Li Bo drowned because he was sitting drunk in a boat and was trying to seize the moon's reflection in the water.

Written by Kyoungnye Kwon

SELECTIONS FROM THE POET LI PO A.D. 701-760

Bai Li, Translated by Arthur Waley

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Fighting

Last year we were fighting at the source of the San-kan;
This year we are fighting at the Onion River road.

We have washed our swords in the surf of Indian seas;
 We have pastured our horses among the snows of T'ien Shan.
 Three armies have grown gray and old,
 Fighting ten thousand leagues away from home.
 The Huns have no trade but battle and carnage;
 They have no pastures or ploughlands,
 But only wastes where white bones lie among yellow sands.
 Where the house of Ch'in built the great wall that was to keep away the Tartars,
 There, in its turn, the house of Han lit beacons of war.
 The beacons are always alight; fighting and marching never stop.
 Men die in the field, slashing sword to sword;
 The horses of the conquered neigh piteously to Heaven.
 Crows and hawks peck for human guts,
 Carry them in their beaks and hang them on the branches of withered trees.
 Captains and soldiers are smeared on the bushes and grass;
 The General schemed in vain.
 Know therefore that the sword is a cursèd thing
 Which the wise man uses only if he must.

The Sun

O Sun that rose in the eastern corner of Earth,
 Looking as though you came from under the ground,
 When you crossed the sky and entered the deep sea,
 Where did you stable your six dragon-steeds?
 Now and of old your journeys have never ceased:
 Strong were that man's limbs
 Who could run beside you on your travels to and fro.

The grass does not refuse
 To flourish in the spring wind;
 The leaves are not angry
 At falling through the autumn sky.
 Who with whip or spur
 Can urge the feet of Time?
 The things of the world flourish and decay,
 Each at its own hour.

Hsi-ho, Hsi-ho,
 Is it true that once you loitered in the West
 While Lu Yang raised his spear, to hold
 The progress of your light;
 Then plunged and sank in the turmoil of the sea?
 Rebels against Heaven, slanderers of Fate;
 Many defy the Way.
 But *I* will put | the Whole Lump | of Life in my bag,
 And merge my being in the Primal Element.

The White River at Nan-Yang

Wading at dawn the White River's source,
 Severed a while from the common ways of men,
 To islands tinged with the colours of Paradise,
 Where the river sky drowns in limpid space.
 While my eyes were watching the clouds that travel to the sea.
 My heart was idle as the fish that swim in the stream.
 With long singing I put the sun to rest:
 Riding the moon, came back to my fields and home.

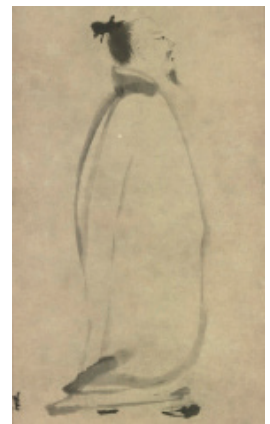


IMAGE 7.3: LI BAI IN STROLL | Ink illustration by Liang Kai of the poet Li Bai (also written as Li Bo).

Author: Liang Kai
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Going Down Chung-Nan Mountain and Spending the Night Drinking with the Hermit Tou-Ssü

At dusk we left the blue mountain-head;
 The mountain-moon followed our homeward steps.
 We looked round: the path by which we had come
 Was a dark cleft across the shoulder of the hill.
 Hand in hand we reached the walls of the farm;
 A young boy opened the wicker-gate.
 Through green bamboos a deep road ran
 Where dark creepers brushed our coats as we passed.
 We were glad at last to come to a place of rest,
 With wine enough to drink together to our fill,
 Long I sang to the tune of the Pine-tree Wind;
 When the song was over, the River-stars were few.
 I was drunk and you happy at my side;
 Till mingled joy drove the World from our hearts.

Drinking Alone by Moonlight

A cup of wine, under the flowering-trees:
 I drink alone, for no friend is near.
 Raising my cup, I beckon the bright moon,
 For he, with my shadow, will make three men.
 The moon, alas! is no drinker of wine:
 Listless, my shadow creeps about at my side.
 Yet with the moon as friend and the shadow as slave
 I must make merry before the Spring is spent.
 To the songs I sing the moon flickers her beams;
 In the dance I weave my shadow tangles and breaks.
 While we were sober, three shared the fun;
 Now we are drunk, each goes his way.

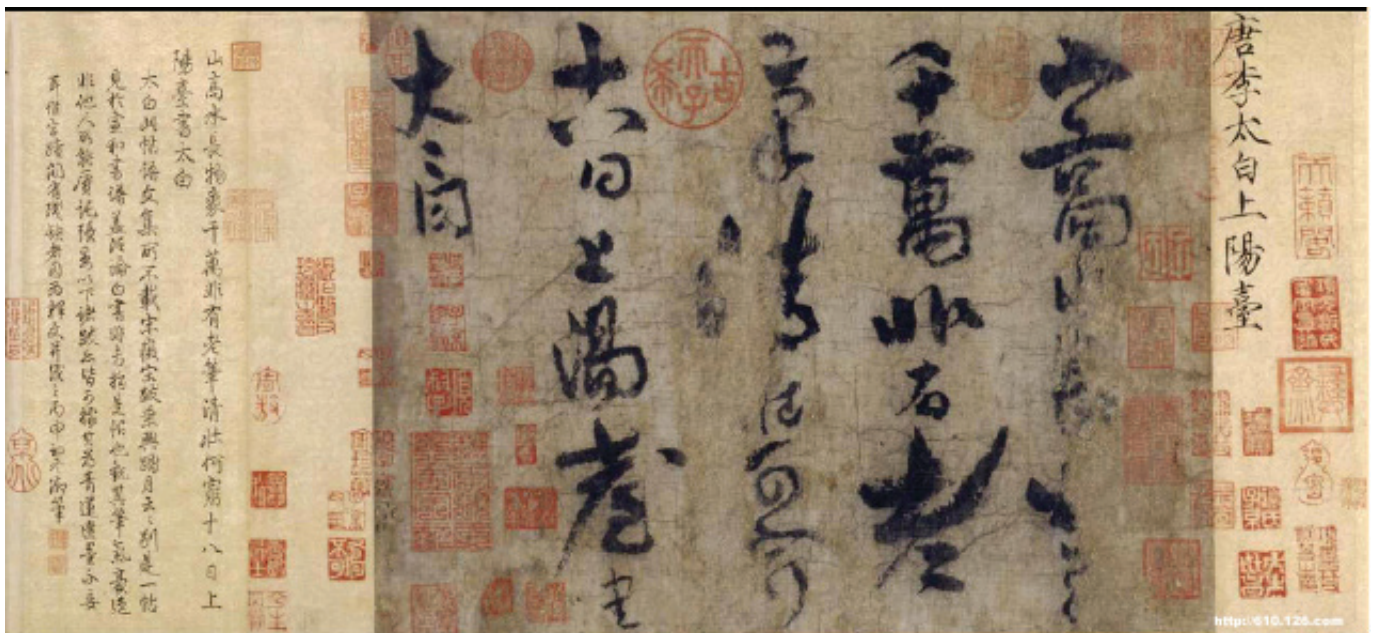


IMAGE 7.4: GOING UP TO SUN TERRACE | The only surviving calligraphy of Li Bo's own handwriting.

Author: Li Bo

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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May we long share our odd, inanimate feast,
And meet at last on the Cloudy River of the Sky.

In the third month the town of Hsien-yang
Is thick-spread with a carpet of fallen flowers.
Who in Spring can bear to grieve alone?
Who, sober, look on sights like these?
Riches and Poverty, long or short life,
By the Maker of Things are portioned and disposed.
But a cup of wine levels life and death
And a thousand things obstinately hard to prove.
When I am drunk, I lose Heaven and Earth;
Motionless, I cleave to my lonely bed.
At last I forget that I exist at all,
And at *that* moment my joy is great indeed.

If High Heaven had no love for wine,
There would not be a Wine Star in the sky.
If Earth herself had no love for wine,
There would not be a city called Wine Springs.
Since Heaven and Earth both love wine,
I can love wine, without shame before God.
Clear wine was once called "a Saint;"
Thick wine was once called "a Sage."
Of Saint and Sage I have long quaffed deep,
What need for me to study spirits and *hsien*?
At the third cup I penetrate the Great Way;
A full gallon—Nature and I are one....
But the things I feel when wine possesses my soul
I will never tell to those who are not drunk.

In the Mountains on a Summer Day

Gently I stir a white feather fan,
With open shirt, sitting in a green wood.
I take off my cap and hang it on a jutting stone:
A wind from the pine-trees trickles on my bare head.

Drinking Together in the Mountains

Two men drinking together where mountain flowers grow:
One cup, one cup, and again one cup.
"Now I am drunk and would like to sleep:
 so please go away.
Come back to-morrow, if you feel inclined,
 and bring your harp with you."

Clearing up at Dawn

The fields are chill; the sparse rain has stopped;
The colours of Spring teem on every side.
With leaping fish the blue pond is full;
With singing thrushes the green boughs droop.
The flowers of the field have dabbled their powdered cheeks;
The mountain grasses are bent level at the waist.
By the bamboo stream the last fragments of cloud
Blown by the wind slowly scatter away.

THE ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS

Luo Guanzhong

Written in the 14th century C.E.

China

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms is one of the stories known as the “Four Classic Novels” or “Four Great Masterpieces” of Chinese literature (the other three being *Water Margin*, *Journey to the West*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*). Although it was written in the 14th century C.E., the story is based on historical events from a thousand years earlier: during the late Han dynasty and the Three Kingdoms Period (starting in 169 C.E. and ending in 280 C.E.). The story depicts the conflicts among the Wu, Wei, and Shu kingdoms. The characters are based on actual people, with the requisite alterations that are expected in fiction (such as the occasional warrior with superhuman strength, and other legendary and mythic elements). The story is 120 chapters long, with literally hundreds of characters to follow. The selections in the anthology begin with the introductory chapter, which includes how one group of heroes meets. The long selection is from the most well-known episode in the story: the Battle of Red Cliffs (208-209 C.E.). *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* continues to be a popular work, with movies, video games, comics, television series, and card games based on the story.

Written by Laura J. Getty

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS

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Luo Quanzhong, translated by C. H. Brewitt-Taylor

Chapter 1

Three Heroes Swear Brotherhood In The Peach Garden; One Victory Shatters The Rebels In Battlegrounds.

The world under heaven, after a long period of division, tends to unite; after a long period of union, tends to divide. This has been so since antiquity. When the rule of the Zhou Dynasty weakened, seven contending kingdoms sprang up, warring one with another until the kingdom of Qin prevailed and possessed the empire. But when Qin's destiny had been fulfilled, arose two opposing kingdoms, Chu and Han, to fight for the mastery. And Han was the victor.

The rise of the fortunes of Han began when Liu Bang the Supreme Ancestor slew a white serpent to raise the banners of uprising, which only ended when the whole empire belonged to Han (BC 202). This magnificent heritage was handed down in successive Han emperors for two hundred years, till the rebellion of Wang Mang caused a disruption. But soon Liu Xiu the Latter Han Founder restored the empire, and Han emperors continued their rule for another two hundred years till the days of Emperor Xian, which were doomed to see the beginning of the empire's division into three parts, known to history as The Three Kingdoms.

But the descent into misrule hastened in the reigns of the two predecessors of Emperor Xian—Emperors Huan and Ling—who sat in the dragon throne about the middle of the second century.

Emperor Huan paid no heed to the good people of his court, but gave his confidence to the Palace eunuchs. He lived and died, leaving the scepter to Emperor Ling, whose advisers were Regent Marshal Dou Wu and Imperial Guardian Chen Fan. Dou Wu and Chen Fan, disgusted with the abuses of the eunuchs in the affairs of the state, plotted the destruction for the power-abusing eunuchs. But Chief Eunuch Cao Jie was not to be disposed of easily. The plot leaked out, and the honest Dou Wu and Chen Fan were put to death, leaving the eunuchs stronger than before.

It fell upon the day of full moon of the fourth month, the second year, in the era of Established Calm (AD 168), that Emperor Ling went in state to the Hall of Virtue. As he drew near the throne, a rushing whirlwind arose in the corner of the hall and, lo! from the roof beams floated down a monstrous black serpent that coiled itself up on the very seat of majesty. The Emperor fell in a swoon. Those nearest him hastily raised and bore him to his palace, while the courtiers scattered and fled. The serpent disappeared.

But there followed a terrific tempest, thunder, hail, and torrents of rain, lasting till midnight and working havoc on all sides. Two years later the earth quaked in Capital Luoyang, while along the coast a huge tidal wave rushed in which, in its recoil, swept away all the dwellers by the sea. Another evil omen was recorded ten years later, when the

reign title was changed to Radiant Harmony (AD 178): Certain hens suddenly crowed. At the new moon of the sixth month, a long wreath of murky cloud wound its way into the Hall of Virtue, while in the following month a rainbow was seen in the Dragon Chamber. Away from the capital, a part of the Yuan Mountains collapsed, leaving a mighty rift in the flank.

Such were some of various omens. Emperor Ling, greatly moved by these signs of the displeasure of Heaven, issued an edict asking his ministers for an explanation of the calamities and marvels.

Court Counselor Cai Yong replied bluntly: “Falling rainbows and changes of fowls’ sexes are brought about by the interference of empresses and eunuchs in state affairs.”

The Emperor read this memorial with deep sighs, and Chief Eunuch Cao Jie, from his place behind the throne, anxiously noted these signs of grief. An opportunity offering, Cao Jie informed his fellows, and a charge was trumped up against Cai Yong, who was driven from the court and forced to retire to his country house.

With this victory the eunuchs grew bolder. Ten of them, rivals in wickedness and associates in evil deeds, formed a powerful party known as the Ten Regular Attendants—Zhang Rang, Zhao Zhong, Cheng Kuang, Duan Gui, Feng Xu, Guo Sheng, Hou Lan, Jian Shuo, Cao Jie, and Xia Yun.

One of them, Zhang Rang, won such influence that he became the Emperor’s most honored and trusted adviser. The Emperor even called him “Foster Father”. So the corrupt state administration went quickly from bad to worse, till the country was ripe for rebellion and buzzed with brigandage.

At this time in the county of Julu was a certain Zhang family, of whom three brothers bore the name of Zhang Jue, Zhang Ba, and Zhang Lian, respectively. The eldest Zhang Jue was an unclassed graduate, who devoted himself to medicine. One day, while culling simples in the woods, Zhang Jue met a venerable old gentleman with very bright, emerald eyes and fresh complexion, who walked with an oak-wood staff. The old man beckoned Zhang Jue into a cave and there gave him three volumes of *The Book of Heaven*.

“This book,” said the old gentleman, “is the *Essential Arts of Peace*. With the aid of these volumes, you can convert the world and rescue humankind. But you must be single-minded, or, rest assured, you will greatly suffer.”

With a humble obeisance, Zhang Jue took the book and asked the name of his benefactor.

“I am Saint Hermit of the Southern Land,” was the reply, as the old gentleman disappeared in thin air.

Zhang Jue studied the wonderful book eagerly and strove day and night to reduce its precepts to practice. Before long, he could summon the winds and command the rain, and he became known as the *Mystic of the Way of Peace*.

In the first month of the first year of Central Stability (AD 184), there was a terrible pestilence that ran throughout the land, whereupon Zhang Jue distributed charmed remedies to the afflicted. The godly medicines brought big successes, and soon he gained the title of the *Wise and Worthy Master*. He began to have a following of disciples whom he initiated into the mysteries and sent abroad throughout all the land. They, like their master, could write charms and recite formulas, and their fame increased his following.

Zhang Jue began to organize his disciples. He established thirty-six circuits, the larger with ten thousand or more members, the smaller with about half that number. Each circuit had its chief who took the military title of *General*. They talked wildly of the death of the blue heaven and the setting up of the golden one; they said a new cycle was beginning and would bring universal good fortune to all members; and they persuaded people to chalk the symbols for the first year of the new cycle on the main door of their dwellings.

With the growth of the number of his supporters grew also the ambition of Zhang Jue. The *Wise and Worthy Master* dreamed of empire. One of his partisans, Ma Yuanyi, was sent bearing gifts to gain the support of the eunuchs within the Palace.

To his brothers Zhang Jue said, “For schemes like ours always the most difficult part is to gain the popular favor. But that is already ours. Such an opportunity must not pass.”

And they began to prepare. Many yellow flags and banners were made, and a day was chosen for the uprising. Then Zhang Jue wrote letters to Feng Xu and sent them by one of his followers, Tang Zhou, who alas! betrayed his trust and reported the plot to the court. The Emperor summoned the trusty Regent Marshal He Jin and bade him



IMAGE 7.5: PEACH GARDEN CEREMONY | Several heroes from the story gather together in a garden to perform a sacrifice and swear and oath.

Author: Anonymous

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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look to the issue. Ma Yuanyi was at once taken and beheaded. Feng Xu and many others were cast into prison.

The plot having thus become known, the Zhang brothers were forced at once to take the field. They took up grandiose titles: Zhang Jue the Lord of Heaven, Zhang Ba the Lord of Earth, and Zhang Lian the Lord of Human. And in these names they put forth this manifesto:

The good fortune of the Han is exhausted, and the Wise and Worthy Man has appeared. Discern the will of Heaven, O ye people, and walk in the way of righteousness, whereby alone ye may attain to peace.

Support was not lacking. On every side people bound their heads with yellow scarves and joined the army of the rebel Zhang Jue, so that soon his strength was nearly half a million strong, and the official troops melted away at a whisper of his coming.

Regent Marshal and Imperial Guardian, He Jin, memorialized for general preparations against the Yellow Scarves, and an edict called upon everyone to fight against the rebels. In the meantime, three Imperial Commanders—Lu Zhi, Huangfu Song, and Zhu Jun—marched against them in three directions with veteran soldiers.

Meanwhile Zhang Jue led his army into Youzhou, the northeastern region of the empire. The Imperial Protector of Youzhou was Liu Yan, a scion of the Imperial House. Learning of the approach of the rebels, Liu Yan called in Commander Zhou Jing to consult over the position.

Zhou Jing said, "They are many and we few. We must enlist more troops to oppose them."

Liu Yan agreed, and he put out notices calling for volunteers to serve against the rebels. One of these notices was posted up in the county of Zhuo, where lived one man of high spirit.

This man was no mere bookish scholar, nor found he any pleasure in study. But he was liberal and amiable, albeit a man of few words, hiding all feeling under a calm exterior. He had always cherished a yearning for high enterprise and had cultivated the friendship of humans of mark. He was tall of stature. His ears were long, the lobes touching his shoulders, and his hands hung down below his knees. His eyes were very big and prominent so that he could see backward past his ears. His complexion was as clear as jade, and he had rich red lips.

He was a descendant of Prince Sheng of Zhongshan whose father was the Emperor Jing (reigned BC 157-141), the fourth emperor of the Han Dynasty. His name was Liu Bei. Many years before, one of his forbears had been the governor of that very county, but had lost his rank for remissness in ceremonial offerings. However, that branch of the family had remained on in the place, gradually becoming poorer and poorer as the years rolled on. His father Liu Hong had been a scholar and a virtuous official but died young. The widow and orphan were left alone, and Liu Bei as a lad won a reputation for filial piety.

At this time the family had sunk deep in poverty, and Liu Bei gained his living by selling straw sandals and weaving grass mats. The family home was in a village near the chief city of Zhuo. Near the house stood a huge mulberry tree, and seen from afar its curved profile resembled the canopy of a wagon. Noting the luxuriance of its foliage, a soothsayer had predicted that one day a man of distinction would come forth from the family.

As a child, Liu Bei played with the other village children beneath this tree, and he would climb up into it, saying, "I am the Son of Heaven, and this is my chariot!" His uncle, Liu Yuanqi, recognized that Liu Bei was no ordinary boy and saw to it that the family did not come to actual want.

When Liu Bei was fifteen, his mother sent him traveling for his education. For a time he served Zheng Xuan and Lu Zhi as masters. And he became great friends with Gongsun Zan.

Liu Bei was twenty-eight when the outbreak of the Yellow Scarves called for soldiers. The sight of the notice saddened him, and he sighed as he read it.

Suddenly a rasping voice behind him cried, "Sir, why sigh if you do nothing to help your country?"

Turning quickly he saw standing there a man about his own height, with a bullet head like a leopard's, large eyes, a swallow pointed chin, and whiskers like a tiger's. He spoke in a loud bass voice and looked as irresistible as a dashing horse. At once Liu Bei saw he was no ordinary man and asked who he was.

"Zhang Fei is my name," replied the stranger. "I live near here where I have a farm; and I am a wine seller and a butcher as well; and I like to become acquainted with worthy people. Your sighs as you read the notice drew me toward you."

Liu Bei replied, "I am of the Imperial Family, Liu Bei is my name. And I wish I could destroy these Yellow Scarves and restore peace to the land, but alas! I am helpless."

"I have the means," said Zhang Fei. "Suppose you and I raised some troops and tried what we could do."

This was happy news for Liu Bei, and the two betook themselves to the village inn to talk over the project. As they were drinking, a huge, tall fellow appeared pushing a hand-cart along the road. At the threshold he halted and entered the inn to rest awhile and he called for wine.

"And be quick!" added he. "For I am in haste to get into the town and offer myself for the army."

Liu Bei looked over the newcomer, item by item, and he noted the man had a huge frame, a long beard, a vivid

face like an apple, and deep red lips. He had eyes like a phoenix's and fine bushy eyebrows like silkworms. His whole appearance was dignified and awe-inspiring. Presently, Liu Bei crossed over, sat down beside him and asked his name.

"I am Guan Yu," replied he. "I am a native of the east side of the river, but I have been a fugitive on the waters for some five years, because I slew a ruffian who, since he was wealthy and powerful, was a bully. I have come to join the army here."

Then Liu Bei told Guan Yu his own intentions, and all three went away to Zhang Fei's farm where they could talk over the grand project.

Said Zhang Fei, "The peach trees in the orchard behind the house are just in full flower. Tomorrow we will institute a sacrifice there and solemnly declare our intention before Heaven and Earth, and we three will swear brotherhood and unity of aims and sentiments: Thus will we enter upon our great task."

Both Liu Bei and Guan Yu gladly agreed.

All three being of one mind, next day they prepared the sacrifices, a black ox, a white horse, and wine for libation. Beneath the smoke of the incense burning on the altar, they bowed their heads and recited this oath:

"We three—Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei—though of different families, swear brotherhood, and promise mutual help to one end. We will rescue each other in difficulty; we will aid each other in danger. We swear to serve the state and save the people. We ask not the same day of birth, but we seek to die together. May Heaven, the all-ruling, and Earth, the all-producing, read our hearts. If we turn aside from righteousness or forget kindness, may Heaven and Human smite us!"

They rose from their knees. The two others bowed before Liu Bei as their elder brother, and Zhang Fei was to be the youngest of the trio. This solemn ceremony performed, they slew other oxen and made a feast to which they invited the villagers. Three hundred joined them, and all feasted and drank deep in the Peach Garden.

The next day weapons were mustered. But there were no horses to ride. This was a real grief. But soon they were cheered by the arrival of two horse dealers with a drove of horses.

"Thus does Heaven help us!" said Liu Bei.

And the three brothers went forth to welcome the merchants. They were Zhang Shiping and Su Shuang from Zhongshan. They went northwards every year to buy horses. They were now on their way home because of the Yellow Scarves. The brothers invited them to the farm, where wine was served before them. Then Liu Bei told them of the plan to strive for tranquillity. Zhang Shiping and Su Shuang were glad and at once gave the brothers fifty good steeds, and beside, five hundred ounces of gold and silver and one thousand five hundred pounds of steel fit for the forging of weapons.

The brothers expressed their gratitude, and the merchants took their leave. Then blacksmiths were summoned to forge weapons. For Liu Bei they made a pair of ancient swords; for Guan Yu they fashioned a long-handled, curve blade called Green-Dragon Saber, which weighed a full one hundred pounds; and for Zhang Fei they created a ten-foot spear called Serpent Halberd. Each too had a helmet and full armor.

When weapons were ready, the troop, now five hundred strong, marched to Commander Zhou Jing, who presented them to Imperial Protector Liu Yan. When the ceremony of introduction was over, Liu Bei declared his ancestry, and Liu Yan at once accorded him the esteem due to a relation.

Before many days it was announced that the rebellion had actually broken out, and a Yellow Scarves chieftain, Cheng Yuanzhi, had invaded the region with a body of fifty thousand rebels. Liu Yan bade Zhou Jing and the three brothers to go out to oppose them with the five hundred troops. Liu Bei joyfully undertook to lead the van and marched to the foot of the Daxing Hills where they saw the rebels. The rebels wore their hair flying about their shoulders, and their foreheads were bound with yellow scarves.

When the two armies had been drawn up opposite each other, Liu Bei rode to the front, Guan Yu to his left, Zhang Fei to his right.

Flourishing his whip, Liu Bei began to hurl reproaches at the rebels, crying, "O malcontents! Why not dismount and be bound?"

Their leader Cheng Yuanzhi, full of rage, sent out one general, Deng Mao, to begin the battle. At once rode forward Zhang Fei, his serpent halberd poised to strike. One thrust and Deng Mao rolled off his horse, pierced through the heart. At this Cheng Yuanzhi himself whipped up his steed and rode forth with sword raised ready to slay Zhang Fei. But Guan Yu swung up his ponderous green-dragon saber and rode at Cheng Yuanzhi. At the sight, fear seized upon Cheng Yuanzhi, and before he could defend himself, the great saber fell, cutting him in halves.

Two heroes new to war's alarms,
Ride boldly forth to try their arms.
Their doughty deeds three kingdoms tell,
And poets sing how these befell.

Their leader fallen, the rebels threw away their weapons and fled. The official soldiers dashed in among them. Many thousands surrendered and the victory was complete. Thus this part of the rebellion was broken up.

On their return, Liu Yan personally met them and distributed rewards. But the next day, letters came from Imperial Protector Gong Jing of Qingzhou Region saying that the rebels were laying siege to the chief city and it was near falling. Help was needed quickly.

“I will go,” said Liu Bei as soon as he heard the news.

And he set out at once with his own soldiers, reinforced by a body of five thousand under Zhou Jing. The rebels, seeing help coming, at once attacked most fiercely. The relieving force being comparatively small could not prevail and retired some ten miles, where they made a camp.

“They are many and we but few,” said Liu Bei to his brothers. “We can only beat them by superior strategy.”

So they prepared an ambush. Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, each with a goodly party, went behind the hills, right and left, and there hid. When the gongs beat they were to move out to support the main army.

These preparations made, the drums rolled noisily for Liu Bei to advance. The rebels also came forward. But Liu Bei suddenly retired. Thinking this was their chance, the rebels pressed forward and were led over the hills. Then suddenly the gongs sounded for the ambush. Guan Yu and Zhang Fei poured out from right and left as Liu Bei faced around to meet the rebels. Under three-side attack, the rebels lost heavily and fled to the walls of Qingzhou City. But Imperial Protector Gong Jing led out an armed body to attack them, and the rebels were entirely defeated and many slain. Qingzhou was no longer in danger.

Though fierce as tigers soldiers be,
Battles are won by strategy.
A hero comes; he gains renown,
Already destined for a crown.

After the celebrations in honor of victory were over, Commander Zhou Jing proposed to return to Youzhou.

But Liu Bei said, “We are informed that Imperial Commander Lu Zhi has been struggling with a horde of rebels led by Zhang Jue at Guangzong. Lu Zhi was once my teacher, and I want to go help him.”

So Liu Bei and Zhou Jing separated, and the three brothers with their troops made their way to Guangzong. They found Lu Zhi’s camp, were admitted to his presence, and declared the reason of their coming. The Commander received them with great joy, and they remained with him while he made his plans.

At that time Zhang Jue’s one hundred fifty thousand troops and Lu Zhi’s fifty thousand troops were facing each other. Neither had had any success.

Lu Zhi said to Liu Bei, “I am able to surround these rebels here. But the other two brothers, Zhang Ba and Zhang Lian, are strongly entrenched opposite Huangfu Song and Zhu Jun at Yingchuan. I will give you a thousand more troops, and with these you can go to find out what is happening, and we can then settle the moment for concerted attack.”

So Liu Bei set off and marched as quickly as possible to Yingchuan. At that time the imperial troops were attacking with success, and the rebels had retired upon Changshe. They had encamped among the thick grass.

Seeing this, Huangfu Song said to Zhu Jun, “The rebels are camping in the field. We can attack them by fire.”

So the Imperial Commanders bade every man cut a bundle of dry grass and laid an ambush. That night the wind blew a gale, and at the second watch they started a blaze. At the same time Huangfu Song and Zhu Jun’s troops attacked the rebels and set their camp on fire. The flames rose to the very heaven. The rebels were thrown into great confusion. There was no time to saddle horses or don armor: They fled in all directions.

The battle continued until dawn. Zhang Lian and Zhang Ba, with a group of flying rebels, found a way of escape. But suddenly a troop of soldiers with crimson banners appeared to oppose them. Their leader was a man of medium stature with small eyes and a long beard. He was Cao Cao, a Beijuo man, holding the rank of Cavalry Commander. His father was Cao Song, but he was not really a Cao. Cao Song had been born to the Xiahou family, but he had been brought up by Eunuch Cao Teng and had taken this family name.

As a young man Cao Cao had been fond of hunting and delighted in songs and dancing. He was resourceful and full of guile. An uncle, seeing the young fellow so unsteady, used to get angry with him and told his father of his misdeeds. His father remonstrated with him.

But Cao Cao made equal to the occasion. One day, seeing his uncle coming, he fell to the ground in a pretended fit. The uncle alarmed ran to tell his father, who came, and there was the youth in most perfect health.

“But your uncle said you were in a fit. Are you better?” said his father.

“I have never suffered from fits or any such illness,” said Cao Cao. “But I have lost my uncle’s affection, and he has deceived you.”

Thereafter, whatever the uncle might say of his faults, his father paid no heed. So the young man grew up licentious and uncontrolled.

A man of the time named Qiao Xuan said to Cao Cao, "Rebellion is at hand, and only a man of the greatest ability can succeed in restoring tranquillity. That man is yourself."

And He Yong of Nanyang said of him, "The dynasty of Han is about to fall. He who can restore peace is this man and only he."

Cao Cao went to inquire his future of a wise man of Runan named Xu Shao.

"What manner of man am I?" asked Cao Cao.

The seer made no reply, and again and again Cao Cao pressed the question.

Then Xu Shao replied, "In peace you are an able subject; in chaos you are a crafty hero!"

Cao Cao greatly rejoiced to hear this.

Cao Cao graduated at twenty and earned a reputation of piety and integrity. He began his career as Commanding Officer in a county within the Capital District. In the four gates of the city he guarded, he hung up clubs of various sorts, and he would punish any breach of the law whatever the rank of the offender. Now an uncle of Eunuch Jian Shuo was found one night in the streets with a sword and was arrested. In due course he was beaten. Thereafter no one dared to offend again, and Cao Cao's name became heard. Soon he became a magistrate of Dunqiu.

At the outbreak of the Yellow Scarves, Cao Cao held the rank of General and was given command of five thousand horse and foot to help fight at Yingchuan. He just happened to fall in with the newly defeated rebels whom he cut to pieces. Thousands were slain and endless banners and drums and horses were captured, together with huge sums of money. However, Zhang Ba and Zhang Lian got away; and after an interview with Huangfu Song, Cao Cao went in pursuit of them.

Meanwhile Liu Bei and his brothers were hastening toward Yingchuan, when they heard the din of battle and saw flames rising high toward the sky. But they arrived too late for the fighting. They saw Huangfu Song and Zhu Jun to whom they told the intentions of Lu Zhi.

"The rebel power is quite broken here," said the commanders, "but they will surely make for Guangzong to join Zhang Jue. You can do nothing better than hasten back."

The three brothers thus retraced their steps. Half way along the road they met a party of soldiers escorting a prisoner in a cage-cart. When they drew near, they saw the prisoner was no other than Lu Zhi, the man they were going to help. Hastily dismounting, Liu Bei asked what had happened.

Lu Zhi explained, "I had surrounded the rebels and was on the point of smashing them, when Zhang Jue employed some of his supernatural powers and prevented my victory. The court sent down Eunuch Zhuo Feng to inquire into my failure, and that official demanded a bribe. I told him how hard pressed we were and asked him where, in the circumstances, I could find a gift for him. He went away in wrath and reported that I was hiding behind my ramparts and would not give battle and that I disheartened my army. So I was superseded by Dong Zhuo, and I have to go to the capital to answer the charge."

This story put Zhang Fei into a rage. He was for slaying the escort and setting free Lu Zhi. But Liu Bei checked him.

"The government will take the due course," said Liu Bei. "You must not act hastily!"

And the escort and the three brothers went two ways.

It was useless to continue on that road to Guangzong, so Guan Yu proposed to go back to Zhuo, and they retook the road. Two days later they heard the thunder of battle behind some hills. Hastening to the top, they beheld the government soldiers suffering great loss, and they saw the countryside was full of Yellow Scarves. On the rebels' banners were the words Zhang Jue the Lord of Heaven written large.

"We will attack this Zhang Jue!" said Liu Bei to his brothers, and they galloped out to join in the battle.

Zhang Jue had worsted Dong Zhuo and was following up his advantage. He was in hot pursuit when the three brothers dashed into his army, threw his ranks into confusion, and drove him back fifteen miles. Then the brothers returned with the rescued general to his camp.

"What offices have you?" asked Dong Zhuo, when he had leisure to speak to the brothers.

"None," replied they.

And Dong Zhuo treated them with disrespect. Liu Bei retired calmly, but Zhang Fei was furious.

"We have just rescued this menial in a bloody fight," cried Zhang Fei, "and now he is rude to us! Nothing but his death can slake my anger."

Zhang Fei stamped toward Dong Zhuo's tent, holding firmly a sharp sword.

As it was in olden time so it is today,
The simple wight may merit well,
Officialdom holds sway;

Zhang Fei, the blunt and hasty,
Where can you find his peer?
But slaying the ungrateful would
Mean many deaths a year.

Dong Zhuo's fate will be unrolled in later chapters.

Chapter 41

Liu Bei Leads His People Over The River; Zhao Zilong Rescues The Child Lord At Dangyang.

The last chapter closed with the attack made by Zhang Fei as soon as his brother had let loose the waters on the doomed army. He met with Xu Chu and a combat began, but a fight with such a warrior was not to Xu Chu's taste and he ran away. Zhang Fei followed till he came upon Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang, and the three went upstream till they came to the boats that had been prepared by Liu Feng and Mi Fang, when they all crossed over and marched toward Fancheng. As soon as they disembarked, Zhuge Liang ordered the boats and rafts to be burned.

Cao Ren gathered in the remnants of his army and camped at Xinye, while his colleague Cao Hong went to tell their lord the evil tidings of defeat.

"How dare he, this rustic Zhuge Liang!" exclaimed Cao Cao angrily.

Cao Cao then hastily sent an overwhelming army to camp near the place and gave orders for enormous works against the city, leveling hills and turning rivers to launch a violent assault on Fancheng from every side at once.

Then Liu Ye came in to see his lord and said, "Sir, you are new to this region, and you should win over the people's hearts. Liu Bei has moved all the people from Xinye to Fancheng. If we march through the country, the people will be ground to powder. It would be well to call upon Liu Bei first to surrender, which will prove to the people that you have a care for them. If he yields, then we get Jingzhou without fighting."

Cao Cao agreed and asked who would be a suitable messenger. Liu Ye suggested Xu Shu.

"He is a close friend of Liu Bei, and he is here with the army," said Liu Ye.

"But he will not come back," objected Cao Cao.

"If he does not return, he will be a laughing stock to the whole world. He will come back."

Xu Shu was sent for, and Cao Cao said, "My first intention was to level Fancheng with the ground. But out of pity for its people, you may carry an offer to Liu Bei that if he will surrender, he will not only not be punished but he shall be given rank. But if he holds on his present misguided course, the whole of his followers shall be destroyed. Now you are an honest man and so I confide this mission to you, and I trust you will not disappoint me."

Xu Shu said nothing but accepted his orders and went to the city, where he was received by both Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang. They enjoyed a talk over old times before Xu Shu mentioned the object of his mission.

Then he said, "Cao Cao has sent me to invite you to surrender, thereby making a bid for popularity. But you ought also to know that he intends to attack the city from every point, that he is damming up the White River's waters to be sent against you, and I fear you will not be able to hold the city. You ought to prepare."

Liu Bei asked Xu Shu to remain with them, but Xu Shu said, "That is impossible, for all the world would ridicule me if I stayed. My old mother is dead, and I never forget my resentment. My body may be over there, but I swear never to form a plan for Cao Cao. You have the Sleeping Dragon to help you and need have no anxiety about the ultimate achievement of your undertaking. But I must go."

And Xu Shu took his leave. Liu Bei felt he could not press his friend to stay. Xu Shu returned to Cao Cao's camp and reported that Liu Bei had no intention of surrender. This angered Cao Cao who gave orders to begin the advance and siege.

When Liu Bei asked what Zhuge Liang meant to do, Zhuge Liang replied, "We shall abandon Fancheng and take Xiangyang."

"But what of the people who have followed us? They cannot be abandoned."

"You can tell them to do as they wish. They may come if they like, or remain here."

They sent Guan Yu to prepare boats and told Sun Qian to proclaim to the people that Cao Cao was coming, that the city could not be defended, and those who wished to do so might cross the river with the army.

All the people cried, "We will follow the Prince even if it be to death!"

They started at once, some lamenting, some weeping, the young helping the aged, parents leading their children, the strong soldiers carrying the women. As the crowds crossed the river, from both banks arose the sound of lamentation.

Liu Bei was much affected as he saw all this from the boat.

“Why was I ever born,” said he, “to be the cause of all this misery to the people?”

He made to leap into the river, but they held him back. All were deeply sympathetic. When the boat reached the southern shore, he looked back at the weeping crowds waiting still on the other bank and was again moved to tears. He bade Guan Yu hasten the boats before he mounted and rode on.

When Xiangyang came in sight, they saw many flags flying on the walls and that the moat was protected by barbed barriers.

Liu Bei checked his horse and called out, “Liu Zong, good nephew! I only wish to save the people and nothing more. I pray you quickly open the gates.”

But Liu Zong was too frightened to appear. Cai Mao and Zhang Yun went up to one of the fighting towers and ordered the soldiers to shoot arrows down on those without the walls. The people gazed up at the towers and wept aloud.

Suddenly there appeared a general, with a small following, who cried out, “Cai Mao and Zhang Yun are two traitors. The princely Liu Bei is a most upright man and has come here to preserve his people. Why do you repulse him?”

All looked at this man. He was of eight-span height, with a face dark brown as a ripe date. He was from Yiyang and named Wei Yan. At that moment he looked very terrible, whirling his sword as if about to slice up the gate guards. They lost no time in throwing open the gate and dropping the bridge.

“Come in, Uncle Liu Bei,” cried Wei Yan, “and bring your army to slay these traitors!”

Zhang Fei plunged forward to take Cai Mao and Zhang Yun, but he was checked by his brother, who said, “Do not frighten the people!”

Thus Wei Yan let in Liu Bei. As soon as he entered, he saw a general galloping up with a few men.

The newcomer yelled, “Wei Yan, you nobody! How dare you create trouble? Do you not know me, General Wen Ping?”

Wei Yan turned angrily, set his spear, and galloped forward to attack the general. The soldiers joined in the fray and the noise of battle rose to the skies.

“I wanted to preserve the people, and I am only causing them injury,” cried Liu Bei distressed. “I do not wish to enter the city.”

“Jiangling is an important point. We will first take that as a place to dwell in,” said Zhuge Liang.

“That pleases me greatly,” said Liu Bei.

So they led the people thither and away from Xiangyang. Many of the inhabitants of that city took advantage of the confusion to escape, and they also joined themselves to Liu Bei.

Meanwhile, within the inhospitable city, Wei Yan and Wen Ping fought. The battle continued for four or five watches, all through the middle of the day, and nearly all the combatants fell. Then Wei Yan got away. As he could not find Liu Bei, he rode off to Changsha and sought an asylum with Governor Han Xuan.

Liu Bei wandered away from the city of Xiangyang that had refused shelter. Soldiers and people, his following numbered more than a hundred thousand. The carts numbered scores of thousands, and the burden bearers were innumerable. Their road led them past the tomb of Liu Biao, and Liu Bei turned aside to bow at the grave.

He lamented, saying, “Shameful is thy brother, lacking both in virtue and in talents. I refused to bear the burden you wished to lay upon me, wherein I was wrong. But the people committed no sin. I pray your glorious spirit descend and rescue these people.”

His prayer was fraught with sorrow, and all those about him wept.

Just then a scout rode up with the news that Fancheng was already taken by Cao Cao and that his army were preparing boats and rafts to cross the river.

The generals of Liu Bei said, “Jiangling is a defensible shelter, but with this crowd we can only advance very slowly, and when can we reach the city? If Cao Cao pursue, we shall be in a parlous state. Our counsel is to leave the people to their fate for a time and press on to Jiangling.”

But Liu Bei wept, saying, “The success of every great enterprise depends upon humanity. How can I abandon these people who have joined me?”

Those who heard him repeat this noble sentiment were greatly affected.

In time of stress his heart was tender toward the people,
And he wept as he went down into the ship,
Moving the hearts of soldiers to sympathy.
Even today, in the countryside,
Fathers and elders recall the Princely One's kindness.

The progress of Liu Bei, with the crowd of people in his train, was very slow.

“The pursuers will be upon us quickly,” said Zhuge Liang. “Let us send Guan Yu to Jiangxia for succor. Liu Qi should be told to bring soldiers and prepare boats for us at Jiangling.”

Liu Bei agreed to this and wrote a letter which he sent by the hands of Guan Yu and Sun Qian and five hundred troops. Zhang Fei was put in command of the rear guard. Zhao Zilong was told to guard Liu Bei’s family, while the others ordered the march of the people.

They only traveled three or four miles daily and the halts were frequent.

Meanwhile Cao Cao was at Fancheng, whence he sent troops over the river toward Xiangyang. He summoned Liu Zong, but Liu Zong was too afraid to answer the call. No persuasion could get him to go.

Wang Wei said to him privately, “Now you can overcome Cao Cao if you are wise. Since you have announced surrender and Liu Bei has gone away, Cao Cao will relax his precautions, and you can catch him unawares. Send a well-prepared but unexpected force to waylay him in some commanding position, and the thing is done. If you were to take Cao Cao prisoner, your fame would run throughout the empire, and the land would be yours for the taking. This is a sort of opportunity that does not recur, and you should not miss it.”

The young man consulted Cai Mao, who called Wang Wei an evil counselor and spoke to him harshly.

“You are mad! You know nothing and understand nothing of destiny,” said Cai Mao.

Wang Wei angrily retorted, saying, “Cai Mao is the betrayer of the country, and I wish I could eat him alive!”

The quarrel waxed deadly, and Cai Mao wanted to slay Wang Wei. But eventually peace was restored by Kuai Yue.

Then Cai Mao and Zhang Yun went to Fancheng to see Cao Cao.

Cai Mao was by instinct specious and flattering, and when his host asked concerning the resources of Jingzhou, he replied, “There are fifty thousand of horse, one hundred fifty thousand of foot, and eighty thousand of marines. Most of the money and grain are at Jiangling. The rest is stored at various places. There are ample supplies for a year.”

“How many war vessels are there? Who is in command?” said Cao Cao.

“The ships, of all sizes, number seven thousands, and we two are the commanders.”

Upon this Cao Cao conferred upon Cai Mao the title of the Lord Who Controls the South, and Supreme Admiral of the Naval Force; and Zhang Yun was his Vice-Admiral with the title of the Lord Who Brings Obedience.

When they went to thank Cao Cao for these honors, he told them, saying, “I am about to propose to the Throne that Liu Biao’s son should be perpetual Imperial Protector of Jingzhou in succession to his late father.”

With this promise for their young master and the honors for themselves, they retired.

Then Xun You asked Cao Cao, “Why these two evident self-seekers and flatterers have been treated so generously?”

Cao Cao replied, “Do I not know all about them? Only in the north, where we have been, we know very little of war by water, and these two men do. I want their help for the present. When my end is achieved, I can do as I like with them.”

Liu Zong was highly delighted when his two chief supporters returned with the promise Cao Cao had given them. Soon after he gave up his seal and military commission and proceeded to welcome Cao Cao, who received him very graciously.

Cao Cao next proceeded to camp near Xiangyang. The populace, led by Cai Mao and Zhang Yun, welcomed him with burning incense, and he on his part put forth proclamations couched in comforting terms.

Cao Cao presently entered the city and took his seat in the residence in state. Then he summoned Kuai Yue and said to him graciously, “I do not rejoice so much at gaining Jingzhou as at meeting you, friend Kuai Yue.”

Cao Cao made Kuai Yue Governor of Jiangling and Lord of Fancheng; Wang Can, Fu Xuan, and Kuai Yue’s other adherents were all ennobled. Liu Zong became Imperial Protector of Qingzhou in the north and was ordered to proceed to his region forthwith.

Liu Zong was greatly frightened and said, “I have no wish to become an actual official. I wish to remain in the place where my father and mother live.”

Said Cao Cao, “Your protectorship is quite near the capital, and I have sent you there as a full official to remove you from the intrigues of this place.”

In vain Liu Zong declined the honors thus thrust upon him: He was compelled to go and he departed, taking his mother with him. Of his friends, only Wang Wei accompanied him. Some of his late officers escorted him as far as the river and then took their leave.

Then Cao Cao called his trusty officer Yu Jin and said, “Follow Liu Zong and put him and his mother to death. Our worries are thus removed.”

Yu Jin followed the small party.

When he drew near he shouted, “I have an order from the great Prime Minister to put you both to death, mother and son! You may as well submit quietly.”

Lady Cai threw her arms about her son, lifted up her voice and wept. Yu Jin bade his soldiers get on with their bloody work. Only Wang Wei made any attempt to save his mistress, and he was soon killed. The two, mother and son, were soon finished, and Yu Jin returned to report his success. He was richly rewarded.

Next Cao Cao sent to discover and seize the family of Zhuge Liang, but they had already disappeared. Zhuge Liang had moved them to the Three Gorges. It was much to Cao Cao's disgust that the search was fruitless.

So Xiangyang was settled. Then Xun You proposed a further advance.

He said, "Jiangling is an important place, and very rich. If Liu Bei gets it, it will be difficult to dislodge him."

"How could I have overlooked that?" said Cao Cao.

Then he called upon the officers of Xiangyang for one who could lead the way. They all came except Wen Ping.

Cao Cao sent for him and soon he came also.

"Why are you late?" asked Cao Cao.

Wen Ping said, "To be a minister and see one's master lose his own boundaries is most shameful. Such a person has no face to show to anyone else, and I was too ashamed to come."

His tears fell fast as he finished this speech. Cao Cao admired his loyal conduct and rewarded him with office of Governorship of Jiangxia and a title of Lordship, and also bade him open the way.

The spies returned and said, "Liu Bei is hampered by the crowds of people who have followed him. He can proceed only three or four miles daily, and he is only one hundred miles away."

Cao Cao decided to take advantage of Liu Bei's plight, so he chose out five thousand of tried horsemen and sent them after the cavalcade, giving them a limit of a day and a night to come up therewith. The main army would follow.

As has been said Liu Bei was traveling with a huge multitude of followers, to guard whom he had taken what precautions were possible. Zhang Fei was in charge of the rear guard, and Zhao Zilong was to protect his lord's family. Guan Yu had been sent to Jiangxia.

One day Zhuge Liang came in and said, "There is as yet no news from Jiangxia. There must be some difficulties."

"I wish that you yourself would go there," said Liu Bei. "Liu Qi would remember your former kindness to him and consent to anything you proposed."

Zhuce Liang said he would go and set out with Liu Feng, the adopted son of Liu Bei, taking an escort of five hundred troops.

A few days after, while on the march in company with three of his commanders—Jian Yong, Mi Zhu, and Mi Fang—a sudden whirlwind rose just in front of Liu Bei, and a huge column of dust shot up into the air hiding the face of the sun.

Liu Bei was frightened and asked, "What might that portend?"

Jian Yong, who knew something of the mysteries of nature, took the auspices by counting secretly on his fingers.

Pale and trembling, he announced, "A calamity is threatening this very night. My lord must leave the people to their fate and flee quickly."

"I cannot do that," said Liu Bei.

"If you allow your pity to overcome your judgment, then misfortune is very near," said Jian Yong.

Thus spoke Jian Yong to his lord, who then asked what place was near.

His people replied, "Dangyang is quite close, and there is a very famous mountain near it called Prospect Mountain."

Then Liu Bei bade them lead the way thither.

The season was late autumn, just changing to winter, and the icy wind penetrated to the very bones. As evening fell, long-drawn howls of misery were heard on every side. At the middle of the fourth watch, two hours after midnight, they heard a rumbling sound in the northwest. Liu Bei halted and placed himself at the head of his own guard of two thousand soldiers to meet whatever might come.

Presently Cao Cao's men appeared and made fierce onslaught. Defense was impossible, though Liu Bei fought desperately. By good fortune just at the crisis Zhang Fei came up, cut an alley through, rescued his brother, and got him away to the east. Presently they were stopped by Wen Ping.

"Turncoat! Can you still look humans in the face?" cried Liu Bei.

Wen Ping was overwhelmed with shame and led his troops away. Zhang Fei, now fighting, protected his brother till dawn.

By that time Liu Bei had got beyond the sound of battle, and there was time to rest. Only a few of his followers had been able to keep near him. He knew nothing of the fate of his officers or the people.

He lifted up his voice in lamentation, saying, "Myriads of living souls are suffering from love of me, and my officers and my loved ones are lost. One would be a graven image not to weep at such loss!"

Still plunged in sadness, presently he saw hurrying toward him Mi Fang, with an enemy's arrow still sticking in his face.

Mi Fang exclaimed, "Zhao Zilong has gone over to Cao Cao!"

Liu Bei angrily bade him be silent, crying, "Do you think I can believe that of my old friend?"

"Perhaps he has gone over," said Zhang Fei. "He must see that we are nearly lost and there are riches and honors on the other side."

"He has followed me faithfully through all my misfortunes. His heart is firm as a rock. No riches or honors would move him," said Liu Bei.

"I saw him go away northwest," said Mi Fang.

"Wait till I meet him," said Zhang Fei. "If I run against him, I will kill him!"

"Beware how you doubt him," said Liu Bei. "Have you forgotten the circumstances under which your brother Guan Yu had to slay Cai Yang to ease your doubts of him? Zhao Zilong's absence is due to good reason wherever he has gone, and he would never abandon me."

But Zhang Fei was not convinced. Then he, with a score of his men, rode to the Long Slope Bridge. Seeing a wood near the bridge, an idea suddenly struck him. He bade his followers cut branches from the trees, tie them to the tails of the horses, and ride to and fro so as to raise a great dust as though an army were concealed in the wood. He himself took up his station on the bridge facing the west with spear set ready for action. So he kept watch.

Now Zhao Zilong, after fighting with the enemy from the fourth watch till daylight, could see no sign of his lord and, moreover, had lost his lord's family.

He thought bitterly within himself, "My master confided to me his family and the child lord Liu Shan; and I have lost them. How can I look him in the face? I can only go now and fight to the death. Whatever happen, I must go to seek the women and my lord's son."

Turning about he found he had but some forty followers left. He rode quickly to and fro among the scattered soldiers seeking the lost women. The lamentations of the people about him were enough to make heaven and earth weep. Some had been wounded by arrows, others by spears; they had thrown away their children, abandoned their wives, and were flying they knew not whither in crowds.

Presently Zhao Zilong saw a man lying in the grass and recognized him as Jian Yong.

"Have you seen the two mothers?" cried he.

Jian Yong replied, "They left their carriage and ran away taking the child lord Liu Shan in their arms. I followed but on the slope of the hill I was wounded and fell from my horse. The horse was stolen. I could fight no longer, and I lay down here."

Zhao Zilong put his colleague on the horse of one of his followers, told off two soldiers to support Jian Yong, and bade Jian Yong ride to their lord and tell him of the loss.

"Say," said Zhao Zilong, "that I will seek the lost ones in heaven or hell, through good or evil. And if I find them not, I will die in the battlefield."

Then Zhao Zilong rode off toward the Long Slope Bridge.

As he went, a voice called out, "General Zhao Zilong, where are you going?"

"Who are you?" said Zhao Zilong, pulling up.

"One of the Princely One's carriage guards. I am wounded."

"Do you know anything of the two ladies?"

"Not very long ago I saw Lady Gan go south with a party of other women. Her hair was down, and she was barefooted"

Hearing this, without even another glance at the speaker, Zhao Zilong put his horse at full gallop toward the south. Soon he saw a small crowd of people, male and female, walking hand in hand.

"Is Lady Gan among you!" he called out.

A woman in the rear of the party looked up at him and uttered a loud cry.

He slipped off his steed, stuck his spear in the sand, and wept, "It was my fault that you were lost. But where are Lady Mi and our child lord?"

Lady Gan replied, "She and I were forced to abandon our carriage and mingle with the crowd on foot. Then a band of soldiers came up, and we were separated. I do not know where they are. I ran for my life."

As she spoke, a howl of distress rose from the crowd of fugitives, for a thousand of soldiers appeared. Zhao Zilong recovered his spear and mounted ready for action. Presently he saw among the soldiers a prisoner bound upon a horse, and the prisoner was Mi Zhu. Behind Mi Zhu followed a general gripping a huge sword. The troops belonged to the army of Cao Ren, and the general was Chunyu Dao. Having captured Mi Zhu, he was just taking him to his chief as a proof of his prowess.

Zhao Zilong shouted and rode at the captor who was speedily slain by a spear thrust and his captive was set free. Then taking two of the horses, Zhao Zilong set Lady Gan on one and Mi Zhu took the other. They rode away toward Long Slope Bridge.

But there, standing grim on the bridge, was Zhang Fei.

As soon as he saw Zhao Zilong, he called out, "Zhao Zilong, why have you betrayed our lord?"

"I fell behind because I was seeking the ladies and our child lord," said Zhao Zilong. "What do you mean by talking of betrayal?"

"If it had not been that Jian Yong arrived before you and told me the story, I should hardly have spared you."

"Where is the master?" said Zhao Zilong.

"Not far away, in front there," said Zhang Fei.

"Conduct Lady Gan to him. I am going to look for Lady Mi," said Zhao Zilong to his companion, and he turned back along the road by which he had come.

Before long he met a leader armed with an iron spear and carrying a sword slung across his back, riding a curvetting steed, and leading ten other horsemen. Without uttering a word Zhao Zilong rode straight toward him and engaged. At the first pass Zhao Zilong disarmed his opponent and brought him to earth. His followers galloped away.

This fallen officer was no other than Xiahou En, Cao Cao's sword-bearer. And the sword on Xiahou En's back was his master's. Cao Cao had two swords, one called "Trust of God" and the other "Blue Blade." Trust of God was the weapon Cao Cao usually wore at his side, the other being carried by his sword-bearer. The Blue Blade would cut clean through iron as though it were mud, and no sword had so keen an edge.

Before Zhao Zilong thus fell in with Xiahou En, the latter was simply plundering, depending upon the authority implied by his office. Least of all thought he of such sudden death as met he at Zhao Zilong's hands.

So Zhao Zilong got possession of a famous sword. The name Blue Blade was chased in gold characters so that he recognized its value at once. He stuck it in his belt and again plunged into the press. Just as he did so, he turned his head and saw he had not a single follower left. He was quite alone.

Nevertheless not for a single instant thought he of turning back. He was too intent upon his quest. To and fro, back and forth, he rode questioning this person and that.

At length a man said, "A woman with a child in her arms, and wounded in the thigh so that she cannot walk, is lying over there through that hole in the wall."

Zhao Zilong rode to look and there, beside an old well behind the broken wall of a burned house, sat the mother clasping the child to her breast and weeping.

Zhao Zilong was on his knees before her in a moment.

"My child will live then since you are here," cried Lady Mi. "Pity him, O General! Protect him, for he is the only son of his father's flesh and blood. Take him to his father, and I can die content."

"It is my fault that you have suffered," replied Zhao Zilong. "But it is useless to say more. I pray you take my horse, while I will walk beside and protect you till we get clear."

She replied, "I may not do that. What would you do without a steed? But the boy here I confide to your care. I am badly wounded and cannot hope to live. Pray take him and go your way. Do not trouble more about me."

"I hear shouting," said Zhao Zilong. "The soldiers will be upon us again in a moment. Pray mount quickly!"

"But really I cannot move," she said. "Do not let there be a double loss!"

And she held out the child toward him as she spoke.

"Take the child!" cried Lady Mi. "His life and safety are in your hands."

Again and again Zhao Zilong besought her to get on his horse, but she would not.

The shouting drew nearer and nearer, Zhao Zilong spoke harshly, saying, "If you will not do what I say, what will happen when the soldiers come up?"

She said no more. Throwing the child on the ground, she turned over and threw herself into the old well. And there she perished.

The warrior relies upon the strength of his charger,
Afoot, how could he bear to safety his young prince?
Brave mother! Who died to preserve the son of her husband's line;
Heroine was she, bold and decisive!

Seeing that Lady Mi had resolved the question by dying, there was nothing more to be done. Zhao Zilong pushed over the wall to fill the well, and thus making a grave for the lady. Then he loosened his armor, let down the heart-protecting mirror, and placed the child in his breast. This done he slung his spear and remounted.

Zhao Zilong had gone but a short distance, when he saw a horde of enemy led by Yan Ming, one of Cao Hong's generals. This warrior used a double edged, three pointed weapon and he offered battle. However, Zhao Zilong disposed of him after a very few bouts and dispersed his troops.

As the road cleared before him, Zhao Zilong saw another detachment barring his way. At the head of this

was a general exalted enough to display a banner with his name Zhang He of Hejian. Zhao Zilong never waited to parley but attacked. However, this was a more formidable antagonist, and half a score bouts found neither any nearer defeat. But Zhao Zilong, with the child in his bosom, could only fight with the greatest caution, and so he decided to flee.

Zhang He pursued, and as Zhao Zilong thought only of thrashing his steed to get away, and little of the road, suddenly he went crashing into a pit. On came his pursuer, spear at poise. Suddenly a brilliant flash of light seemed to shoot out of the pit, and the fallen horse leapt with it into the air and was again on firm earth.

A bright glory surrounds the child of the imperial line, now in danger,
The powerful charger forces his way through the press of battle,
Bearing to safety him who was destined to the throne two score years and two;
And the general thus manifested his godlike courage.

This apparition frightened Zhang He, who abandoned the pursuit forthwith, and Zhao Zilong rode off. Presently he heard shouts behind, "Zhao Zilong, Zhao Zilong, stop!" and at the same time he saw ahead of him two generals who seemed disposed to dispute his way.

Ma Yan and Zhang Zi following and Jiao Chu and Zhang Neng in front, his state seemed desperate, but Zhao Zilong quailed not.

As the men of Cao Cao came pressing on, Zhao Zilong drew Cao Cao's own sword to beat them off. Nothing could resist the blue blade sword. Armor, clothing, it went through without effort and blood gushed forth in fountains wherever it struck. So the four generals were soon beaten off, and Zhao Zilong was once again free.

Now Cao Cao from a hilltop of the Prospect Mountain saw these deeds of derring-do and a general showing such valor that none could withstand him, so Cao Cao asked of his followers whether any knew the man. No one recognized him.

So Cao Hong galloped down into the plain and shouted out, "We should hear the name of the warrior!"

"I am Zhao Zilong of Changshan!" replied Zhao Zilong.

Cao Hong returned and told his lord, who said, "A very tiger of a leader! I must get him alive."

Whereupon he sent horsemen to all detachments with orders that no arrows were to be fired from an ambush at any point Zhao Zilong should pass: He was to be taken alive.

And so Zhao Zilong escaped most imminent danger, and Liu Shan's safety, bound up with his savior's, was also secured. On this career of slaughter which ended in safety, Zhao Zilong, bearing in his bosom the child lord Liu Shan, cut down two main banners, took three spears, and slew or wounded of Cao Cao's generals half a hundred, all men of renown.

Blood dyed the fighting robe and crimsoned his buff coat;
None dared engage the terrible warrior at Dangyang;
In the days of old lived the brave Zhao Zilong,
Who fought in the battlefield for his lord in danger.

Having thus fought his way out of the press, Zhao Zilong lost no time in getting away from the battle field. His white battle robe had turned red, soaking in blood.

On his way, near the rise of the hills, he met with two other bodies of troops under two brothers, Zhong Jin and Zhong Shen. One of these was armed with a massive ax, the other a halberd.

As soon as they saw Zhao Zilong, they knew him and shouted, "Quickly dismount and be bound!"

He has only escaped from the tiger cave,
To risk the dragon pool's sounding wave.

How Zhao Zilong escaped will be next related.

Chapter 42

Screaming Zhang Fei Triumphs At Long Slope Bridge; Defeated Liu Bei Marches To Hanjin.

As related in the last chapter two generals appeared in front of Zhao Zilong, who rode at them with his spear ready for a thrust. Zhong Jin was leading, flourishing his battle-ax. Zhao Zilong engaged and very soon unhorsed

him. Then Zhao Zilong galloped away. Zhong Shen rode up behind ready with his halberd, and his horse's nose got so close to the other's tail that Zhao Zilong could see in his armor the reflection of the play of Zhong Shen's weapon. Then suddenly, and without warning, Zhao Zilong wheeled round his horse so that he faced his pursuer, and their two steeds struck breast to breast. With his spear in his left hand, Zhao Zilong warded off the halberd strokes, and in his right he swung the blue blade sword. One slash and he had cut through both helmet and head. Zhong Shen fell to the ground, a corpse with only half a head on his body. His followers fled, and Zhao Zilong retook the road toward Long Slope Bridge.

But in his rear arose another tumultuous shouting, seeming to rend the very sky, and Wen Ping came up behind. However, although the man was weary and his steed spent, Zhao Zilong got close to the bridge where he saw standing, all ready for any fray, Zhang Fei.

"Help me, Zhang Fei!" he cried and crossed the bridge.

"Hasten!" cried Zhang Fei, "I will keep back the pursuers!"

About seven miles from the bridge, Zhao Zilong saw Liu Bei with his followers reposing in the shade of some trees. He dismounted and drew near, weeping. The tears also started to Liu Bei's eyes when he saw his commander.

Still panting from his exertions, Zhao Zilong gasped out, "My fault—death is too light a punishment. Lady Mi was severely wounded. She refused my horse and threw herself into a well. She is dead, and all I could do was to fill in the well with the rubbish that lay around. But I placed the babe in the breast of my fighting robe and have won my way out of the press of battle. Thanks to the little lord's grand luck I have escaped. At first he cried a good deal, but for some time now he has not stirred or made a sound. I fear I may not have saved his life after all."

Then Zhao Zilong opened his robe and looked: The child was fast asleep.

"Happily, Sir, your son is unhurt," said Zhao Zilong as he drew him forth and presented him in both hands.

Liu Bei took the child but threw it aside angrily, saying, "To preserve that suckling I very nearly lost a great general!"

Zhao Zilong picked up the child again and, weeping, said, "Were I ground to powder, I could not prove my gratitude."

From out Cao Cao's host a tiger rushed,
His wish but to destroy;
Though Liu Bei's consort lost her life,
Zhao Zilong preserved her boy.
"Too great the risk you ran to save
This child," the father cried.
To show he rated Zhao Zilong high,
He threw his son aside.

Wen Ping and his company pursued Zhao Zilong till they saw Zhang Fei's bristling mustache and fiercely glaring eyes before them. There he was seated on his battle steed, his hand grasping his terrible serpent spear, guarding the bridge. They also saw great clouds of dust rising above the trees and concluded they would fall into an ambush if they ventured across the bridge. So they stopped the pursuit, not daring to advance further.

In a little time Cao Ren, Xiahou Dun, Xiahou Yuan, Li Dian, Yue Jing, Zhang Liao, Xu Chu, Zhang He, and other generals of Cao Cao came up, but none dared advance, frightened not only by Zhang Fei's fierce look, but lest they should become victims of a ruse of Zhuge Liang. As they came up, they formed a line on the west side, halting till they could inform their lord of the position.

As soon as the messengers arrived and Cao Cao heard about it, he mounted and rode to the bridge to see for himself. Zhang Fei's fierce eye scanning the hinder position of the army opposite him saw the silken umbrella, the axes and banners coming along, and concluded that Cao Cao came to see for himself how matters stood.

So in a mighty voice he shouted: "I am Zhang Fei of Yan. Who dares fight with me?"

At the sound of this thunderous voice, a terrible quaking fear seized upon Cao Cao, and he bade them take the umbrella away.

Turning to his followers, he said, "Guan Yu had said that his brother Zhang Fei was the sort of man to go through an army of a hundred legions and take the head of its commander-in-chief, and do it easily. Now here is this terror in front of us, and we must be careful."

As he finished speaking, again that terrible voice was heard, "I am Zhang Fei of Yan. Who dares fight with me?"

Cao Cao, seeing his enemy so fierce and resolute, was too frightened to think of anything but retreat.

Zhang Fei, seeing a movement going on in the rear, once again shook his spear and roared, "What mean you? You will not fight nor do you run away!"

This roar had scarcely begun when one of Cao Cao's staff, Xiahou Jie, reeled and fell from his horse terror-stricken, paralyzed with fear. The panic touched Cao Cao and spread to his whole surroundings, and he and his

staff galloped for their lives. They were as frightened as a suckling babe at a clap of thunder or a weak woodcutter at the roar of a tiger. Many threw away their spears, dropped their casques and fled, a wave of panic-stricken humanity, a tumbling mass of terrified horses. None thought of ought but flight, and those who ran trampled the bodies of fallen comrades under foot.

Zhang Fei was wrathful; and who dared
To accept his challenge? Fierce he glared;
His thunderous voice rolled out, and then
In terror fled Cao Cao's armed soldiers.

Panic-stricken Cao Cao galloped westward with the rest, thinking of nothing but getting away. He lost his head-dress, and his loosened hair streamed behind him. Presently Zhang Liao and Xu Chu came up with him and seized his bridle; fear had deprived him of all self-control.

"Do not be frightened," said Zhang Liao. "After all Zhang Fei is but one man and not worthy of extravagant fear. If you will only return and attack, you will capture your enemy."

That time Cao Cao had somewhat overcome his panic and become reasonable. Two generals were ordered back to the bridge to reconnoiter.

Zhang Fei saw the disorderly rout of the enemy but he dared not pursue. However, he bade his score or so of dust-raising followers to cut loose the branches from their horses' tails and come to help destroy the bridge. This done he went to report to his brother and told him of the destruction of the bridge.

"Brave as you are, brother, and no one is braver, but you are no strategist," said Liu Bei.

"What mean you, brother?"

"Cao Cao is very deep. You are no match for him. The destruction of the bridge will bring him in pursuit."

"If he ran away at a yell of mine, think you he will dare return?"

"If you had left the bridge, he would have thought there was an ambush and would not have dared to pass it. Now the destruction of the bridge tells him we are weak and fearful, and he will pursue. He does not mind a broken bridge. His legions could fill up the biggest rivers that we could get across."

So orders were given to march, and they went by a bye-road which led diagonally to Hanjin by the road of Minyang.

The two generals sent by Cao Cao to reconnoiter near Long Slope Bridge returned, saying, "The bridge has been destroyed. Zhang Fei has left."

"Then he is afraid," said Cao Cao.

Cao Cao at once gave orders to set ten thousand men at work on three floating bridges to be finished that night.

Li Dian said, "I fear this is one of the wiles of Zhuge Liang. So be careful."

"Zhang Fei is just a bold warrior, but there is no guile about him," said Cao Cao.

He gave orders for immediate advance.

Liu Bei was making all speed to Hanjin. Suddenly there appeared in his track a great cloud of dust whence came loud rolls of drums and shoutings.

Liu Bei was dismayed and said, "Before us rolls the Great River; behind is the pursuer. What hope is there for us?"

But he bade Zhao Zilong organize a defense.

Now Cao Cao in an order to his army had said, "Liu Bei is a fish in the fish kettle, a tiger in the pit. Catch him this time, or the fish will get back to the sea and the tiger escape to the mountains. Therefore every general must use his best efforts to press on."

In consequence every leader bade those under him hasten forward. And they were pressing on at great speed, when suddenly a body of soldiers appeared from the hills and a voice cried, "I have waited here a long time!"

The leader who had shouted this bore in his hand the green-dragon saber and rode Red Hare, for indeed it was no other than Guan Yu. He had gone to Jiangxia for help and had returned with a whole legion of ten thousand. Having heard of the battle, he had taken this very road to intercept pursuit.

As soon as Guan Yu appeared, Cao Cao stopped and said to his officers, "Here we are, tricked again by that Zhuge Liang!"

Without more ado he ordered a retreat. Guan Yu followed him some three miles and then drew off to act as guard to his elder brother on his way to the river. There boats were ready, and Liu Bei and family went on board. When all were settled comfortably in the boat, Guan Yu asked where was his sister, the second wife of his brother, Lady Mi. Then Liu Bei told him the story of Dangyang.

"Alas!" said Guan Yu. "Had you taken my advice that day of the hunting in Xutian, we should have escaped the misery of this day."

“But,” said Liu Bei, “on that day it was ‘Ware damaged when pelting rats.’”

Just as Liu Bei spoke, he heard war drums on the south bank. A fleet of boats, thick as a flight of ants, came running up with swelling sails before the fair wind. He was alarmed.

The boats came nearer. There Liu Bei saw the white clad figure of a man wearing a silver helmet who stood in the prow of the foremost ship.

The leader cried, “Are you all right, my uncle? I am very guilty.”

It was Liu Qi. He bowed low as the ship passed, saying, “I heard you were in danger from Cao Cao, and I have come to aid you.”

Liu Bei welcomed Liu Qi with joy, and his soldiers joined in with the main body, and the whole fleet sailed on, while they told each other their adventures.

Unexpectedly in the southwest there appeared a line of fighting ships swishing up before a fair wind.

Liu Qi said, “All my troops are here, and now there is an enemy barring the way. If they are not Cao Cao’s ships, they must be from the South Land. We have a poor chance. What now?”

Liu Bei went to the prow and gazed at them. Presently he made out a figure in a turban and Daoist robe sitting in the bows of one of the boats and knew it to be Zhuge Liang. Behind him stood Sun Qian.

When they were quite near, Liu Bei asked Zhuge Liang how he came to be there.

And Zhuge Liang reported what he had done, saying, “When I reached Jiangxia, I sent Guan Yu to land at Hanjin with reinforcements, for I feared pursuit from Cao Cao and knew that road you would take instead of Jiangling. So I prayed your nephew to go to meet you, while I went to Xiakou to muster as many soldiers as possible.”

The new-comers added to their strength, and they began once more to consider how their powerful enemy might be overcome.

Said Zhuge Liang, “Xiakou is strong and a good strategic point. It is also rich and suited for a lengthy stay. I would ask you, my lord, to make it a permanent camp. Your nephew can go to Jiangxia to get the fleet in order and prepare weapons. Thus we can create two threatening angles for our position. If we all return to Jiangxia, the position will be weakened.”

Liu Qi replied, “The Directing Instructor’s words are excellent, but I wish rather my uncle stayed awhile in Jiangxia till the army was in thorough order. Then he could go to Xiakou.”

“You speak to the point, nephew,” replied Liu Bei.

Then leaving Guan Yu with five thousand troops at Xiakou he, with Zhuge Liang and his nephew, went to Jiangxia.

When Cao Cao saw Guan Yu with a force ready to attack, he feared lest a greater number were hidden away behind, so he stopped the pursuit. He also feared lest Liu Bei should take Jiangling, so he marched thither with all haste.

The two officers in command at Jingzhou City, Deng Yi and Liu Xin, had heard of the death of their lord Liu Zong at Xiangyang and, knowing that there was no chance of successful defense against Cao Cao’s armies, they led out the people of Jingzhou to the outskirts and offered submission. Cao Cao entered the city and, after restoring order and confidence, he released Han Song and gave him the dignified office of Director of Ambassadorial Receptions. He rewarded the others.

Then said Cao Cao, “Liu Bei has gone to Jiangxia and may ally himself with the South Land, and the opposition to me will be greater. Can he be destroyed?”

Xun You said, “The splendor of your achievements has spread wide. Therefore you might send a messenger to invite Sun Quan to a grand hunting party at Jiangxia, and you two could seize Liu Bei, share Jingzhou with Sun Quan, and make a solemn treaty. Sun Quan will be too frightened not to come over to you, and your end will be gained.”



IMAGE 7.6: THREE BROTHERS | Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei stand close together reading a scroll.

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Cao Cao agreed. He sent the letters by a messenger, and he prepared his army—horse and foot and marines. He had in all eight hundred thirty thousand troops, but he called them a million. The attack was to be by land and water at the same time.

The fleet advanced up the river in two lines. On the west it extended to Jingxia, on the east to Qichun. The stockades stretched one hundred miles.

The story of Cao Cao's movements and successes reached Sun Quan, then in camp at Chaisang. He assembled his strategists to decide on a scheme of defense.

Lu Su said, "Jingzhou is contiguous to our borders. It is strong and defensive, its people are rich. It is the sort of country that an emperor or a king should have. Liu Biao's recent death gives an excuse for me to be sent to convey condolence and, once there, I shall be able to talk over Liu Bei and the officers of the late Imperial Protector to combine with you against Cao Cao. If Liu Bei does as I wish, then success is yours."

Sun Quan thought this a good plan, so he had the necessary letters prepared, and the gifts, and sent Lu Su with them.

All this time Liu Bei was at Jiangxia where, with Zhuge Liang and Liu Qi, he was endeavoring to evolve a good plan of campaign.

Zhugé Liang said, "Cao Cao's power is too great for us to cope with. Let us go over to the South Land and ask help from Sun Quan. If we can set north and south at grips, we ought to be able to get some advantage from our intermediate position between them."

"But will they be willing to have anything to do with us?" said Liu Bei. "The South Land is a large and populous country, and Sun Quan has ambitions of his own."

Zhugé Liang replied, "Cao Cao with his army of a million holds the Han River and a half of the Great River. The South Land will certainly send to find out all possible about the position. Should any messenger come, I shall borrow a little boat and make a little trip over the river and trust to my little lithe tongue to set north and south at each other's throats. If the south wins, we will assist in destroying Cao Cao in order to get Jingzhou. If the north wins, we shall profit by the victory to get the South Land. So we shall get some advantage either way."

"That is a very fine view to take," said Liu Bei. "But how are you going to get hold of anyone from the South Land to talk to?"

Liu Bei's question was answered by the arrival of Lu Su, and as the ship touched the bank and the envoy came ashore, Zhugé Liang laughed, saying, "It is done!"

Turning to Liu Qi he asked, "When Sun Ce died, did your country send any condolences?"

"It is impossible there would be any mourning courtesies between them and us. We had caused the death of his father, Sun Jian."

"Then it is certain that this envoy does not come to present condolences but to spy out the land."

So he said to Liu Bei, "When Lu Su asks about the movements of Cao Cao, you will know nothing. If he presses the matter, say he can ask me."

Having thus prepared their scheme, they sent to welcome the envoy, who entered the city in mourning garb. The gifts having been accepted, Liu Qi asked Lu Su to meet Liu Bei. When the introductory ceremonies were over, the three men went to one of the inner chambers to drink a cup of wine.

Presently Lu Su said to Liu Bei, "By reputation I have known you a long time, Uncle Liu Bei, but till today I have not met you. I am very gratified at seeing you. You have been fighting Cao Cao, though, lately, so I suppose you know all about him. Has he really so great an army? How many, do you think, he has?"

"My army was so small that we fled whenever we heard of his approach. So I do not know how many he had."

"You had the advice of Zhugé Liang, and you used fire on Cao Cao twice. You burned him almost to death so that you can hardly say you know nothing about his soldiers," said Lu Su.

"Without asking my adviser, I really do not know the details."

"Where is Zhugé Liang? I should like to see him," said Lu Su.

So they sent for him, and he was introduced.

When the ceremonies were over, Lu Su said, "I have long admired your genius but have never been fortunate enough to meet you. Now that I have met you, I hope I may speak of present politics."

Replied Zhugé Liang, "I know all Cao Cao's infamies and wickednesses, but to my regret we were not strong enough to withstand him. That is why we avoided him."

"Is the Imperial Uncle going to stay here?"

"The Princely One is an old friend of Wu Ju, Governor of Changwu, and intends to go to him."

"Wu Ju has few troops and insufficient supplies. He cannot ensure safety for himself. How can he receive the Uncle?" said Lu Su.

"Changwu is not one to remain in long, but it is good enough for the present. We can make other plans for the future."

Lu Su said, "Sun Quan is strongly posted in the six southern territories and is exceedingly well supplied. He treats able people and scholars with the greatest courtesy and so they gather round him. Now if you are seeking a plan for your Prince, you cannot do better than send some friend to confer with him."

"There have never been any relations between my master and yours," said Zhuge Liang. "I fear there would be nothing but a waste of words. Besides, we have no one to send."

"Your elder brother Zhuge Jin is there as adviser and is longing to see you. I am but a simple wight, but I should be pleased to discuss affairs with my master and you."

"But Zhuge Liang is my Directing Instructor," said Liu Bei, "and I cannot do without him. He cannot go."

Lu Su pressed him. Liu Bei pretended to refuse permission.

"It is important. I pray you give me leave to go," said Zhuge Liang.

Then Liu Bei consented. And they soon took leave and the two set out by boat for Sun Quan's headquarters.

A little boat sailed down the stream
With Zhuge Liang well content;
For he could see his enemies
To fiery perdition sent.

The result of this journey will appear in the following chapter.

Chapter 43

Zhuce Liang Disputes With The Southern Scholars; Lu Su Denounces The Majority Opinion.

In the boat on the way to Chaisang, the two travelers beguiled the time by discussing affairs.

Lu Su impressed upon his companion, saying, "When you see my master, do not reveal the truth about the magnitude of Cao Cao's army."

You do not have to remind me," replied Zhuge Liang, "but I shall know how to reply."

When the boat arrived, Zhuge Liang was lodged in the guests' quarters, and Lu Su went alone to see his master. Lu Su found Sun Quan actually at a council, assembled to consider the situation. Lu Su was summoned thereto and questioned at once upon what he had discovered.

"I know the general outline, but I want a little time to prepare my report," replied Lu Su.

Then Sun Quan produced Cao Cao's letter and gave it to Lu Su.

"That came yesterday. I have sent the bearer of it back, and this gathering is to consider the reply," said he.

Lu Su read the letter:

"When I, the Prime Minister, received the imperial command to punish a fault, my banners went south and Liu Zong became my prisoner, while the people of Jingzhou flocked to my side at the first rumor of my coming. Under my hand are one million strong and a thousand able leaders. My desire is, General, that we go on a great hunting expedition into Jiangxia and together attack Liu Bei. We will share his land between us, and we will swear perpetual amity. If happily you would not be a mere looker-on, I pray you reply quickly."

"What have you decided upon, my lord?" asked Lu Su as he finished the letter.

"I have not yet decided."

Then Zhang Zhao said, "It would be imprudent to withstand Cao Cao's hundred legions backed by the imperial authority. Moreover, your most important defense against him is the Great River; and since Cao Cao has gained possession of Jingzhou, the river is his ally against us. We cannot withstand him, and the only way to tranquillity, in my opinion, is submission."

"The words of the speaker accord with the manifest decree of providence," echoed all the assembly.

Sun Quan remaining silent and thoughtful.

Zhang Zhao again took up the argument, saying, "Do not hesitate, my lord. Submission to Cao Cao means tranquillity to the people of the South Land and safety for the inhabitants of the six territories."

Sun Quan still remained silent. His head bent in deep thought. Presently he arose and paced slowly out at the door, and Lu Su followed him.

Outside he took Lu Su by the hand, saying, "What do you desire?"

"What they have all been saying is very derogatory to you. A common person might submit. You cannot."

“Why? How do you explain that?”

“If people like us servants submitted, we would just return to our village or continue holding our offices, and everything would go on as before. If you submit, whither will you go? You will be created a lord of some humble fief, perhaps. You will have one carriage, no more; one saddle horse, that is all. Your retinue will be some ten. Will you be able to sit facing the south and call yourself by the kingly title of ‘The Solitary’? Each one in that crowd of hangers-on is thinking for himself, is purely selfish, and you should not listen to them, but take a line of your own and that quickly. Determine to play a bold game!”

Sun Quan sighed, “They all talk and talk: They miss my point of view. Now you have just spoken of a bold game, and your view is the same as mine. Surely God has expressly sent you to me. Still Cao Cao is now the stronger by all Yuan Shao’s and Liu Biao’s armies, and he has possession of Jingzhou. I fear he is almost too powerful to contend with.”

“I have brought back with me Zhuge Liang, the younger brother of our Zhuge Jin. If you questioned him, he would explain clearly.”

“Is Master Sleeping Dragon really here?”

“Really here, in the guest-house.”

“It is too late to see him today. But tomorrow I will assemble my officials, and you will introduce him to all my best. After that we will debate the matter.”

With these instructions Lu Su retired.

Next day he went to the guest-house and conveyed Sun Quan’s commands to the guest, particularly saying, “When you see my master, say nothing of the magnitude of Cao Cao’s army.”

Zhuce Liang smiled, saying, “I shall act as circumstances dictate. You may be sure I shall make no mistakes.”

Zhuce Liang was then conducted to where the high officers, civil and military to the number of forty and more, were assembled. They formed a dignified conclave as they sat in stately ranks with their tall headdresses and broad girdles.

Zhang Zhao sat at the head, and Zhuce Liang first saluted him. Then, one by one, he exchange the formal courtesies with them all. This done he took his seat in the guest’s chair.

They, on their part, noted with interest Zhuce Liang’s refined and elegant manner and his commanding figure, thinking within themselves, “Here is a persuader fitted for discourse.”

Zhang Zhao led the way in trying to bait the visitor. He said, “You will pardon the most insignificant of our official circle, myself, if I mention that people say you compare yourself with those two famous men of talent, Guan Zhong and Yue Yi. Is there any truth in this?”

“To a trifling extent I have compared myself with them,” replied Zhuce Liang.

“I have heard that Liu Bei made three journeys to visit you when you lived in retirement in your simple dwelling in the Sleeping Dragon Ridge, and that when you consented to serve him, he said he was as lucky as a fish in getting home to the ocean. Then he desired to possess the region about Jingzhou. Yet today all that country belongs to Cao Cao. I should like to hear your account of all that.”

Zhuce Liang thought, “This Zhang Zhao is Sun Quan’s first adviser. Unless I can nonplus him, I shall never have a chance with his master.”

So he replied, “In my opinion the taking of the region around the Han River was as simple as turning over one’s hand. But my master Liu Bei is both righteous and humane and would not stoop to filching the possession of a member of his own house. So he refused the offer of succession. But Liu Zong, a stupid lad, misled by specious words, submitted to Cao Cao and fell victim to his ferocity. My master is in camp at Jiangxia, but what his future plans may be cannot be divulged at present.”

Zhang Zhao said, “Be it so; but your words and your deeds are something discordant. You say you are the equal of the two famous ones. Well, Guan Zhong, as minister of Prince Huan, put his master at the very head of the feudal nobles, making his master’s will supreme in all the land. Under the able statesmanship of Yue Yi, the feeble state of Yan conquered Qi, reducing nearly seventy of its cities. These two were men of most commanding and conspicuous talent.

“When you lived in retirement, you smiled scornfully at ordinary people, passed your days in idleness, nursing your knees and posing in a superior manner, implying that if you had control of affairs, Liu Bei would be more than human; he should bring good to everybody and remove all evil; rebellion and robbery would be no more. Poor Liu Bei, before he obtained your help, was an outcast and a vagabond, stealing a city here and there where he could. With you to help him, he was to become the cynosure of every eye, and every lisping school child was to say that he was a tiger who had grown wings; the Hans were to be restored and Cao Cao and his faction exterminated; the good old days would be restored, and all the people who had been driven into retirement by the corruption of political life would wake up, rub the sleep out of their eyes, and be in readiness to lift the cloud of darkness that covered the sky and gaze up at the glorious brilliancy of the sun and moon, to pull the people out of fire and water and put

all the world to rest on a couch of comfort. That was all supposed to happen forthwith.

“Why then, when you went to Xinye, did not Cao Cao’s army throw aside their arms and armors and flee like rats? Why could you not have told Liu Biao how to give tranquillity to his people? Why could you not aid his orphan son to protect his frontiers? Instead you abandoned Xinye and fled to Fancheng; you were defeated at Dangyang and fled to Xiakou with no place to rest in. Thus, after you had joined Liu Bei, he was worse off than before. Was it thus with Guan Zhong and Yue Yi? I trust you do not mind my blunt speech.”

Zhuge Liang waited till Zhang Zhao had closed his oration, then laughed and said, “How can the common birds understand the long flight of the cranes? Let me use an illustration. A man has fallen into a terrible malady. First the physician must administer hashish, then soothing drugs until his viscera shall be calmed into harmonious action. When the sick man’s body shall have been reduced to quietude, then may he be given strong meats to strengthen him and powerful drugs to correct the disorder. Thus the disease will be quite expelled, and the man restored to health. If the physician does not wait till the humors and pulse are in harmony, but throws in his strong drugs too early, it will be difficult to restore the patient.

“My master suffered defeat at Runan and went to Liu Biao. He had then less than one thousand soldiers and only three generals—Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Zilong. That was indeed a time of extreme weakness. Xinye was a secluded, rustic town with few inhabitants and scanty supplies, and my master only retired there as a temporary refuge. How could he even think of occupying and holding it? Yet, with insufficient force, in a weak city, with untrained men and inadequate supplies, we burned Xiahou Dun at Bowang Slope, drowned Cao Ren and Cao Hong and their army in the White River, and set them in terror as they fled. I doubt whether the two ancient heroes would have done any better. As to the surrender of Liu Zong, Liu Bei knew nothing of it. And he was too noble and too righteous to take advantage of a kinsman’s straits to seize his inheritance. As for the defeat at Dangyang, it must be remembered that Liu Bei was hampered with a huge voluntary following of common people, with their aged relatives and their children, whom he was too humane to abandon. He never thought of taking Jiangling, but willingly suffered with his people. This is a striking instance of his magnanimity.

“Small forces are no match for large armies. Victory and defeat are common episodes in every campaign. The great Founder of the Hans suffered many defeats at the hands of Xiang Yu, but Liu Bang finally conquered at Gaixia, and that battle was decisive. Was not this due to the strategy of Han Xin who, though he had long served Liu Bang, had never won a victory. Indeed real statesmanship and the restoration of stable government is a master plan far removed from the vapid discourses and debates of a lot of bragging babblers and specious and deceitful talkers, who, as they themselves say, are immeasurably superior to the rest of humankind but who, when it comes to deeds and decisions to meet the infinite and constant vicissitudes of affairs, fail to throw up a single capable person. Truly such people are the laughing stock of all the world.”

Zhang Zhao found no reply to this diatribe.

But another in the assembly lifted up his voice, saying, “But what of Cao Cao’s present position? There he is, encamped with one hundred legions and a thousand leaders. Whither he goes he is invincible as wriggling dragon, and whither he looks he is as fearsome as roaring tiger. He seems to have taken Jiangxia already, as we see.”

The speaker was Yu Fan.

And Zhuge Liang replied, “Cao Cao has acquired the swarms of Yuan Shao and stolen the crowds of Liu Biao. Yet I care not for all his mob legions.”

Yu Fan smiled icily, saying, “When you got thrashed at Dangyang and in desperation sent this way and that to ask help, even then did you not care? But do you think big talk really takes people in?”

Zhuge Liang replied, “Liu Bei had a few thousand scrupulous soldiers to oppose against a million fierce brutes. He retired to Xiakou for breathing space. The South Land have strong and good soldiers, and there are ample supplies, and the Great River is a defense. Is now a time for you to convince your lord to bend the knee before a renegade, to be careless of his honor and reputation? As a fact Liu Bei is not the sort of man to fear such a rebel as Cao Cao.”

Yu Fan had nothing to reply.

Next, Bu Zhi, who was among those seated, said, “Will you talk of our southern land with a tongue like the tongues of the persuaders Zhang Yi and Su Qin in the ancient time?”

Zhuge Liang replied, “You regard those two as mere speculative talkers; you do not recognize them also as heroes. Su Qin bore the Prime Ministers’ seals of six federated states; Zhang Yi was twice Prime Minister of the state of Qin. Both were men of conspicuous ability who brought about the reformation of their governments. They are not to be compared with those who quail before the strong and overbear the weak, who fear the dagger and run away from the sword. You, Sir, have listened to Cao Cao’s crafty and empty threat, and it has frightened you into advising surrender. Dare you ridicule Su Qin and Zhang Yi?”

Bu Zhi was silenced.

Then suddenly another interjected the question, “What do you think of Cao Cao?”

It was Xue Zong who had spoken.

And Zhuge Liang replied, "Cao Cao is one of the rebels against the dynasty. Why ask about him?"

"You are mistaken," said Xue Zong. "The Hans have outlasted their allotted time, and the end is near. Cao Cao already has two-thirds of the empire, and people are turning to him. Your master has not recognized the fateful moment, and to contend with a man so strong is to try to smash stones with eggs. Failure is certain."

Zhuce Liang angrily replied, "Why do you speak so undutiful words, as if you knew neither father nor prince? Loyalty and filial duty are the essentials of a person's being. For a minister of Han, correct conduct demands that one is pledged to the destruction of anyone who does not follow the canon of a minister's duty. Cao Cao's forbears enjoyed the bounty of Han, but instead of showing gratitude, he nourishes in his bosom thoughts of rebellion. The whole world is incensed against him, and yet you would claim for him the indication of destiny. Truly you are a man who knows neither father nor prince, a man unworthy of any words, and I decline to argue with you further."

The blush of shame overspread Xue Zong's face, and he said no more.

But another, Lu Ji, took up the dispute and said, "Although Cao Cao overawes the Emperor and in his name coerces the nobles, yet he is the descendant of the Supreme Ancestor's Prime Minister Cao Shen; while your master, though he says he is descended from a prince, has no proof thereof. In the eyes of the world, Liu Bei is just a weaver of mats, a seller of straw shoes. Who is he to strive with Cao Cao?"

Zhuce Liang laughed and replied, "Are you not that Lu Ji who pocketed the orange when you were sitting among Yuan Shu's guests? Listen to me: I have a word to say to you. Inasmuch as Cao Cao is a descendant of a minister of state, he is by heredity a servant of the Hans. But now he has monopolized all state authority and knows only his own arbitrary will, heaping every indignity upon his lord. Not only does he forget his prince, but he ignores his ancestors; not only is he a rebellious servant of Han, but the renegade of his family. Liu Bei of Yuzhou is a noble scion of the imperial family upon whom the Emperor has conferred rank, as is recorded in the annals. How then can you say there is no evidence of his imperial origin? Beside, the very founder of the dynasty was himself of lowly origin, and yet he became emperor. Where is the shame in weaving mats and selling shoes? Your mean, immature views are unfit to be mentioned in the presence of scholars of standing."

This put a stop to Lu Ji's flow of eloquence.

But another of those present said, "Zhuce Liang's words are overbearing, and he distorts reason. It is not proper argument, and he had better say no more. But I would ask him what classical canon he studied."

Zhuce Liang looked at his interlocutor, who was Yan Jun, and said, "The dryasdusts of every age select passages and choose phrases. What else are they good for? Do they ever initiate a policy or manage an affair? Yi Yin, who was a farmer in the state of Shen, and Lu Wang, the fisherman of the River Wei, Zhang Liang and Chen Ping, Zheng Yu and Geng Yan—all were men of transcendent ability, but I have never inquired what classical canon they followed or on whose essays they formed their style. Would you liken them to your rusty students of books, whose journeyings are comprised between their brush and their inkstone, who spend their days in literary futilities, wasting both time and ink?"

No reply was forthcoming. Yan Jun hung his head with shame.

But another disputant, Cheng Deshu by name, suddenly shouted, "You are mightily fond of big words, Sir, but they do not give any proof of your scholarship after all. I am inclined to think that a real scholar would just laugh at you."

Zhuce Liang replied, "There is the noble scholar, loyal and patriotic, of perfect rectitude and a hater of any crookedness. The concern of such a scholar is to act in full sympathy with his day and leave to future ages a fine reputation. There is the scholar of the mean type, a pedant and nothing more. He labors constantly with his pen, in his callow youth composing odes and in hoary age still striving to understand the classical books completely. Thousands of words flow from his pen, but there is not a solid idea in his breast. He may, as did Yang Xiong, glorify the age with his writings and yet stoop to serve a tyrant such as Wang Mang. No wonder Yang Xiong threw himself out of a window; he had to. That is the way of the scholar of mean type. Though he composes odes by the hundred, what is the use of him?"

Cheng Deshu could make no reply. The other officers now began to hold this man of torrential speech in wholesome fear.

Only two of them, Zhang Wen and Luo Tong, had failed to challenge him, but when they would have tried to pose Zhuce Liang, suddenly someone appeared from without and angrily shouted, "This is not paying fit respect to a guest. You have among you the most wonderful man of the day, and you all sit there trying to entangle him in speech while our archenemy Cao Cao is nearing our borders. Instead of discussing how to oppose Cao Cao, you are all wrangling and disputing!"

All eyes turned toward the speaker. It was Huang Gai of Lingling, who was the Chief of the Commissariat of the South Land.

He turned to address Zhuce Liang, saying, "There is a saying that though something may be gained by talk,

there is more to be got by silence. Why not give my lord the advantage of your valuable advice instead of wasting time in discussion with this crowd?"

"They did not understand," replied Zhuge Liang, "and it was necessary to enlighten them, so I had to speak."

As Huang Gai and Lu Su led the guest toward their master's apartments, they met his brother Zhuge Jin. Zhuge Liang saluted him with the deference due to an elder brother.

Zhuge Jin said, "Why have you not been to see me, brother?"

"I am now in the service of Liu Bei of Yuzhou, and it is right that public affairs precede private obligations. I cannot attend to any private matters till my work is done. You must pardon me, brother."

"After you have seen Marquis Sun Quan, you will come and tell me your news," said he as he left.

As they went along to the audience chamber, Lu Su again cautioned Zhuge Liang against any rash speech, saying, "Do not tell the magnitude of Cao Cao's forces. Please remember."

The latter nodded but made no other reply. When they reached the hall, Sun Quan came down the steps to welcome his guests and was extraordinarily gracious. After the mutual salutations, the guest was given a chair while the Marquis' officials were drawn up in two lines, on one side the civil, on the other the military. Lu Su stood beside Zhuge Liang and listened to his introductory speech.

As Zhuge Liang spoke of Liu Bei's intentions, he glanced up at his host. He noted the green eyes and purple beard and the dignified commanding air of the man and thought within himself, "Certainly in appearance this is no common man. He is one to be incited perhaps, but not to be persuaded. It will be better to see what he has to say first, then I will try to stir him to action."

The serving of tea being now finished, Sun Quan began with the usual gracious ceremonial expressions.

"Lu Su has often spoken of your genius," said the host. "It is a great pleasure to meet you. I trust you will confer upon me the advantage of your instruction."

"I am neither clever nor learned," was the reply. "It humiliates me to hear such words."

"You have been at Xinye lately, and you helped your master to fight that decisive battle with Cao Cao, so you must know exactly the measure of his military strength."

"My master's army was small and his generals were few; the city was paltry and lacked supplies. Hence no stand could be made against such a force as Cao Cao had."

"How many has he in all?"

"Horse and foot, land and marine, he has a million."

"Is there not some doubt about that?" said Sun Quan, surprised.

"None whatever. When Cao Cao went to Yanzhou, he had the two hundred thousand soldiers of Qingzhou. He gained five or six hundred thousand more when Yuan Shao fell. He has three or four hundred thousand troops newly recruited in the capital. Lately he has acquired two or three hundred thousand troops in Jingzhou. And if these be reckoned up, the total is not less than a million and a half. Hence I said a million for I was afraid of frightening your officers."

Lu Su was much disturbed and turned pale. He looked meaningfully at the bold speaker, but Zhuge Liang would not see. Sun Quan went on to ask if his archenemy had a corresponding number of leaders.

"Cao Cao has enough administrators and strategists to control such a host, and his capable and veteran leaders are more than a thousand; perhaps more than two thousand."

"What will be Cao Cao's next move now that he has overcome Jingzhou?"

"He is camped along the river, and he has collected a fleet. If he does not intend to invade the South Land, what can his intentions be?"

"Since that is his intention, it is a case of fight or not fight. I wish you would decide that for me."

"I have something I could say, but I fear, Sir, you would not care to hear it."

"I am desirous of hearing your most valuable opinion."

"Strife has prevailed for a long time; and so you have raised your army in the South Land and Liu Bei collected his forces south of the Han River to act in contest for the empire against Cao Cao. Now Cao Cao has overcome most of his difficulties, and his recent conquest of Jingzhou has won him great and wide renown. Though there might be one bold enough to tackle him, yet there is no foothold for such. That is how Liu Bei has been forced to come here. But, General, I wish you to measure your forces and decide whether you can venture to meet Cao Cao and that without loss of time. If you cannot, then follow the advice of your councilors: Cease your military preparations and yield, turn your face to the north and serve."

Sun Quan did not reply. But his guest went on, "You have the reputation of being reasonable, but I know also you are inclined to hesitate. Still this matter is most important, and evil will be quickly upon you if you do not decide."

Then replied Sun Quan, "If what you say represents the actual conditions, why does not Liu Bei yield?"

"Well, you know Tian Heng, that hero of the state of Qi: His character was too noble for him to submit to any

shame. It is necessary to remember that Liu Bei also is an off-shoot from the Dynastic Family, beside being a man of great renown. Everyone looks up to him. His lack of success is simply the will of Heaven, but manifestly he could not bow the knee to anyone.”

These last words touched Sun Quan to the quick, and he could not control his anger. He shook out his sleeves, rose, and left the audience chamber. Those present smiled at each other as they dispersed.

But Lu Su was annoyed and reproached Zhuge Liang for his maladroit way of talking to Sun Quan, saying, “Luckily for you, my lord is too large-minded to rebuke you to your face, for you spoke to him most contemptuously.”

Zhuce Liang threw back his head and laughed.

“What a sensitive fellow it is!” cried he. “I know how Cao Cao could be destroyed, but he never asked me. So I said nothing.”

“If you really do know how that could be done, I will certainly beg my lord to ask you.”

“Cao Cao’s hosts in my eyes are but as swarms of ants. I have but to lift my hand, and they will be crushed,” said Zhuge Liang.

Lu Su at once went into his master’s private room, where he found Sun Quan still very irritable and angry.

“Zhuge Liang insulted me too deeply,” said Sun Quan.

“I have already reproached him,” said Lu Su, “and he laughed and said you were too sensitive. He would not give you any advice without being asked for it. Why did you not seek advice from him, my lord?”

At once Sun Quan’s anger changed to joy.

He said, “So he had a plan ready, and his words were meant to provoke me. I did despise him for a moment, and it has very nearly lost me.”

So Sun Quan returned to the audience chamber where the guest was still seated and begged Zhuge Liang to continue his speech.

Sun Quan spoke courteously, saying, “I offended you just now. I hope you are not implacable.”

“And I also was rude,” replied Zhuge Liang. “I entreat pardon.”

Host and guest retired to the inner room where wine was served.

After it had gone round several times, Sun Quan said, “The enemies of Cao Cao were Lu Bu, Liu Biao, Yuan Shao, Yuan Shu, Liu Bei, and my poor self. Now most of these are gone, and only Liu Bei and I remain. I will never allow the land of Wu to be dictated to by another. The only one who could have withstood Cao Cao was Liu Bei, but he has been defeated lately and what can he do now against such force?”

Zhuce Liang replied, “Although defeated, Liu Bei still has Guan Yu with ten thousand veterans. And Liu Qi still leads the troops of Jiangxia, another ten thousand. Cao Cao’s army is far from home, and the soldiers are worn out. They made a frantic effort to come up with my master, and the light horse marched one hundred miles in a day and a night. This was the final kick of the crossbow spring, and the bolt was not swift enough to penetrate even the thin silken vesture of Lu. The army can do no more. They are northern people, unskilled in water warfare, and the people of Jingzhou are unwilling supporters. They have no desire to help Cao Cao. Now if you, General, will assist Liu Bei, Cao Cao will certainly be broken, and he must retire northwards. Then your country and Jingzhou will be strong, and the tripod will be firmly established. But the scheme must be carried out without delay, and only you can decide.”

Sun Quan joyfully replied, “Your words, Master, open up the road clearly. I have decided and shall have no further doubts.”

So the orders were issued forthwith to prepare for a joint attack on Cao Cao. And Sun Quan bade Lu Su bear the news of his decision to all his officers. He himself escorted Zhuge Liang to the guest-quarters and saw to his comfort.

When Zhang Zhao heard of the decision he met his colleagues and said to them, “Our master has fallen into the trap set by this Zhuge Liang.”

They went in a body to their lord and said, “We hear you are going to attack Cao Cao. But how do you stand when compared with Yuan Shao? In those days Cao Cao was comparatively weak, and yet he overcame. What is he like today with his countless legions? He is not to be lightly attacked, and to listen to Zhuge Liang’s advice to engage in a conflict is like carrying fuel to a fire.”

Sun Quan made no reply, and Gu Yong took up the argument.

Gu Yong said, “Liu Bei has been defeated, and he wants to borrow our help to beat his enemy. Why must our lord lend himself to his schemes? Pray listen to our leader’s words.”

Doubts again surged up in the mind of Sun Quan.

When the troop of advisers had retired, Lu Su came in, saying, “They came to exhort you not to fight, but to compel you to surrender. All this is simply because they wish to secure the safety of their families. They distort their sense of duty to serve their own ends, and I hope you will not take their advice.”

Sun Quan being sunk in thought and saying nothing, Lu Su went on, "If you hesitate, you will certainly be led astray by the majority and——"

"Retire for a time," said his master. "I must think it over carefully."

So Lu Su left the chamber. Among the soldiers some wished for war, but of the civil officers, all were in favor of surrender; and so there were many discussions and much conflict of opinion. Sun Quan went to his private apartments greatly perplexed. There his worry was easily discernible, and he neither ate nor slept. He was quite unable to decide finally upon a course of action.

Then Lady Wu, the sister of his late mother, whom he also regarded as his own mother, asked him what so troubled him, and he told her of the threatened danger of Cao Cao and the different opinions his advisers held one and another and all his doubts and fears.

"If I fight, I might fail. But if I offer to surrender, perhaps Cao Cao will not tolerate me," said he.

Then she replied, "Have you forgotten the last words of my sister?"

As to one recovering from a fit of drunkenness, or waking out of a dream, so came to him the dying words of the mother who bore him.

His mother's advice he called to mind,
"In Zhou Yu's counsels you safety find."

What happened will be told in the next chapter.

Chapter 44

Zhuge Liang Stirs Zhou Yu To Actions; Sun Quan Decides To Attack Cao Cao.

The dying message which Lady Wu recalled to Sun Quan's memory was, "For internal matters consult Zhang Zhao; for external policy Zhou Yu."

Wherefore Zhou Yu was summoned.

But Zhou Yu was already on the way. He had been training his naval forces on Poyang Lake when he heard of the approach of Cao Cao's hosts and had started for Chaisang without loss of time. So, before the messenger ordered to call him could start, he had already arrived. As he and Lu Su were close friends, the latter went to welcome him and told him of all that had happened.

"Have no anxiety," said Zhou Yu. "I shall be able to decide this. But go quickly and beg Zhuge Liang to come to see me."

So Lu Su went to seek out Zhuge Liang.

Zhou Yu had many other visitors. First came Zhang Zhao, Zhang Hong, Gu Yong, and Bu Zhi to represent their faction to find out what might be afoot.

They were received, and after the exchange of the usual commonplaces, Zhang Zhao said, "Have you heard of our terrible danger?"

"I have heard nothing," said Zhou Yu.

"Cao Cao and his hordes are encamped up the Han River. He has just sent letters asking our lord to hunt with him in Jiangxia. He may have a desire to absorb this country but, if so, the details of his designs are still secret. We prayed our master to give in his submission and so avoid the horrors of war, but now Lu Su has returned bringing with him the Directing Instructor of Liu Bei's army, Zhuge Liang. Zhuge Liang, desiring to avenge himself for the recent defeat, has talked our lord into a mind for war, and Lu Su persists in supporting that policy. They only await your final decision."

"Are you all unanimous in your opinions?"

"We are perfectly unanimous," said Zhang Zhao.

Zhou Yu said, "The fact is I have also desired to submit for a long time. I beg you to leave me now, and tomorrow we will see our master, and I shall make up his mind for him."

So they took their leave. Very soon came the military party led by Cheng Pu, Huang Gai, and Han Dang. They were admitted and duly inquired after their host's health.

Then the leader Cheng Pu said, "Have you heard that our country is about to pass under another's government?"

"No, I have heard nothing," replied the host.

"We helped General Sun Quan to establish his authority here and carve out this kingdom, and to gain that end we fought many a battle before we conquered the country. Now our lord lends his ear to his civil officers and desires to submit himself to Cao Cao. This is a most shameful and pitiful course, and we would rather die than follow it. So

we hope you will decide to fight, and you may depend upon our struggling to the last person.”

“And are you unanimous, Generals?” asked Zhou Yu.

Huang Gai suddenly started up and smote his forehead, saying, “They may take my head, but I swear never to surrender.”

“Not one of us is willing to surrender,” cried all the others.

“My desire also is to decide matters with Cao Cao on the battlefield. How could we think of submission? Now I pray you retire, Generals, and when I see our lord, I will settle his doubts.”

So the war party left. They were quickly succeeded by Zhuge Jin, Lu Fan, and their faction.

They were brought in and, after the usual courtesies, Zhuge Jin said, “My brother has come down the river saying that Liu Bei desires to ally himself with our lord against Cao Cao. The civil and military hold different opinions as to the course to be pursued. But as my brother is so deeply concerned, I am unwilling to say much on either side. We are awaiting your decision.”

“And what do you think about it?” asked Zhou Yu.

“Submission is an easy road to tranquillity, while the result of war is hard to foretell.”

Zhou Yu smiled, “I shall have my mind made up. Come tomorrow to the palace, and the decision shall be announced.”

The trimmers took their leave. But soon after came Lu Meng, Gan Ning, and their supporters, also desirous of discussing the same thing, and they told him that opinions differed greatly, some being for peace and others for war. One party constantly disputed with the other.

“I must not say much now,” replied Zhou Yu, “but you will see tomorrow in the palace, when the matter will be fully debated.”

They went away leaving Zhou Yu smiling cynically.

About eventide Lu Su and Zhuge Liang came, and Zhou Yu went out to the main gate to receive them.

When they had taken their proper seats, Lu Su spoke first, saying, “Cao Cao has come against the South Land with a huge army. Our master cannot decide whether to submit or give battle and waits for your decision. What is your opinion?”

Zhou Yu replied, “We may not oppose Cao Cao when he acts at the command of the Emperor. Moreover, he is very strong, and to attack him is to take serious risks. In my opinion, opposition would mean defeat and, since submission means peace, I have decided to advise our lord to write and offer surrender.”

“But you are wrong!” stammered Lu Su. “This country has been under the same rule for three generations and cannot be suddenly abandoned to some other. Our late lord Sun Ce said that you were to be consulted on matters beyond the border, and we depended upon you to keep the country as secure and solid as the Taishan Mountains. Now you adopt the view of the weaklings and propose to yield! I cannot believe you mean it.”

Replied Zhou Yu, “The six territories contain countless people. If I am the means of bringing upon them the misery of war, they will hate me. So I have decided to advise submission.”

“But do you not realize our lord’s might and the strength of our country? If Cao Cao does attack, it is very uncertain that he will realize his desire.”

The two wrangled for a long time, while Zhuge Liang sat smiling with folded arms.

Presently Zhou Yu asked, “Why do you smile thus, Master?”

And Zhuge Liang replied, “I am smiling at no other than your opponent Lu Su, who knows nothing of the affairs of the day.”

“Master,” said Lu Su, “what do you mean?”

“Why, this intention to submit is perfectly reasonable. It is the one proper thing.”

“There!” exclaimed Zhou Yu. “Zhuge Liang knows the times perfectly well, and he agrees with me.”

“But, both of you, why do you say this?” said Lu Su.

Said Zhuge Liang, “Cao Cao is an excellent commander, so good that no one dares oppose him. Only very few have ever attempted it, and they have been exterminated—the world knows them no more. The only exception is Liu Bei, who did not understand the conditions and vigorously contended against him, with the result that he is now at Jiangxia in a very parlous state. To submit is to secure the safety of wives and children, to be rich and honored. But the dignity of the country would be left to chance and fate—however, that is not worth consideration.”

Lu Su interrupted angrily, “Would you make our lord crook the knee to such a rebel as Cao Cao?”

“Well,” replied Zhuge Liang, “there is another way, and a cheaper. There would be no need to ‘lead the sheep and shoulder wine pots’ for presents, nor any need to yield territory and surrender seals of office. It would not even be necessary to cross the river yourselves. All you would require is a simple messenger and a little boat to ferry a couple of persons across the river. If Cao Cao only got these two under his hand, his hordes and legions would just drop their weapons, furl their banners, and silently vanish away.”

“What two persons could cause Cao Cao to go away as you say?” asked Zhou Yu.

“Two persons who could be easily spared from this populous country. They would not be missed any more than a leaf from a tree or a grain of millet from a granary. But if Cao Cao could only get them, would he not go away rejoicing?”

“But who are the two?” asked Zhou Yu again.

“When I was living in the country, they told me that Cao Cao was building a pavilion on the River Zhang. It was to be named the Bronze Bird Tower. It is an exceedingly handsome building, and he has sought throughout all the world for the most beautiful women to live in it. For Cao Cao really is a sensualist.

“Now there are two very famous beauties in Wu, born of the Qiao family. So beautiful are they that birds alight and fishes drown, the moon hides her face and the flowers blush for shame at sight of them. Cao Cao has declared with an oath that he only wants two things in this world: The imperial throne in peace and the sight of those two women on the Bronze Bird Terraces. Given these two, he would go down to his grave without regret. This expedition of his, his huge army that threatens this country, has for its real aim these two women. Why do you not buy these two from their father, the State Patriarch Qiao, for any sum however large and send them over the river? The object of the army being attained, it will simply be marched away. This is the ruse that Fan Li of Yue made to the king of Wu of the famous beauty Xi Shi.”

“How do you know Cao Cao so greatly desires these two?” said Zhou Yu.

“Because his son Cao Zhi, who is an able writer, at the command of his father wrote a poem ‘An Ode to the Bronze Bird Terrace,’ theme only allowing allusions to the family fitness for the throne. He has sworn to possess these two women. I think I can remember the poem, if you wish to hear it. I admire it greatly.”

“Try,” said Zhou Yu.

So Zhuge Liang recited the poem:

“Let me follow in the footsteps of the enlightened ruler that I may rejoice,
 And ascend the storied terrace that I may gladden my heart,
 That I may see the wide extent of the palace,
 That I may gaze upon the plans of the virtuous one.
 He has established the exalted gates high as the hills,
 He has built the lofty towers piercing the blue vault,
 He has set up the beautiful building in the midst of the heavens,
 Whence the eye can range over the cities of the west.
 On the banks of the rolling River Zhang he planned it,
 Whence abundance of fruits could be looked for in his gardens.
 The two towers rise, one on either flank,
 This named Golden Phoenix, that Jade Dragon.
 He would have the two Qiaos, these beautiful ladies of Wu,
 That he might rejoice with them morning and evening.
 Look down; there is the grand beauty of an imperial city,
 And the rolling vapors lie floating beneath.
 He will rejoice in the multitude of scholars that assemble,
 Answering to the felicitous dream of King Wen.
 Look up; and there is the gorgeous harmony of springtime,
 And the singing of many birds delighting the ear;
 The lofty sky stands over all.
 The house desires success in its double undertaking,
 That the humane influence may be poured out over all the world,
 That the perfection of reverence may be offered to the Ruler.
 Only the richly prosperous rule of Kings Wu and Huan
 Could compare with that of the sacred understanding
 That fortune! What beauty!
 The gracious kindness spreads afar,
 The imperial family is supported,
 Peace reigns over all the empire,
 Bounded only by the universe.
 Bright as the glory of the sun and moon,
 Ever honorable and ever enduring,
 The Ruler shall live to the age of the eastern emperor,
 The dragon banner shall wave to the farthest limit.

His glorious chariot shall be guided with perfect wisdom,
 His thoughts shall reform all the world,
 Felicitous produce shall be abundant,
 And the people shall rest firm.
 My desire is that these towers shall endure forever,
 And that joy shall never cease through all the ages.

Zhou Yu listened to the end but then suddenly jumped up in a tremendous rage.

Turning to the north and pointing with his finger, he cried, "You old rebel, this insult is too deep!"

Zhuge Liang hastily rose too and soothed him, saying, "But remember the Khan of the Xiongnu People. The Han emperor gave him a princess of the family to wife although he had made many incursions into our territory. That was the price of peace. You surely would not grudge two more women from among the common people."

"You do not know, Sir," replied Zhou Yu. "Of those two women of the Qiao family you mentioned, Elder Qiao is the widow of Sun Ce, our late ruler, and Younger Qiao is my wife!"

Zhuge Liang feigned the greatest astonishment and said, "No indeed: I did not know. I blundered—a deadly fault—a deadly fault!"

"One of us two has to go: Either the old rebel or I. We shall not both live. I swear that!" cried Zhou Yu.

"However, such a matter needs a good deal of thought," replied Zhuge Liang. "We must not make any mistake."

Zhou Yu replied, "I hold a sacred trust from my late lord, Sun Ce. I would not bow the knee to any such as Cao Cao. What I said just now was to see how you stood. I left Poyang Lake with the intention of attacking the north, and nothing can change that intention, not even the sword at my breast or the ax on my neck. But I trust you will lend an arm, and we will smite Cao Cao together."

"Should I be happy enough not to be rejected, I would render such humble service as I could. Perhaps presently I might be able to offer a plan to oppose him."

"I am going to see my lord tomorrow to discuss this matter," said Zhou Yu.

Zhuge Liang and Lu Su then left.

Next day at dawn Sun Quan went to the council chamber, where his officials, civil and military, were already assembled. They numbered about sixty in all. The civil, with Zhang Zhao at their head, were on the right; the military, with Cheng Pu as their leader, were ranged on the left. All were in full ceremonial dress, and the swords of the soldiers clanked on the pavement.

Soon Zhou Yu entered.

When Sun Quan had finished the usual gracious remarks, Zhou Yu said, "I hear that Cao Cao is encamped on the river and has sent a dispatch to you, my lord. I would ask what your opinion is."

Thereupon the dispatch was produced and handed to Zhou Yu.

After reading it through he said, smiling, "The old thief thinks there are no people in this land that he writes in this contemptuous strain."

"What do you think, Sir?" asked Sun Quan.

"Have you discussed this with the officials?" asked Zhou Yu.

"We have been discussing this for days. Some counsel surrender and some advise fight. I am undecided, and therefore I have asked you to come and decide the point."

"Who advise surrender?" asked Zhou Yu.

"Zhang Zhao and his party are firmly set in this opinion."

Zhou Yu then turned to Zhang Zhao and said, "I should be pleased to hear why you are for surrender, Master."

Then Zhang Zhao replied, "Cao Cao has been attacking all opponents in the name of the Emperor, who is entirely in his hands. He does everything in the name of the government. Lately he has taken Jingzhou and thereby increased his prestige. Our defense against him was the Great River, but now he also has a large fleet and can attack by water. How can we withstand him? Wherefore I counsel submission till some chance shall offer."

"This is but the opinion of an ill-advised student," said Zhou Yu. "How can you think of abandoning this country that we have held for three generations?"

"That being so," said Sun Quan, "where is a plan to come from?"

"Though Cao Cao assumes the name of the Prime Minister of the empire, he is at heart a rebel. You, O General, are able in war and brave. You are the heir to your father and brother. You command brave and tried soldiers, and you have plentiful supplies. You are able to overrun the whole country and rid it of every evil. There is no reason why you should surrender to a rebel.

"Moreover, Cao Cao has undertaken this expedition in defiance of all the rules of war. The north is unsubdued. Ma Teng and Han Sui threaten his rear, and yet he persists in his southern march. This is the first point against Cao Cao. The northern soldiers are unused to fighting on the water. Cao Cao is relinquishing his well-tried cavalry and

trusting to ships. That is the second point against him. Again, we are now in full winter and the weather is at its coldest so there is no food for the horses. That is the third point against. Soldiers from the central state marching in a wet country among lakes and rivers will find themselves in an unaccustomed climate and suffer from malaria. That is the fourth point against. Now when Cao Cao's armies have all these points against them, defeat is certain, however numerous they may be, and you can take Cao Cao captive just as soon as you wish. Give me a few legions of veterans, and I will go and destroy him."

Sun Quan started up from his place, saying, "The rebellious old rascal has been wanting to overthrow the Hans and set up himself for years. He has rid himself of all those he feared, save only myself, and I swear that one of us two shall go now. Both of us cannot live. What you say, noble friend, is just what I think, and Heaven has certainly sent you to my assistance."

"Thy servant will fight a decisive battle," said Zhou Yu, "and shrink not from any sacrifice. Only, General, do not hesitate."

Sun Quan drew the sword that hung at his side and slashed off a corner of the table in front of him, exclaiming, "Let any other person mention surrender, and he shall be served as I have served this table!"

Then he handed the sword to Zhou Yu, at the same time giving him a commission as Commander-in-Chief and Supreme Admiral, Cheng Pu being Vice-Admiral. Lu Su was also nominated as Assistant Commander.

In conclusion Sun Quan said, "With this sword you will slay any officer who may disobey your commands."

Zhou Yu took the sword and turning to the assembly said, "You have heard our lord's charge to me to lead you to destroy Cao Cao. You will all assemble tomorrow at the riverside camp to receive my orders. Should any be late or fail, then the full rigor of military law—the seven prohibitions and the fifty-four capital penalties—there provided, will be enforced."

Zhou Yu took leave of Sun Quan and left the chamber. The various officers also went their several ways.

When Zhou Yu reached his own place, he sent for Zhuge Liang to consult over the business in hand. He told Zhuge Liang of the decision that had been taken and asked for a plan of campaign.

"But your master has not yet made up his mind," said Zhuge Liang. "Till he has, no plan can be decided upon."

"What do you mean?"

"In his heart, Sun Quan is still fearful of Cao Cao's numbers and frets over the inequality of the two armies. You will have to explain away those numbers and bring him to a final decision before anything can be effected."

"What you say is excellent," said Zhou Yu, and he went to the palace that night to see his master.

Sun Quan said, "You must have something of real importance to say if you come like this at night."

Zhou Yu said, "I am making my dispositions tomorrow. You have quite made up your mind?"

"The fact is," said Sun Quan, "I still feel nervous about the disparity of numbers. Surely we are too few. That is really all I feel doubtful about."

"It is precisely because you have this one remaining doubt that I am come. And I will explain. Cao Cao's letter speaks of a million of marines, and so you feel doubts and fears and do not wait to consider the real truth. Let us examine the case thoroughly. We find that he has of central regions' soldiers, say, some one hundred fifty thousand troops, and many of them are sick. He only got seventy or eighty thousand northern soldiers from Yuan Shao, and many of those are of doubtful loyalty. Now these sick men and these men of doubtful loyalty seem a great many, but they are not at all fearsome. I could smash them with fifty thousand soldiers. You, my lord, have no further anxiety."

Sun Quan patted his general on the back, saying, "You have explained my difficulty and relieved my doubts. Zhang Zhao is a fool who constantly bars my expeditions. Only you and Lu Su have any real understanding of my heart. Tomorrow you and Lu Su and Cheng Pu will start, and I shall have a strong reserve ready with plentiful supplies to support you. If difficulties arise, you can at once send for me, and I will engage with my own army."

Zhou Yu left. But in his innermost heart, he said to himself, "If that Zhuge Liang can gauge my master's thoughts so very accurately, he is too clever for me and will be a danger. He will have to be put out of the way."

Zhou Yu sent a messenger over to Lu Su to talk over this last scheme. When he had laid it bare, Lu Su did not favor it.

"No, no," said Lu Su, "it is self-destruction to make away with your ablest officer before Cao Cao shall have been destroyed."

"But Zhuge Liang will certainly help Liu Bei to our disadvantage."

"Try what his brother Zhuge Jin can do to persuade him. It would be an excellent thing to have these two in our service."

"Yes, indeed," replied Zhou Yu.

Next morning at dawn, Zhou Yu went to his camp and took his seat in the council tent. The armed guards took up their stations right and left, and the officers ranged themselves in lines to listen to the orders.

Now Cheng Pu, who was older than Zhou Yu but was made second in command, was very angry at being passed over, so he made a pretense of indisposition and stayed away from this assembly. But he sent his eldest son,

Cheng Zi, to represent him.

Zhou Yu addressed the gathering, saying, "The law knows no partiality, and you will all have to attend to your several duties. Cao Cao is now more absolute than ever was Dong Zhuo, and the Emperor is really a prisoner in Xuchang, guarded by the most cruel soldiers. We have a command to destroy Cao Cao, and with your willing help we shall advance. The army must cause no hardship to the people anywhere. Rewards for good service and punishments for faults shall be given impartially."

Having delivered this charge, Zhou Yu told off Han Dang and Huang Gai as Leaders of the Van, and ordered the ships under their own command to get under way and go to the Three Gorges. They would get orders by and bye. Then he appointed four armies with two leaders over each: The first body was under Jiang Qin and Zhou Tai; the second, Pan Zhang and Ling Tong; the third, Taishi Ci and Lu Meng; the fourth, Lu Xun and Dong Xi. Lu Fan and Zhu Zhi were appointed inspectors, to move from place to place and keep the various units up to their work and acting with due regard to the general plan. Land and marine forces were to move simultaneously. The expedition would soon start.

Having received their orders, each returned to his command and busied himself in preparation. Cheng Zi, the son of Cheng Pu, returned and told his father what arrangements had been made, and Cheng Pu was amazed at Zhou Yu's skill.

Said he, "I have always despised Zhou Yu as a mere student who would never be a general, but this shows that he has a leader's talent. I must support him."

So Cheng Pu went over to the quarters of the Commander-in-Chief and confessed his fault. He was received kindly and all was over.

Next Zhou Yu sent for Zhuge Jin and said to him, "Evidently your brother is a genius, a man born to be a king's counselor. Why then does he serve Liu Bei? Now that he is here, I wish you to use every effort to persuade him to stay with us. Thus our lord would gain able support and you two brothers would be together, which would be pleasant for you both. I wish you success."

Zhuce Jin replied, "I am ashamed of the little service I have rendered since I came here, and I can do no other than obey your command to the best of my ability."

Thereupon he went away to his brother, whom he found in the guest-house. The younger brother received him; and when he had reached the inner rooms, Zhuge Liang bowed respectfully and, weeping, told his experiences since they parted and his sorrow at their separation.

Then Zhuge Jin, weeping also, said, "Brother, do you remember the story of Bo Yi and Shu Qi, the brothers who would not be separated?"

"Ah, Zhou Yu has sent him to talk me over," thought Zhuge Liang. So he replied, "They were two of the noble people of old days. Yes, I know."

"Those two, although they perished of hunger near the Shouyang Hills, yet never separated. You and I, born of the same mother and suckled at the same breast, yet serve different masters and never meet. Are you not ashamed when you think of such examples as Bo Yi and Shu Qi?"

Zhuce Liang replied, "You are talking now of love, but what I stand for is duty. We are both men of Han, and Liu Bei is of the family. If you, brother, could leave the South Land and join me in serving the rightful branch, then on the one side we should be honored as Ministers of Han, and on the other we should be together as people of the same flesh and blood should be. Thus love and duty would both receive their proper meed. What do you think of it, my brother?"

"I came to persuade him and lo! It is I who is being talked over," thought Zhuge Jin.

He had no fitting reply to make, so he rose and took his leave. Returning to Zhou Yu, he related the story of the interview.

"What do you think?" asked Zhou Yu.

"General Sun Quan has treated me with great kindness, and I could not turn my back on him," replied Zhuge Jin.

"Since you decide to remain loyal, there is no need to say much. I think I have a plan to win over your brother."

The wisest people see eye to eye,
For each but sees the right;
But should their several interests clash,
They all the fiercer fight.

The means by which Zhou Yu tried to get the support of Zhuge Liang will be described in the next chapter.

Chapter 45

At The Three Gorges, Cao Cao Loses Soldiers; In The Gathering Of Heroes, Jiang Gan Is Trapped.

Zhou Yu was very annoyed by the words of Zhuge Jin, and a fierce hatred for Zhuge Liang took root in his heart. He nourished a secret resolve to make away with Zhuge Liang. He continued his preparations for war, and when the troops were all mustered and ready, he went in for a farewell interview with his lord.

"You go on first, Noble Sir," said Sun Quan. "I will then march to support you."

Zhou Yu took his leave and then, with Cheng Pu and Lu Su, marched out with the army. He invited Zhuge Liang to accompany the expedition, and when Zhuge Liang cheerfully accepted, the four embarked in the same ship. They set sail, and the fleet made for Xiakou.

About twenty miles from Three Gorges the fleet anchored near the shore, and Zhou Yu built a stockade on the bank near the middle of their line with the Western Hills as a support. Other camps were made near his. Zhuge Liang, however, took up his quarters in a small ship.

When the camp dispositions were complete, Zhou Yu sent to request Zhuge Liang to come and give him advice. Zhuge Liang came.

After the salutations were ended, Zhou Yu said, "Cao Cao, though he had fewer troops than Yuan Shao, nevertheless overcame Yuan Shao because he followed the advice given by Xun You to destroy Yuan Shao's supplies at Wuchao. Now Cao Cao has over eight hundred thousand troops while I have but fifty or sixty thousand. In order to defeat him, his supplies must be destroyed first. I have found out that the main depot is at the Iron Pile Mountains. As you have lived hereabout, you know the topography quite well, and I wish to entrust the task of cutting off supplies to you and your colleagues Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Zilong. I will assist you with a thousand soldiers. I wish you to start without delay. In this way we can best serve our masters."

Zhuce Liang saw through this at once. He thought to himself, "This is a ruse in revenge for my not having been persuaded to enter the service of the South Land. If I refuse, I shall be laughed at. So I will do as he asks and trust to find some means of deliverance from the evil he intends."

Therefore Zhuge Liang accepted the task with alacrity, much to the joy of Zhou Yu.

After the leader of the expedition had taken his leave, Lu Su went to Zhou Yu secretly and said, "Why have you set him this task?"

"Because I wish to compass his death without appearing ridiculous. I hope to get him killed by the hand of Cao Cao and prevent his doing further mischief."

Lu Su left and went to see Zhuge Liang to find out if he suspected anything. Lu Su found him looking quite unconcerned and getting the soldiers ready to march.

Unable to let Zhuge Liang go without a warning, however, Lu Su put a tentative question, "Do you think this expedition will succeed?"

Zhuce Liang laughingly replied, "I am an adept at all sorts of fighting, with foot, horse, and chariots on land and marines on the water. There is no doubt of my success. I am not like you and your friend, only capable in one direction."

"What do you mean by our being capable only in one direction?" said Lu Su.

"I have heard the street children in your country singing:

"To lay an ambush, hold a pass,
Lu Su is the man to choose;
But when you on the water fight,
Zhou Yu is the man to use.

"You are only fit for ambushes and guarding passes on land, just as Zhou Yu only understands fighting on the water," said Zhuge Liang.

Lu Su carried this story to Zhou Yu, which only incensed him the more against Zhuge Liang.

"How dare he flout me, saying I cannot fight a land battle? I will not let him go. I will go myself with ten thousand troops and cut off Cao Cao's supplies."

Lu Su went back and told this to Zhuge Liang, who smiled and said, "Zhou Yu only wanted me to go on this expedition because he wanted Cao Cao to kill me. And so I teased him a little. But he cannot bear that. Now is the critical moment, and Marquis Sun Quan and my master must act in harmony if we are to succeed. If each one tries to harm the other, the whole scheme will fail. Cao Cao is no fool, and it is he who usually attack enemies through cutting off their supplies. Do you not think Cao Cao has already taken double precautions against any surprise of

his own depot? If Zhou Yu tries, he will be taken prisoner. What he ought to do is to bring about a decisive naval battle, whereby to dishearten the northern soldiers, and then find some other means to defeat them utterly. If you could persuade him what his best course was, it would be well."

Without loss of time, Lu Su went to Zhou Yu to relate what Zhuge Liang had told him.

Zhou Yu shook his head when he heard it and beat the ground with his foot, saying, "This man is far too clever. He beats me ten to one. He will have to be done away with, or the South Land will suffer."

Said Lu Su, "This is the moment to use people. You must think of the country's good first of all. When once Cao is defeated, you may do as you please."

Zhou Yu had to confess the reasonableness of this.

Liu Bei had ordered his nephew Liu Qi to hold Jiangxia, while he and the bulk of the army returned to Xiakou. Thence he saw the opposite bank thick with banners and flags and glittering with every kind of arms and armors. He knew then that the expedition from the South Land had started. So he moved all his force from Jiangxia to Fankou.

Then he assembled his officers and said to them, "Zhuge Liang went to Wu some time ago, and no word has come from him, so I know not how the business stands. Will anyone volunteer to go to find out?"

"I will go," said Mi Zhu.

So presents were prepared and gifts of flesh and wine, and Mi Zhu prepared to journey to the South Land on the pretext of offering a congratulatory feast to the army. He set out in a small ship and went down river. He stopped opposite the camp, and the soldiers reported his arrival to Zhou Yu, who ordered him to be brought in. Mi Zhu bowed low and expressed the respect which Liu Bei had for Zhou Yu and offered the various gifts. The ceremony of reception was followed by a banquet in honor of the guest.

Mi Zhu said, "Zhuge Liang has been here a long time, and I desire that he may return with me."

"Zhuge Liang is making plans with me, and I could not let him return," said Zhou Yu. "I also wish to see Liu Bei that we may make joint plans. But when one is at the head of a great army, one cannot get away even for a moment. If your master would only come here, it would be very gracious on his part."

Mi Zhu agreed that Liu Bei might come and presently took his leave.

Then Lu Su asked Zhou Yu, "What is your reason for desiring Liu Bei to come?"

"Liu Bei is the one bold and dangerous man and must be removed. I am taking this opportunity to persuade him to come. When he shall be slain, a great danger will cease to threaten our interests."

Lu Su tried to dissuade him from this scheme, but Zhou Yu was deaf to all Lu Su said.

Zhou Yu even issued orders: "Arrange half a hundred executioners to be ready to hide within the lining of the tent if Liu Bei decides to come; and when I drop a cup, that will be a signal for them to fall on and slay him."

Mi Zhu returned and told Liu Bei that his presence was desired by Zhou Yu. Suspecting nothing, Liu Bei at once ordered them to prepare a fast vessel to take him without loss of time.

Guan Yu was opposed to his going, saying, "Zhou Yu is artful and treacherous, and there is no news from Zhuge Liang. Pray think more carefully."

Liu Bei replied, "I have joined my forces to theirs in this attack on our common enemy. If Zhou Yu wishes to see me and I refuse to go, it is a betrayal. Nothing will succeed if both sides nourish suspicions."

"If you have finally decided to go, then will I go with you," said Guan Yu.

"And I also," cried Zhang Fei.

But Liu Bei said, "Let Guan Yu come with me while you and Zhao Zilong keep guard. Jian Yong will hold Exian. I shall not be away long."

So leaving these orders, Liu Bei embarked with Guan Yu on a small boat. The escort did not exceed twenty. The light craft traveled very quickly down the river. Liu Bei rejoiced greatly at the sight of the war vessels in tiers by the bank, the soldiers in their breastplates, and all the pomp and panoply of war. All was in excellent order.

As soon as he arrived, the guards ran to tell Zhou Yu.

"How many ships has he?" asked Zhou Yu.

They replied, "Only one; and the escort is only about a score."

"His fate is sealed," said Zhou Yu.

Zhou Yu sent for the executioners and placed them in hiding between the outer and inner tents, and when all was arranged for the assassination he contemplated, he went out to receive his visitor. Liu Bei came with his brother and escort into the midst of the army to the Admiral's tent.

After the salutations, Zhou Yu wished Liu Bei to take the upper seat, but he declined saying, "General, you are famous throughout all the empire, while I am a nobody. Do not overwhelm me with too great deference."

So they took the positions of simple friends, and refreshments were brought in.

Now by chance Zhuge Liang came on shore and heard that his master had arrived and was with the Commander-in-Chief. The news gave Zhuge Liang a great shock, and he said to himself, "What is to be done now?"

He made his way to the reception tent and stole a look therein. He saw murder written on Zhou Yu's countenance and noted the assassins hidden within the walls of the tent. Then he got a look at Liu Bei, who was laughing and talking quite unconcernedly. But when he noticed the redoubtable figure of Guan Yu near his master's side, he became quite calm and contented.

"My lord faces no danger," said Zhuge Liang, and he went away to the river bank to await the end of the interview.

Meanwhile the banquet of welcome proceeded. After the wine had gone around several times, Zhou Yu picked up a cup to give the signal agreed upon. But at that moment Zhou Yu saw so fierce a look upon the face of the trusty henchman who stood, sword in hand, behind his guest, that Zhou Yu hesitated and hastily asked who he was.

"That is my brother, Guan Yu," replied Liu Bei.

Zhou Yu, quite startled, said, "Is he the slayer of Yan Liang and Wen Chou?"

"Exactly; he it is," replied Liu Bei.

The sweat of fear broke out all over Zhou Yu's body and trickled down his back. Then he poured out a cup of wine and presented it to Guan Yu.

Just then Lu Su came in, and Liu Bei said to him, "Where is Zhuge Liang? I would trouble you to ask him to come."

"Wait till we have defeated Cao Cao," said Zhou Yu, "then you shall see him."

Liu Bei dared not repeat his request, but Guan Yu gave him a meaningful look which Liu Bei understood and rose, saying, "I would take leave now. I will come again to congratulate you when the enemy has been defeated and your success shall be complete."

Zhou Yu did not press him to remain, but escorted him to the great gates of the camp, and Liu Bei left. When he reached the river bank, they found Zhuge Liang awaiting them in their boat.

Liu Bei was exceedingly pleased, but Zhuge Liang said, "Sir, do you know in how great danger you were today?"

Suddenly sobered, Liu Bei said, "No, I did not think of danger."

"If Guan Yu had not been there, you would have been killed," said Zhuge Liang.

Liu Bei, after a moment's reflection, saw that it was true. He begged Zhuge Liang to return with him to Fankou, but Zhuge Liang refused.

"I am quite safe," said Zhuge Liang. "Although I am living in the tiger's mouth, I am as steady as the Taishan Mountains. Now, my lord, return and prepare your ships and soldiers. On the twentieth day of the eleventh month, send Zhao Zilong with a small ship to the south bank to wait for me. Be sure there is no miscarriage."

"What are your intentions?" said Liu Bei.

"When the southeast wind begins, I shall return."

Liu Bei would have questioned him further, but Zhuge Liang pressed him to go. So the boat started up river again, while Zhuge Liang returned to his temporary lodging.

The boat had not proceeded far when appeared a small fleet of fifty ships sweeping down with the current, and in the prow of the leading vessel stood a tall figure armed with a spear. Guan Yu was ready to fight. But when they were near, they recognized that was Zhang Fei, who had come down fearing lest his brother might be in some difficulty from which the strong arm of Guan Yu might even be insufficient to rescue him.

The three brothers thus returned together.

After Zhou Yu, having escorted Liu Bei to the gate of his camp, had returned to his quarters, Lu Su soon came to see him.

"Then you had cajoled Liu Bei into coming, why did you not carry out your plan?" asked Lu Su.

"Because of that Guan Yu. He is a very tiger, and he never left his brother for a moment. If anything had been attempted, he would certainly have had my life."

Lu Su knew that Zhou Yu spoke the truth. Then suddenly they announced a messenger with a letter from Cao Cao. Zhou Yu ordered them to bring him in and took the letter. But when he saw the superscription The First Minister of Han to Commander-in-Chief Zhou Yu, he fell into a frenzy of rage, tore the letter to fragments, and threw them on the ground.

"To death with this fellow!" cried he.

"When two countries are at war, their emissaries are not slain," said Lu Su.

"Messengers are slain to show one's dignity and independence," replied Zhou Yu.

The unhappy bearer of the letter was decapitated, and his head sent back to Cao Cao by the hands of his escort.

Zhou Yu then decided to move. The van under Gan Ning was to advance, supported by two wings led by Han Dang and Jiang Qin. Zhou Yu would lead the center body in support. The next morning the early meal was eaten in the fourth watch, and the ships got under way in the fifth with a great beating of drums.

Cao Cao was greatly angered when he heard that his letter had been torn to fragments, and he resolved to attack forthwith. His advance was led by the Supreme Admiral Cai Mao, the Vice-Admiral Zhang Yun, and others of

the Jingzhou officers who had joined his side. Cao Cao went as hastily as possible to the meeting of the three rivers and saw the ships of the South Land sailing up.

In the bow of the foremost ship from the south stood a fine figure of a warrior, who cried, "I am Gan Ning. I challenge anyone to combat!"

Cai Mao sent his young brother, Cai Xun, to accept the challenge. But as Cai Xun's ship approached, Gan Ning shot an arrow and Cai Xun fell. Gan Ning pressed forward, his crossbowmen keeping up a heavy discharge which Cao Cao's troops could not stand. The wings of Han Dang from the left and Jiang Qin from the right also joined in.

Cao Cao's soldiers, being mostly from the dry plains of the north, did not know how to fight effectually on water, and the southern ships had the battle all their own way. The slaughter was very great. However, after a contest lasting till afternoon, Zhou Yu thought it more prudent, in view of the superior numbers of his enemy, not to risk further the advantage he had gained. So he beat the gongs as the signal to cease battle and recall the ships.

Cao Cao was worsted, but his ships returned to the bank, where a camp was made and order was restored.

Cao Cao sent for his defeated leaders and reproached them, saying, "You did not do your best. You let an inferior force overcome you."

Cai Mao defended himself, saying, "The Jingzhou marines have not been exercised for a long time, and the others have never been trained for naval warfare at all. A naval camp must be instituted, the northern soldiers trained, and the Jingzhou force drilled. When they have been made efficient, they will win victories."

"You are the Supreme Admiral. If you know what should be done, why have you not done it?" said Cao Cao. "What is the use of telling me this?"

So Cai Mao and Zhang Yun organized a naval camp on the river bank. They established twenty-four "Water Gates," with the large ships outside as a sort of rampart, and under their protection the smaller ships went to and fro freely. At night when the lanterns and torches were lit, the very sky was illuminated, and the water shone red with the glare. On land the smoke of the camp fires could be traced for one hundred mile without a break.

Zhou Yu returned to camp and feasted his victorious fighting force. A messenger bore the joyful tidings of victory to his master Sun Quan. When night fell, Zhou Yu went up to the summit of one of the hills and looked out over the long line of bright lights stretching toward the west, showing the extent of the enemy's camp. He said nothing, but a great fear came in upon him.

Next day Zhou Yu decided that he would go in person to find out the strength of the enemy. So he bade them prepare a small squadron which he manned with strong, hardy men armed with powerful bows and stiff crossbows. He also placed musicians on each ship. They set sail and started up the stream. When they got opposite Cao Cao's camp, the heavy stones that served as anchors were dropped, and the music was played while Zhou Yu scanned the enemy's naval camp. What he saw gave him no satisfaction, for everything was most admirable.

He said, "How well and correctly built is that naval base! Anyone knows the names of those in command?"

"They are Cai Mao and Zhang Yun," said his officers.

"They have lived in the south a long time," said Zhou Yu, "and are thoroughly experienced in naval warfare. I must find some means of removing them before I can effect anything."

Meanwhile on shore the sentinels had told Cao Cao that the enemy craft were spying upon them, and Cao Cao ordered out some ships to capture the spies. Zhou Yu saw the commotion of the commanding flags on shore and hastily gave the order to unmoor and sail down stream. The squadron at once got under way and scattered; to and fro went the oars, and each ship seemed to fly. Before Cao Cao's ships could get out after them, they were all far away.

Cao Cao's ships took up the chase but soon saw pursuit was useless. They returned and reported their failure.

Again Cao Cao found fault with his officers and said, "The other day you lost a battle, and the soldiers were greatly dispirited. Now the enemy have spied out our camp. What can be done?"

In eager response to his question one stepped out, saying, "When I was a youth, Zhou Yu and I were fellow students and pledged friends. My three-inch tongue is still good, and I will go over and persuade him to surrender."

Cao Cao, rejoiced to find so speedy a solution, looked at the speaker. It was Jiang Gan of Jiujiang, one of the counseling staff in the camp.

"Are you a good friend of Zhou Yu?" said Cao Cao.

"Rest content, O Prime Minister," replied Jiang Gan. "If I only get on the other side of the river, I shall succeed."

"What preparations are necessary?" asked Cao Cao.

"Just a youth as my servant and a couple of rowers. Nothing else."

Cao Cao offered him wine, wished him success, and sent him on his way.

Clad in a simple linen robe and seated in his little craft, the messenger reached Zhou Yu's camp and bade the guards say that an old friend Jiang Gan wished to see him.

The commander was in his tent at a council when the message came, and he laughed as he said to those about him, "A persuader is coming."

Then he whispered certain instructions in the ear of each one of them, and they went out to await his arrival. Zhou Yu received his friend in full ceremonial garb. A crowd of officers in rich silken robes were about him. The guest appeared, his sole attendant a lad dressed in a simple blue gown. Jiang Gan bore himself proudly as he advanced, and Zhou Yu made a low obeisance.

“You have been well I hope since last we met,” said Jiang Gan.

“You have wandered far and suffered much in this task of emissary in Cao Cao’s cause,” said Zhou Yu.

“I have not seen you for a very long time,” said the envoy much taken aback, “and I came to visit you for the sake of old times. Why do you call me an emissary for the Cao Cao’s cause?”

“Though I am not so profound a musician as Shi Kuang of old, yet I can comprehend the thought behind the music,” replied Zhou Yu.

“As you choose to treat your old friend like this, I think I will take my leave,” said Jiang Gan.

Zhou Yu laughed again, and taking Jiang Gan by the arm, said, “Well, I feared you might be coming on his behalf to try to persuade me. But if this is not your intention, you need not go away so hastily.”

So they two entered the tent. When they had exchanged salutes and were seated as friends, Zhou Yu bade them call his officers that he might introduce them. They soon appeared civil and military officials, all dressed in their best. The military officers were clad in glittering silver armor and the staff looked very imposing as they stood ranged in two lines.

The visitor was introduced to them all. Presently a banquet was spread, and while they feasted, the musicians played songs of victory and the wine circulated merrily.

Under the mellowing influence, Zhou Yu’s reserve seemed to thaw and he said, “Jiang Gan is an old fellow student of mine, and we are pledged friends. Though he has arrived here from the north, he is no artful pleader so you need not be afraid of him.”

Then Zhou Yu took off the commanding sword which he wore as Commander-in-Chief and handed it to Taishi Ci, saying, “You take this and wear it for the day as master of the feast. This day we meet only as friends and speak only of friendship, and if anyone shall begin a discussion of the questions at issue between Cao Cao and the South Land, just slay him.”

Taishi Ci took the sword and seated himself in his place. Jiang Gan was not a little overcome, but he said no word.

Zhou Yu said, “Since I assumed command, I have tasted no drop of wine; but today as an old friend is present and there is no reason to fear him, I am going to drink freely.”

So saying he quaffed a huge goblet and laughed loudly.

The rhinoceros cups went swiftly round from guest to guest till all were half drunk. Then Zhou Yu, laying hold of the guest’s hand, led him outside the tent. The guards who stood around all braced themselves up and seized their shining weapons.

“Do you not think my soldiers a fine lot of fellows?” said Zhou Yu.

“Strong as bears and bold as tigers,” replied Jiang Gan.

Then Zhou Yu led him to the rear of the tent whence he saw the grain and forage piled up in mountainous heaps.

“Do you not think I have a fairly good store of grain and forage?”

“Your troops are brave and your supplies ample: The empire’s gossip is not baseless, indeed.”

Zhou Yu pretended to be quite intoxicated and went on, “When you and I were students together, we never looked forward to a day like this, did we?”

“For a genius like you, it is nothing extraordinary,” said the guest.

Zhou Yu again seized his hand, and they sat down.

“A man of the time, I have found a proper lord to serve. In his service, we rely upon the right feeling between minister and prince outside, and at home we are firm in the kindly feeling of relatives. He listens to my words and follows my plans. We share the same good or evil fortune. Even when the great old persuaders like Su Qin, Zhang Yi, Lu Jia, and Li Yiji lived again, even when their words poured forth like a rushing river, their tongues were as a sharp sword, it is impossible to move such as I am!”

Zhou Yu burst into a loud laugh as he finished, and Jiang Gan’s face had become clay-colored. Zhou Yu then led his guest back into the tent, and again they fell to drinking.

Presently Zhou Yu pointed to the others at table and said, “These are all the best and bravest of the land of the south. One might call this the ‘Gathering of Heroes.’”

They drank on till daylight failed and continued after lamps had been lit. Zhou Yu even gave an exhibition of sword play and sang this song:

When a man is in the world, O,
He ought to do his best.

And when he's done his best, O.
 He ought to have his rest.
 And when I have my rest, O,
 I'll quaff my wine with zest.
 And when I'm drunk as drunk can be, O,
 I'll sing the madman's litany.

A burst of applause greeted the song. By this time it was getting late, and the guest begged to be excused.

"The wine is too much for me," said Jiang Gan.

His host bade them clear the table.

As all the others left, Zhou Yu said, "It has been many a day since I shared a couch with my friend, but we will do so tonight."

Putting on the appearance of irresponsible intoxication, he led Jiang Gan into the tent and they went to bed. Zhou Yu simply fell, all dressed as he was, and lay there emitting uncouth grunts and groans, so that to the guest sleep was impossible.

Jiang Gan lay and listened to the various camp noises without and his host's thunderous snores within. About the second watch he rose and looked at his friend by the dim light of the small lamp. He also saw on the table a heap of papers, and coming out and looking at them furtively, he saw they were letters. Among them he saw one marked as coming from Cai Mao and Zhang Yun, Cao Cao's Supreme Admiral and Vice-Admiral. He read it and this is what it said:

"We surrendered to Cao Cao, not for the sake of pay but under stress of circumstances. Now we have been able to hold these northern soldiers into this naval camp but, as soon as occasion offers, we mean to have the rebel's head to offer as a sacrifice to your banner. From time to time there will be reports as occasions serve, but you may trust us. This is our humble reply to your letter."

"Those two were connected with the South Land in the beginning," thought Jiang Gan, so he secreted the letter in his dress and began to examine the others. But at that moment Zhou Yu turned over, and so Jiang Gan hastily blew out the light and went to his couch.

Zhou Yu was muttering as he lay there as if dreaming, saying, "Friend, I am going to let you see Cao Cao's head in a day or two."

Jiang Gan hastily made some reply to load on his host to say more. Then came, "Wait a few days; you will see Cao Cao's head. The old wretch!"

Jiang Gan tried to question him as to what he meant, but Zhou Yu was fast asleep and seemed to hear nothing. Jiang Gan lay there on his couch wide awake till the fourth watch was beating.

Then someone came in, saying, "General, are you awake?"

At that moment as if suddenly awakened from the deepest slumber, Zhou Yu started up and said, "Who is this on the couch?"

The voice replied, "Do you not remember, General? You asked your old friend to stay the night with you. It is he, of course."

"I drank too much last night," said Zhou Yu in a regretful tone, "and I forgot. I seldom indulge to excess and am not used to it. Perhaps I said many things I ought not."

The voice went on, "A man has arrived from the north."

"Speak lower," said Zhou Yu, and turning toward the sleeper, he called him by name. But Jiang Gan affected to be sound asleep and made no sign.

Zhou Yu crept out of the tent, while Jiang Gan listened with all his ears. He heard the man say, "Cai Mao and Zhang Yun, the two commanders, said that they cannot execute the plan in a hurry."

But listening as he did with straining ears, he could not make out what followed. Soon after Zhou Yu reentered and again called out his companion's name. But no reply came, for Jiang Gan was pretending to be in the deepest slumber and to hear nothing. Then Zhou Yu undressed and went to bed.

As Jiang Gan lay awake, he remembered that Zhou Yu was known to be meticulously careful in affairs, and if in the morning Zhou Yu found that a letter had disappeared, he would certainly slay the offender. So Jiang Gan lay there till near daylight and then called out to his host. Getting no reply, he rose, dressed, and stole out of the tent. Then he called his servant and made for the camp gate.

"Whither are you going, Sir?" said the watchmen at the gate.

"I fear I am in the way here," replied Jiang Gan, "and so I have taken leave of the Commander-in-Chief for a time. So do not stop me."

He found his way to the river bank and reembarked. Then, with flying oars, he hastened back to Cao Cao's camp. When he arrived, Cao Cao asked at once how he had sped, and he had to acknowledge failure.

"Zhou Yu is very clever and perfectly high-minded," said Jiang Gan. "Nothing that I could say moved him in the least."

"Your failure makes me look ridiculous," said Cao Cao.

"Well, if I did not win over Zhou Yu, I found out something for you. Send away these people, and I will tell you," said Jiang Gan.

The servants were dismissed, and then Jiang Gan produced the letter he had stolen from Zhou Yu's tent. He gave it to Cao Cao. Cao Cao was very angry and sent for Cai Mao and Zhang Yun at once.

As soon as they appeared, he said, "I want you two to attack."

Cai Mao replied, "But the soldiers are not yet sufficiently trained."

"The soldiers will be well enough trained when you have sent my head to Zhou Yu, eh?"

Both commanders were dumb-founded, having not the least idea what this meant. They remained silent for they had nothing to say. Cao Cao bade the executioners lead them away to instant death. In a short time their heads were produced.

By this time Cao Cao had thought over the matter, and it dawned upon him that he had been tricked. A poem says:

No one could stand against Cao Cao,
Of sin he had full share,
But Zhou Yu was more treacherous,
And caught him in a snare.
Two commanders to save their lives,
Betrayed a former lord,
Soon after, as was very met.
Both fell beneath the sword.

The death of these two naval commanders caused much consternation in the camp, and all their colleagues asked the reason for their sudden execution. Though Cao Cao knew they had been victimized, he would not acknowledge it.

So he said, "These two had been remiss, and so had been put to death."

The others were aghast, but nothing could be done. Two other officers, Mao Jie and Yu Jin, were put in command of the naval camp.

Spies took the news to Zhou Yu, who was delighted at the success of his ruse.

"Those two Cai Mao and Zhang Yun were my only source of anxiety," said he. "Now they are gone: I am quite happy."

Lu Su said, "General, if you can continue like this, you need not fear Cao Cao."

"I do not think any of them saw my game," said Zhou Yu, "except Zhuge Liang. He beats me, and I do not think this ruse was hidden from him. You go and sound him. See if he knew."

Zhou Yu's treacherous plot succeeded well,
Dissension sown, his rivals fell.
Drunk with success was he, but sought
To know what cynic Zhuge Liang thought.

What passed between Lu Su and Zhuge Liang will next be related.

Chapter 46

Using Strategy, Zhuge Liang Borrows Arrows; Joining A Ruse, Huang Gai Accepts Punishment.

Lu Su departed on his mission and found Zhuge Liang seated in his little craft.

"There has been so much to do that I have not been able to come to listen to your instructions," said Lu Su.

"That is truly so," said Zhuge Liang, "and I have not yet congratulated the Commander-in-Chief."

"What have you wished to congratulate him upon?"

"Why Sir, the matter upon which he sent you to find out whether I knew about it or not. Indeed I can congratulate him on that."

Lu Su turned pale and gasped, saying, "But how did you know, Master?"

"The ruse succeeded well thus played off on Jiang Gan. Cao Cao has been taken in this once, but he will soon rise to it. Only he will not confess his mistake. However, the two men are gone, and the South Land is freed from a grave anxiety. Do you not think that is a matter for congratulation? I hear Mao Jie and Yu Jin are the new admirals, and in their hands lie both good and evil for the fate of the northern fleet."

Lu Su was quite dumbfounded. He stayed a little time longer passing the time in making empty remarks, and then took his leave.

As he was going away, Zhuge Liang cautioned him, saying, "Do not let Zhou Yu know that I know his ruse. If you let him know, he will seek some chance to do me harm."

Lu Su promised. Nevertheless he went straight to his chief and related the whole thing just as it happened.

"Really he must be got rid of," said Zhou Yu. "I have quite decided to put the man out of the way."

"If you slay him, will not Cao Cao laugh at you?"

"Oh, no! I will find a legitimate way of getting rid of him so that he shall go to his death without resentment."

"But how can you find a legitimate way of assassinating him?"

"Do not ask too much. You will see presently."

Soon after all the officers were summoned to the main tent, and Zhuge Liang's presence was desired. He went contentedly enough.

When all were seated, Zhou Yu suddenly addressed Zhuge Liang, saying, "I am going to fight a battle with the enemy soon on the water. What weapons are the best?"

"On a great river arrows are the best," said Zhuge Liang.

"Your opinion and mine agree. But at the moment we are short of them. I wish you would undertake to supply about a hundred thousand arrows for the naval fight. As it is for the public service, you will not decline, I hope."

"Whatever task the Commander-in-Chief lays upon me, I must certainly try to perform," replied Zhuge Liang. "May I inquire by what date you require the hundred thousand arrows?"

"Could you have them ready in ten days?"

"The enemy will be here very soon. Ten days will be too late," said Zhuge Liang.

"In how many days do you estimate the arrows can be ready?"

"Let me have three days. Then you may send for your hundred thousand."

"No joking, remember!" said Zhou Yu. "There is no joking in war time."

"Dare I joke with the Commander-in-Chief? Give me a formal military order. If I have not completed the task in three days, I will take my punishment."

Zhou Yu, secretly delighted, sent for the secretaries and prepared the commission then and there.

Then he drank to the success of the undertaking and said, "I shall have to congratulate you most heartily when this is accomplished."

"This day is too late to count," said Zhuge Liang. "On the third from tomorrow morning send five hundred soldiers to the river side to convey the arrows."

They drank a few more cups together, and then Zhuge Liang took his leave.

After he had gone, Lu Su said, "Do you not think there is some deceit about this?"

"Clearly it is not I! It is he who has signed his own death warrant," said Zhou Yu. "Without being pressed in the least, he asked for a formal order in the face of the whole assembly. Even if he grew a pair of wings, he could not escape. Only I will just order the workers to delay him as much as they can, and not supply him with materials, so that he is sure to fail. And then, when the certain penalty is incurred, who can criticize? You can go and inquire about it all and keep me informed."

So off went Lu Su to seek Zhuge Liang, who at once reproached him with having blabbed about the former business.

Zhuce Liang said, "He wants to hurt me, as you know, and I did not think you could not keep my secret. And now there is what you saw today, and how do you think I can get a hundred thousand arrows made in three days? You will simply have to rescue me."

"You brought the misfortune on yourself, and how can I rescue you?" said Lu Su.

"I look to you for the loan of twenty vessels, manned each by thirty people. I want blue cotton screens and bundles of straw lashed to the sides of the boats. I have good use for them. On the third day, I shall undertake to deliver the fixed number of arrows. But on no account must you let Zhou Yu know, or my scheme will be wrecked."

Lu Su consented, and this time he kept his word. He went to report to his chief as usual, but he said nothing about the boats.

He only said, "Zhuge Liang is not using bamboo or feathers or glue or varnish, but has some other way of getting arrows."

"Let us await the three days' limit," said Zhou Yu, puzzled though confident.

On his side Lu Su quietly prepared a score of light swift boats, each with its crew and the blue screens and bundles of grass complete and, when these were ready, he placed them at Zhuge Liang's disposal.

Zhuce Liang did nothing on the first day, nor on the second. On the third day at the middle of the fourth watch, Zhuge Liang sent a private message asking Lu Su to come to his boat.

"Why have you sent for me, Sir?" asked Lu Su.

"I want you to go with me to get those arrows."

"Whither are you going?"

"Do not ask. You will see."

Then the twenty boats were fastened together by long ropes and moved over to the north bank. The night proved very foggy and the mist was very dense along the river, so that one person could scarcely see another. In spite of the fog, Zhuge Liang urged the boats forward as if into the vast fairy kingdom.

There is a poem on these river fogs:

Mighty indeed is the Great River!
Rising far in the west, in the Emei and Min Mountains,
Plowing its way through Wu, east flowing, resistless,
Swelled by its nine tributary streams, rolling down from the far north,
Aided and helped by a hundred rivulets swirling and foaming,
Ocean receives it at last welcoming, joyful, its waters.
Therein abide sea nymphs and water gods,
Enormous whales a thousand fathoms long,
Nine-headed monstrous beasts, reptiles and octopi,
Demons and uncouth creatures wondrous strange.
In faith it is the home and safe retreat
Of devils and sprites, and wondrous growths,
And eke the battle ground of valiant humans.
At times occur strange strife of elements,
When darkness strives on light's domains that encroach,
Whereat arises in the vaulted dome of blue
White wreaths of fog that toward the center roll.
Then darkness falls, too dense for any torch
Illumine; only clanging sounds can pass.
The fog at first appears, a vaporous wreath
Scarce visible. But thickening fast, it veils
The Southern Hills, the painted leopard's home.
And spreads afar, until the northern sea
Leviathans are amazed and lose their course.
And denser yet it touches on the sky.
And spreads a heavy mantle over the earth.
Then, wide as is the high pitched arch of heaven,
Therein appears no single rift of blue.
Now mighty whales lead up their spouses to sport
Upon the waves, the sinuous dragons dive
Deep down and, breathing, swell the heaving sea,
The earth is moist as with the early rains,
And spring's creative energy is chilled.
Both far and wide and high the damp fog spreads,
Great cities on the eastern bank are hid,
Wide ports and mountains in the south are lost,
Whole fleets of battle ships, a thousand keels,
Hide in the misty depths; frail fishing boats
High riding on a wave are seen—and lost.
The gloom increases and the domed sky
Grows dark and darker as the sun's light fails.
The daylight dies, dim twilight's reign begins,
The ruddy hills dissolve and lose their hue.
The skill of matchless King Yu would fail to sound

The depth and height; and Li Lou's eye, though keen,
 Could never pierce this gloom.
 Now is the time, O sea and river gods, to use your powers.
 The gliding fish and creeping water folk
 Are lost; there is no track for bird or beast.
 Fair Penglai Isles are hidden from our sight,
 The lofty gates of heaven have disappeared.
 Nature is blurred and indistinct, as when
 A driving rain storm hurries over the earth.
 And then, perhaps, within the heavy haze,
 A noisome serpent vents his venom foul
 And plagues descend, or impish demons work
 Their wicked wills.
 Ills fall on humans but do not stay,
 Heaven's cleansing breath sweeps them sway,
 But while they last the mean ones cry,
 The nobler suffer silently.
 The greatest turmoil is a sign
 Of quick return to state benign.

The little fleet reached Cao Cao's naval camp about the fifth watch, and Zhuge Liang gave orders to form line lying prows west, and then to beat the drums and shout.

"But what shall we do if they attack us?" exclaimed Lu Su.

Zhugue Liang replied with a smile, "I think their fleet will not venture out in this fog. Go on with your wine, and let us be happy. We will go back when the fog lifts."

As soon as the shouting from the river was heard by those in the camp, the two admirals, Mao Jie and Yu Jin, ran off to report to Cao Cao, who said, "Coming up in a fog like this means that they have prepared an ambush for us. Do not go out, but get all the force together and shoot at them."

He also sent orders to the ground camps to dispatch six thousand of archers and crossbowmen to aid the marines.

The naval forces were then lined up shooting on the bank to prevent a landing. Presently the soldiers arrived, and ten thousand and more soldiers were shooting down into the river, where the arrows fell like rain. By and bye Zhuge Liang ordered the boats to turn round so that their prows pointed east and to go closer in so that many arrows might hit them.

Zhugue Liang ordered the drums to be kept beating till the sun was high and the fog began to disperse, when the boats got under way and sailed down stream. The whole twenty boats were bristling with arrows on both sides.

As they left, Zhuge Liang asked all the crews to shout derisively, "We thank you, Sir Prime Minister, for the arrows!"

They told Cao Cao, but by the time he came, the light boats helped by the swift current were seven miles long down the river and pursuit was impossible. Cao Cao saw that he had been duped and was very sorry, but there was no help for it.

On the way down Zhuge Liang said to his companion, "Every boat must have five or six thousand arrows and so, without the expenditure of an ounce of energy, we must have more than ten myriad arrows, which tomorrow can be shot back again at Cao Cao's army to his great inconvenience."

"You are really superhuman," said Lu Su. "But how did you know there would be a thick fog today?"

"One cannot be a leader without knowing the workings of heaven and the ways of earth. One must understand the secret gates and the interdependence of the elements, the mysteries of tactics and the value of forces. It is but an ordinary talent. I calculated three days ago that there would be a fog today, and so I set the limit at three days. Zhou Yu would give me ten days, but neither artificers nor materials, so that he might find occasion to put me to death as I knew. But my fate lies with the Supreme, and how could Zhou Yu harm me?"

Lu Su could not but agree. When the boats arrived, five hundred soldiers were in readiness on the bank to carry away the arrows. Zhuge Liang bade them go on board the boats, collect them and bear them to the tent of the Commander-in-Chief. Lu Su went to report that the arrows had been obtained and told Zhou Yu by what means.

Zhou Yu was amazed and sighed sadly, saying, "He is better than I. His methods are more than human."

Thick lies the fog on the river,
 Nature is shrouded in white,
 Distant and near are confounded,
 Banks are no longer in sight.

Fast fly the pattering arrows,
Stick in the boats of the fleet.
Now can full tale be delivered,
Zhuge Liang is victor complete.

When, shortly after his return, Zhuge Liang went to the tent of the Commander-in-Chief, he was welcomed by Zhou Yu, who came forward to greet him, saying, "Your superhuman predictions compel one's esteem."

"There is nothing remarkable in that trifling trick," replied he.

Zhou Yu led him within and wine was brought.

Then Zhou Yu said, "My lord sent yesterday to urge me to advance, but I have no master plan ready. I wish you would assist me, Master."

"But where should I, a man of poor everyday ability, find such a plan as you desire?"

"I saw the enemy's naval camp just lately, and it looked very complete and well organized. It is not an ordinary place to attack. I have thought of a plan, but I am not sure it will answer. I should be happy if you would decide for me."

"General," replied Zhuge Liang, "do not say what your plan is, but each of us will write in the palm of his hand and see whether our opinions agree."

So brush and ink were sent for, and Zhou Yu first wrote on his own palm, and then passed the pen to Zhuge Liang who also wrote. Then getting close together on the same bench, each showed his hand to the other, and both burst out laughing, for both had written the same word, "Fire."

"Since we are of the same opinion," said Zhou Yu, "there is no longer any doubt. But our intentions must be kept secret."

"Both of us are public servants, and what would be the sense of telling our plans? I do not think Cao Cao will be on his guard against this, although he has had two experiences. You may put your scheme into force."

They finished their wine and separated. Not an officer knew a word of their plans.

Now Cao Cao had expended a myriad arrows in vain and was much irritated in consequence. He deeply desired revenge.

Then Xun You proposed a ruse, saying, "The two strategists on the side of the enemy are Zhou Yu and Zhuge Liang, two men most difficult to get the better of. Let us send someone who shall pretend to surrender to them but really be a spy on our behalf and a helper in our schemes. When we know what is doing, we can plan to meet it."

"I had thought of that myself," replied Cao Cao. "Whom do you think the best person to send?"

"Cai Mao has been put to death, but all his clan and family are in the army, and his two younger brothers are junior generals. You have them most securely in your power and may send them to surrender. The ruler of the South Land will never suspect deceit there."

Cao Cao decided to act on this plan, and in the evening summoned Cai Zhong and Cai He to his tent, where he told them, saying, "I want you to pretend to surrender to the South Land so that you can gather intelligence and sent it back. When all done, you will be richly rewarded. But do not betray me."

"Our families are in Jingzhou, and that place is yours," replied they. "Should we dare betray? You need have no doubts, Sir. You will soon see the heads of both Zhou Yu and Zhuge Liang at your feet."

Cao Cao gave them generous gifts. Soon after the two men, each with his five hundred soldiers, set sail with a fair wind for the opposite bank.

Now as Zhou Yu was preparing for the attack, the arrival of some northern ships was announced. They bore the two younger brothers of Cai Mao, who had come as deserters.

They were led in and, bowing before the general, said, weeping, "Our innocent brother has been put to death, and we desire vengeance. So we have come to offer allegiance to you. We pray you appoint us to the vanguard."

Zhou Yu appeared very pleased and made them presents. Then he ordered them to join Gan Ning in leading the van. They thanked him and regarded their scheme as already a success.

But Zhou Yu gave Gan Ning secret orders, saying, "They have come without their families, and so I know their desertion is only pretense. They have been sent as spies, and I am going to meet their ruse with one of my own. They shall have some information to send. You will treat them well, but keep a careful guard over them. On the day our soldiers start the offense, they shall be sacrificed to the flag. But be very careful that nothing goes wrong."

Gan Ning went away.

Then Lu Su came to tell Zhou Yu, saying, "Everyone agrees in thinking the surrender of Cai Zhong and Cai He feigned and they should be rejected."

"But they wish to revenge the death of their brother," said the Fleet Admiral. "Where is the pretense? If you are so suspicious, you will receive nobody at all."

Lu Su left much piqued and went to see Zhuge Liang to whom he told the story. Zhuge Liang only smiled.

"Why do you smile?" said Lu Su.

"I smile at your simplicity. The General is playing a game. Spies cannot easily come and go, so these two have been sent to feign desertion that they may act as spies. The General is meeting one ruse with another. He wants them to give false information. Deceit is not to be despised in war, and his scheme is the correct one to employ."

Then Lu Su understood.

That night as Zhou Yu was sitting in his tent, Huang Gai came to see him privately.

Zhou Yu said, "You have surely some wise plan to propose that you come at night like this."

Huang Gai replied, "The enemy are more numerous than we, and it is wrong to delay. Why not burn them out?"

"Who suggested that to you?"

"I thought of it myself. Nobody suggested it," replied Huang Gai.

"I just wanted something like this, and that is why I kept those two pretended deserters. I want them to give some false news. The pity is that I have no one to feign desertion to the other side and work my plan."

"But I will carry out your plan," said Huang Gai.

"But if you cannot show some injury, you will not be believed," said Zhou Yu.

"The Sun family have been very generous to me, and I would not resent being crushed to death to repay them," said Huang Gai.

Zhou Yu bowed and thanked him, saying, "If you would not object to some bodily suffering, then the South Land would indeed be happy."

"Kill me. I do not mind," repeated Huang Gai as he took his leave.

Next day the drums called all the officers together to the Commander-in-Chief's tent, and Zhuge Liang came with the others.

Zhou Yu said, "The enemy's camps extend about one hundred miles so that the campaign will be a long one. Each leader is to prepare supplies for three months."

Scarcely had he spoken when Huang Gai started up, crying, "Say not three months. Be ready for thirty months, and even then it will not be ended. If you can destroy them this month, then all is well. If you cannot, then it were better to take Zhang Zhao's advice, throw down your weapons, turn to the north, and surrender."

Zhou Yu's anger flared up, and he flushed, crying, "Our lord's orders were to destroy Cao Cao, and whoever mentioned the word surrender should be put to death! Now, the very moment when the two armies are to engage, you dare talk of surrender and damp the ardor of my army! If I do not slay you, how can I support the others?"

He ordered the lictors to remove Huang Gai and execute him without delay.

Huang Gai then flamed up in turn, saying, "This is the third generation since I went with General Sun Jian, and we overran the southeast. Whence have you sprung up?"

This made Zhou Yu perfectly furious, and Huang Gai was ordered to instant death. But Gan Ning interfered.

Said he, "He is a veteran officer of the South Land. Pray pardon him!"

"What are you prating about?" cried Zhou Yu. "Dare you come between me and my duty?"

Turning to the lictors, Zhou Yu ordered them to drive Gan Ning forth with blows.

The other officials fell on their knees entreating pity for Huang Gai.

"He is indeed most worthy of death, but it would be a loss to the army. We pray you forgive him. Record his fault for the moment; and after the enemy shall have been defeated, then put him to death."

But Zhou Yu was implacable. The officers pleaded with tears.

At length he seemed moved, saying, "Had you not interceded, he should certainly have suffered death. But now I will mitigate the punishment to a beating. He shall not die."

Zhou Yu turned to the lictors and bade them deal the culprit one hundred blows. Again his colleagues prayed for remission, but Zhou Yu angrily pushed over the table in front of him and roared to the officers to get out of the way and let the sentence be executed.

So Huang Gai was stripped, thrown to the ground, and fifty blows were given. At this point the officers again prayed that he be let off.

Zhou Yu sprang from his chair and pointing his finger at Huang Gai said, "If you dare flout me again, you shall have the other fifty. If you are guilty of any disrespect, you shall be punished for both faults!"

With this he turned into the inner part of the tent, growling as he went, while the officers helped their beaten colleague to his feet. He was in a deplorable state. His back was cut in many places, and the blood was flowing in streams. They led him to his own quarters and on the way he swooned several times. His case seemed most pitiable.

Lu Su went to see the suffering officer and then called on Zhuge Liang in his boat.

Lu Su related the story of the beating and said, "Though the other officers have been cowed into silence, I think thought you, Sir, might have interceded. You are a guest and not under Zhou Yu's orders. Why did you stand by with your hands up your sleeves and say never a word?"

"You insult me," said Zhuge Liang smiling.

"Why do you say that? I have never insulted you: Never since the day we came here together."

“Do you not know that terrible beating was but a ruse? How could I try to dissuade Zhou Yu?”

Then Lu Su began to perceive, and Zhuge Liang continued, saying, “Cao Cao would not be taken in unless there was some real bodily suffering. Zhou Yu is going to send Huang Gai over as a deserter, and Zhou Yu will see to it that the two Cao Cao’s spies duly tell the tale. But when you see the General, you must not tell him that I saw through the ruse. You say that I am very angry like the others.”

Lu Su went to see Zhou Yu and asked, “Why have you so cruelly beaten a proved and trusty officer?”

“Do the officers resent it?” asked Zhou Yu.

“They are all upset about it.”

“And what does your friend think?”

“Zhuge Liang also resents it in his heart, and he thinks you have made a mistake.”

“Then I have deceived him for once,” said Zhou Yu gleefully.

“What mean you?” cried Lu Su.

“That beating that Huang Gai got is part of my ruse. I am sending him to Cao Cao as a deserter, and so I have supplied a reason for desertion. Then I am going to use fire against the enemy.”

Lu Su kept silence, but he recognized that Zhuge Liang was again right.

Meanwhile Huang Gai lay in his tent, whither all his colleague officers went to condole with him and inquire after his health. But Huang Gai would say never a word. He only lay sighing deeply from time to time.

But when the Strategist Kan Ze came, Huang Gai told them to bring him to the room where he lay. Then he bade the servants go away.

Kan Ze said, “Surely you must have some serious quarrel with the General.”

“I have none,” said Huang Gai.

“Then this beating is just part of a ruse?”

“How did you guess?” said Huang Gai.

“Because I watched the General, and I guessed about nine tenths of the truth.”

Huang Gai said, “You see I have been very generously treated by the Sun family, all three of them, and have no means of showing my gratitude except by offering to help in this ruse. True I suffer, but I do not regret that. Among all those I know in the army, there is not one I am intimate with except yourself. You are true, and I can talk with you as a friend.”

“I suppose you wish me to present your surrender letter to Cao Cao. Is that it?”

“Just that; will you do it?” said Huang Gai.

Kan Ze consented joyfully.

Even the warrior’s body is but a stake in the game,
The friend so ready to help him proves that their hearts are the same.

Kan Ze’s reply will be read in the next chapter.

Chapter 47

Kan Ze Presents A Treacherous Letter; Pang Tong Suggests Chaining The Ships.

Kan Ze was from Shanyin, a son of a humble family. He loved books, but as he was too poor to buy, he used to borrow. He had a wonderfully tenacious memory, was very eloquent and no coward. Sun Quan had employed him among his advisers, and he and Huang Gai were excellent friends.

Now Huang Gai had thought of Kan Ze to present the treacherous letter to Cao Cao, as Kan Ze’s gifts made him most suitable.

Kan Ze accepted with enthusiasm, saying, “When you, my friend, have suffered so much for our lord, could I spare myself? No! While a person lives, he must go on fulfilling his mission, or he is no better than the herbs that rot in the field.”

Huang Gai slipped off the couch and came over to salute him.

“However, this matter must speed,” continued Kan Ze. “There is no time to lose.”

“The letter is already written,” said Huang Gai.

Kan Ze received it and left. That night he disguised himself as an old fisherman and started in a small punt for the north shore, under the cold, glittering light of the stars. Soon he drew near the enemy’s camp and was captured by the patrol.

Without waiting for day, they informed Cao Cao, who said at once, “Is he not just a spy?”

“No,” said they, “he is alone, just an old fisherman. And he says he is an adviser in the service of the South Land named Kan Ze, and he has come on secret business.”

"Bring him," said Cao Cao, and Kan Ze was led in.

Cao Cao was seated in a brilliantly lit tent. He was leaning on a small table, and as soon as he saw the prisoner, he said harshly, "You are an adviser of East Wu. What then are you doing here?"

"People say that you greedily welcome people of ability. I do not think your question a very proper one. O friend Huang Gai, you made a mistake," said Kan Ze.

"You know I am fighting against East Wu, and you come here privately. Why should I not question you?"

"Huang Gai is an old servant of Wu, one who has served three successive rulers. Now he has been cruelly beaten, for no fault, before the face of all the officers in Zhou Yu's camp. He is grievously angry about this and wishes to desert to your side that he may be revenged. He discussed it with me, and as we are inseparable, I have come to give you his letter asking whether you would receive him."

"Where is the letter?" said Cao Cao.

The missive was produced and presented. Cao Cao opened it and read:

"I, Huang Gai, have been generously treated by the Sun family and have served them single-heartedly. Lately they have been discussing an attack with our forces on the enormous army of the central government. Everyone knows our few are no match for such a multitude, and every officer of the South Land, wise or foolish, recognizes that quite well. However, Zhou Yu who, after all, is but a youth and a shallow minded simpleton, maintains that success is possible and rashly desires to smash stones with an egg. Beside, he is arbitrary and tyrannical, punishing for no crime, and leaving meritorious service unrewarded. I am an old servant and for no reason have been shamed in the sight of people. Wherefore I hate him in my heart.

"You, O Prime Minister, treat people with sincerity and are ready to welcome ability and so I, and those under my leadership, desire to enter your service whereby to acquire reputation and remove the shameful stigma. The commissariat, weapons, and the supply ships that I am commanding will also come over to you. In perfect sincerity I state these matters. I pray you not to doubt me."

Leaning there on the low table by his side, Cao Cao turned this letter over and over and read it again and again.

Then he smacked the table, opened his eyes wide with anger, saying, "Huang Gai is trying to play the personal injury trick on me, is he? And you are in it as the intermediary to present the letter. How dare you come to sport with me?"

Cao Cao ordered the lictors to thrust forth the messenger and take off his head. Kan Ze was hustled out, his face untroubled. On the contrary, he laughed aloud.

At this Cao Cao told them to bring him back and harshly said to him, "What do you find to laugh at now that I have foiled you and your ruse has failed?"

"I was not laughing at you. I was laughing at my friend's simplicity."

"What do you mean by his simplicity?"

"If you want to slay, slay. Do not trouble me with a multitude of questions."

"I have read all the books on the art of war, and I am well versed in all ways of misleading the enemy. This ruse of yours might have succeeded with many, but it will not do for me."

"And so you say that the letter is a vicious trick?" said Kan Ze.

"What I say is that your little slip has sent you to the death you risked. If the thing was real and you were sincere, why does not the letter name a time of coming over? What have you to say to that?"

Kan Ze waited to the end and then laughed louder than ever, saying, "I am so glad you are not frightened but can still boast of your knowledge of the books of war. Now you will not lead away your soldiers. If you fight, Zhou Yu will certainly capture you. But how sad to think I die at the hand of such an ignorant fellow!"

"What mean you? I, ignorant?"

"You are ignorant of any strategy and a victim of unreason. Is not that sufficient?"

"Well then, tell me where is any fault?"

"You treat wise people too badly for me to talk to you. You can finish me and let there be an end of it."

"If you can speak with any show of reason, I will treat you differently."

"Do you not know that when one is going to desert one's master and become a renegade, one cannot say exactly when the chance will occur? If one binds one's self to a fixed moment and the thing cannot be done just then, the secret will be discovered. One must watch for an opportunity and take it when it comes. Think: Is it possible to know exactly when? But you know nothing of common sense. All you know is how to put good people to death. So you really are an ignorant fellow!"

At this Cao Cao changed his manner, got up, and came over to the prisoner bowing, "I did not see clearly. That is quite true. I offended you, and I hope you will forget it."

"The fact is that Huang Gai and I are both inclined to desert to you. We even yearn for it as a child desires its parents. Is it possible that we should play you false?"

"If you two could render me so great a service, you shall certainly be richly rewarded."

"We do not desire rank or riches. We come because it is the will of Heaven and the plain way of duty."

Then wine was set out, and Kan Ze was treated as an honored guest. While they were drinking, someone came in and whispered in Cao Cao's ear.

He replied, "Let me see the letter."

Whereupon the man pulled out and gave him a letter, which evidently pleased him.

"That is from the two Cai brothers," thought Kan Ze. "They are reporting the punishment of my friend, and that will be a proof of the sincerity of his letter."

Turning toward Kan Ze, Cao Cao said, "I must ask you to return to settle the date with your friend. As soon as I know, I will have a force waiting."

"I cannot return. Pray, Sir, send some other one you can trust."

"If someone else should go, the secret would be discovered."

Kan Ze refused again and again but at last gave way, saying, "If I am to go, I must not wait here. I must be off at once."

Cao Cao offered him gold and silks, which were refused. Kan Ze started, left the camp, and reembarked for the south bank, where he related all that had happened to Huang Gai.

"If it had not been for your persuasive tongue, then had I undergone this suffering in vain," said Huang Gai.

"I will now go to get news of the two Cai brothers," said Kan Ze.

"Excellent," said Huang Gai.

Kan Ze went to the camp commanded by Gan Ning.

When they were seated, Kan Ze said to his host, "I was much distressed when I saw how disgracefully you were treated for your intercession on behalf of Huang Gai."

Gan Ning smiled. Just then the two Cai brothers came, and host and guest exchanged glances.

Gan Ning said, "The truth is Zhou Yu is over confident, and he reckons us as nobody. We count for nothing. Everyone is talking of the way I was insulted."

And he shouted and gritted his teeth and smacked the table in his wrath.

Kan Ze leaned over toward his host and said something in a very low voice, at which Gan Ning bent his head and sighed.

Cai He and Cai Zhong gathered from this scene that both Gan Ning and Kan Ze were ripe for desertion and determined to probe them.

"Why, Sir, do you anger him? Why not be silent about your injuries?" said they.

"What know you of our bitterness?" said Kan Ze.

"We think you seem much inclined to go over to Cao Cao," said they.

Kan Ze at this lost color. Gan Ning started up and drew his sword, crying, "They have found out. They must die to keep their mouths shut!"

"No, no," cried the two in a flurry. "Let us tell you something quite secret!"

"Quick, then!" cried Gan Ning.

So Cai He said, "The truth is that we are only pretended deserters, and if you two gentlemen are of our way of thinking, we can manage things for you."

"But are you speaking the truth?" said Gan Ning.

"Is it likely we should say such a thing if it were untrue?" cried both at the same moment.

Gan Ning put on a pleased look and said, "Then this is the very heaven-given chance."

"You know we have already told Cao Cao of the Huang Gai affair and how you were insulted."

"The fact is I have given the Prime Minister a letter on behalf of Huang Gai, and he sent me back again to settle the date of Huang Gai's desertion," said Kan Ze.

"When an honest person happens upon an enlightened master, his heart will always be drawn toward him," said Gan Ning.

The four then drank together and opened their hearts to each other. The two Cai Zhong and Cai He wrote a private letter to their master saying Gan Ning has agreed to join in our plot and play the traitor, and Kan Ze also wrote, and they sent the letters secretly to Cao Cao.

Kan Ze's letter said:

"Huang Gai has found no opportunity so far. However, when he comes, his boat can be recognized by a black, indented flag. That shall mean he is on board."

However, when Cao Cao got these two letters, he was still doubtful and called together his advisers to talk over the matter.

Said he, "On the other side Gan Ning has been put to shame by the Commander-in-Chief whom he is prepared

to betray for the sake of revenge. Huang Gai has been punished and sent Kan Ze to propose that he should come over to our side. Only I still distrust the whole thing. Who will go over to the camp to find out the real truth?"

Then Jiang Gan spoke up, saying, "I failed in my mission the other day and am greatly mortified. I will risk my life again and, this time, I shall surely bring good news."

Cao Cao approved of him as messenger and bade him start. Jiang Gan set out in a small craft and speedily arrived in the Three Gorges, landing near the naval camp. Then he sent to inform Zhou Yu.

Hearing who it was, Zhou Yu chuckled, saying, "Success depends upon this man."

Then Zhou Yu called Lu Su and told him to call Pang Tong to come and do certain things for him.

This Pang Tong was from Xiangyang. And he had gone to the east of the river to get away from the strife. Lu Su had recommended him to Zhou Yu, but he had not yet presented himself.

When Zhou Yu sent Lu Su to ask what scheme of attack he would recommend against Cao Cao, Pang Tong had said to Lu Su, "You must use fire against him. But the river is wide and if one ship is set on fire, the others will scatter unless they are fastened together so that they must remain in one place. That is the one road to success."

Lu Su took this message to Zhou Yu, who pondered over it and then said, "The only person who can manage this is Pang Tong himself."

"Cao Cao is very wily," said Lu Su. "How can Pang Tong go?"

So Zhou Yu was sad and undecided. He could think of no method till suddenly the means presented itself in the arrival of Jiang Gan.

Zhou Yu at once sent instructions to Pang Tong how to act, and then sat himself in his tent to await his visitor Jiang Gan.

But the visitor became ill at ease and suspicious when he saw that his old student friend did not come to welcome him, and he took the precaution of sending his boat into a retired spot to be made fast before he went to the general's tent.

When Zhou Yu saw Jiang Gan, Zhou Yu put on an angry face and said, "My friend, why did you treat me so badly?"

Jiang Gan laughed and said, "I remembered the old days when we were as brothers, and I came expressly to pour out my heart to you. Why do you say I treated you badly?"

"You came to persuade me to betray my master, which I would never do unless the sea dried up and the rocks perished. Remembering the old times, I filled you with wine and kept you to sleep with me. And you, you plundered my private letters and stole away with never a word of farewell. You betrayed me to Cao Cao and caused the death of my two friends on the other side and so caused all my plans to miscarry. Now what have you come for? Certainly, it is not out of kindness to me. I would cut you in two, but I still care for our old friendship. I would send you back again, but within a day or two I shall attack that rebel. If I let you stay in my camp, my plans will leak out. So I am going to tell my attendants to conduct you to a certain retired hut in the Western Hills, and keep you there till I shall have won the victory. Then I will send you back again."

Jiang Gan tried to say something, but Zhou Yu would not listen. He turned his back and went into the recesses of his tent. The attendants led the visitor off, set him on a horse, and took him away over the hills to the small hut, leaving two soldiers to look after him.

When Jiang Gan found himself in the lonely hut, he was very depressed and had no desire to eat or sleep. But one night, when the stars were very brilliant, he strolled out to enjoy them. Presently he came to the rear of his lonely habitation and heard, near by, someone crooning over a book. Approaching with stealthy steps, he saw a tiny cabin half hidden in a cliff whence a slender beam or two of light stole out between the rafters. He went nearer and peeping in, saw a man reading by the light of a lamp near which hung a sword. And the book was Sun Zi's classic "The Art of War."

"This is no common person," thought Jiang Gan, and so he knocked at the door.

The door was opened by the reader, who bade him welcome with cultivated and refined ceremony. Jiang Gan inquired his name.

The host replied, "I am Pang Tong."

"Then you are surely the Master known as Young Phoenix, are you not?"

"Yes, I am he."

"How often have I heard you talked about! You are famous. But why are you hidden away in this spot?"

"That fellow Zhou Yu is too conceited to allow that anyone else has any talent, and so I live here quietly. But who are you, Sir?"

"I am Jiang Gan."

Then Pang Tong made him welcome and led him in, and the two sat down to talk.

"With your gifts, you would succeed anywhere," said Jiang Gan. "If you would enter Cao Cao's service, I would recommend you to him."

"I have long desired to get away from here. And if you, Sir, will present me, there is no time like the present. If

Zhou Yu heard of my wish, he would kill me, I am sure.”

So without more ado, they made their way down the hill to the water's edge to seek the boat in which Jiang Gan had come. They embarked and, rowing swiftly, they soon reached the northern shore. At the central camp, Jiang Gan landed and went to seek Cao Cao to whom he related the story of the discovery of his new acquaintance.

When Cao Cao heard that the newcomer was Master Young Phoenix, Cao Cao went to meet him personally, made him very welcome, and soon they sat down to talk on friendly terms.

Cao Cao said, “And so Zhou Yu in his youth is conceited and annoys his officers and rejects all their advice: I know that. But your fame has been long known to me, and now that you have been gracious enough to turn my way, I pray you not to be thrifty of your advice.”

“I, too, know well that you are a model of military strategy,” said Pang Tong, “but I should like to have one look at your disposition.”

So horses were brought, and the two rode out to the lines, host and visitor on equal terms, side by side. They ascended a hill whence they had a wide view of the land base.

After looking all round Pang Tong remarked, “Wu Qi the Great General, came to life again, could not do better, nor Sun Zi the Famed Strategist if he reappeared! All accords with the precepts. The camp is beside the hills and is flanked by a forest. The front and rear are within sight of each other. Gates of egress and ingress are provided, and the roads of advance and retirement are bent and broken.”

“Master, I entreat you not to overpraise me, but to advise me where I can make further improvements,” said Cao Cao.

Then the two men rode down to the naval camp, where twenty four gates were arranged facing south. The cruisers and the battleships were all lined up so as to protect the lighter crafts which lay inside. There were channels to pass to and fro and fixed anchorages and stations.

Pang Tong surveying all this smiled, saying, “Sir Prime Minister, if this is your method of warfare, you enjoy no empty reputation.”

Then pointing to the southern shore, he went on, “Zhou Yu! Zhou Yu! You are finished. You will have to die.”

Cao Cao was mightily pleased. They rode back to the chief tent and wine was brought. They discussed military matters, and Pang Tong held forth at length. Remarks and comments flowed freely between the two, and Cao Cao formed an exalted opinion of his new adherent's abilities and treated him with the greatest honor.

By and bye the guest seemed to have succumbed to the influence of many cups and said, “Have you any capable medical people in your army?”

“What are they for, Master?” said Cao Cao.

“There is a lot of illness among the marines, and you ought to find some remedy.”

The fact was that at this time Cao Cao's men were suffering from the climate. Many were vomiting and not a few had died. It was a source of great anxiety to him, and when the newcomer suddenly mentioned it, of course he had to ask advice.

Pang Tong said, “Your marine force is excellent, but there is just one defect. It is not quite perfect.”

Cao Cao pressed him to say where the imperfection lay.

“I have a plan to overcome the ailment of the soldiers so that no one shall be sick and all fit for service.”

“What is this excellent scheme?” said Cao Cao.

“The river is wide, and the tides ebb and flow. The winds and waves are never at rest. Your troops from the north are unused to ships, and the motion makes them ill. If your ships, large and small, were classed and divided into thirties, or fifties, and joined up stem to stem by iron chains and boards spread across them, to say nothing of soldiers being able to pass from one to the next, even horses could move about on them. If this were done, then there would be no fear of the wind and the waves and the rising and falling tides.”

Coming down from his seat, Cao Cao thanked his guest, saying, “I could never defeat the land of the south without this scheme of yours.”

“That is only my idea,” said Pang Tong. “It is for you to decide about it.”

Orders were then issued to call up all the blacksmiths and set them to work, night and day, forging iron chains and great bolts to lock together the ships. And the soldiers rejoiced when they heard of the plan.

In the Red Cliffs' fight they used the flame,
The weapon here will be the same.
By Pang Tong's advice the ships were chained,
Else Zhou Yu had not that battle gained.

Pang Tong further told Cao Cao, saying, “I know many bold people on the other side who hate Zhou Yu. If I may use my little tongue in your service, I can induce them to come over to you. If Zhou Yu be left alone, you can

certainly take him captive. And Liu Bei is of no account.”

“Certainly if you could render me so great a service, I would memorialize the Throne and obtain for you one of the highest offices,” said Cao Cao.

“I am not doing this for the sake of wealth or honors, but from a desire to succor humankind. If you cross the river, I pray you be merciful.”

“I am Heaven’s means of doing right and could not bear to slay the people.”

Pang Tong thanked him and begged for a document that would protect his own family.

Cao Cao asked, “Where do they live?”

“All are near the river bank.”

And Cao Cao ordered a protection declaration to be prepared. Having sealed it, he gave it to Pang Tong.

Pang Tong said, “You should attack as soon as I have gone, but do not let Zhou Yu doubt anything.”

Cao Cao promised secrecy, and the wily traitor took his leave. Just as he was about to embark, he met a man in a Daoist robe, with a bamboo comb in his hair, who stopped him.

The man said, “You are very bold. Huang Gai is planning to use the ‘personal injury ruse,’ and Kan Ze has presented the letter of pretended desertion. You have proffered the fatal scheme of chaining the ships together lest the flames may not completely destroy them. This sort of mischievous work may have been enough to deceive Cao Cao, but I saw it all.”

Pang Tong become helpless with fear—his viscera flown away, his spirit scattered.

By guileful means one may succeed,
The victims too find friends in need.

The next chapter will tell who the stranger was.

Chapter 48

Banquet On The Great River, Cao Cao Sings A Song; Battle On Water, Northerners Fight With Chained Ships.

In the last chapter Pang Tong was brought up with a sudden shock when someone seized him and said of his scheme. Upon turning to look at the man, Pang Tong saw it was Xu Shu, an old friend, and his heart revived.

Looking around and seeing no one near, Pang Tong said, “It would be a pity if you upset my plan. The fate of the people of all the eighty-one southern counties is in your hands.”

Xu Shu smiled, saying, “And what of the fate of these eight hundred thirty thousand soldiers and horse of the north?”

“Do you intend to wreck my scheme, Xu Shu?”

“I have never forgotten the kindness of Uncle Liu Bei, nor my oath to avenge the death of my mother at Cao Cao’s hands. I have said I would never think out a plan for him. So am I likely to wreck yours now, brother? But I have followed Cao Cao’s army thus far; and after they shall have been defeated, good and bad will suffer alike and how can I escape? Tell me how I can secure safety, and I sew up my lips and go away.”

Pang Tong smiled, “If you are as high-minded as that, there is no great difficulty.”

“Still I wish you would instruct me.”

So Pang Tong whispered something in his ear, which seemed to please Xu Shu greatly, for he thanked him most cordially and took his leave. Then Pang Tong betook himself to his boat and left for the southern shore.

His friend gone, Xu Shu mischievously spread certain rumors in the camp, and next day were to be seen everywhere soldiers in small groups, some talking, others listening, heads together and ears stretched out, till the camps seemed to buzz.

Some of the officers went to Cao Cao and told him, saying, “A rumor is running around the camps that Han Sui and Ma Teng are marching from Xiliang to attack the capital.”

This troubled Cao Cao, who called together his advisers to council.

Said he, “The only anxiety I have felt in this expedition was about the possible doings of Han Sui and Ma Teng. Now there is a rumor running among the soldiers, and though I know not whether it be true or false, it is necessary to be on one’s guard.”

At this point Xu Shu said, “You have been kind enough to give me an office, Sir, and I have really done nothing in return. If I may have three thousand troops, I will march at once to San Pass and guard this entrance. If there be any pressing matter, I will report at once.”

“If you would do this, I should be quite at my ease. There are already troops beyond the Pass, who will be under

your command, and now I will give you three thousand of horse and foot, and Zang Ba shall lead the van and march quickly.”

Xu Shu took leave of the Prime Minister and left in company with Zang Ba. This was Pang Tong’s scheme to secure the safety of Xu Shu.

A poem says:

Cao Cao marched south, but at his back
There rode the fear of rear attack.
Pang Tong’s good counsel Xu Shu took,
And thus the fish escaped the hook.

Cao Cao’s anxiety diminished after he had thus sent away Xu Shu. Then he rode round all the camps, first the land forces and then the naval. He boarded one of the large ships and thereon set up his standard. The naval camps were arranged along two lines, and every ship carried a thousand bows and crossbows.

While Cao Cao remained with the fleet, it occurred the full moon of the eleventh month of the thirteenth year of Rebuilt Tranquillity (AD 208). The sky was clear; there was no wind; and the river lay unruffled. He prepared a great banquet, with music, and thereto invited all his leaders. As evening drew on, the moon rose over the eastern hills in its immaculate beauty, and beneath it lay the broad belt of the river like a band of pure silk. It was a great assembly, and all the guests were clad in gorgeous silks and embroidered robes, and the arms of the fighting soldiers glittered in the moonlight. The officers, civil and military, were seated in their proper order of precedence.

The setting, too, was exquisite. The Southern Hills were outlined as in a picture; the boundaries of Chaisang lay in the east; the river showed west as far as Xiakou; on the south lay the Fan Mountains, on the north was the Black Forest. The view stretched wide on every side.

Cao Cao’s heart was jubilant, and he harangued the assembly, saying, “My one aim since I enlisted my first small band of volunteers has been the removal of evil from the state, and I have sworn to cleanse the country and restore tranquillity. Now there is only left this land of the south to withstand me. I am at the head of a hundred legions. I depend upon you, gentlemen, and have no doubt of my final success. After I have subdued the South Land, there will be no trouble in all the country. Then we shall enjoy wealth and honor and revel in peace.”

They rose in a body and expressed their appreciation, saying, “We trust that you may soon report complete victory, and we shall all repose in the shade of your good fortune.”

In his elation, Cao Cao bade the servants bring more wine and they drank till late at night.

Warmed and mellowed, the host pointed to the south bank, saying, “Zhou Yu and Lu Su know not the appointed time. Heaven is aiding me bringing upon them the misfortune of the desertion of their most trusted friends.”

“O Prime Minister, say nothing of these things lest they become known to the enemy,” said Xun You.

But the Prime Minister only laughed.

“You are all my trusty friends,” said he, “both officers and humble attendants. Why should I refrain?”

Pointing to Xiakou, he continued, “You do not reckon for much with your puny force, Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang. How foolish of you to attempt to shake the Taishan Mountains!”

Then turning to his officers, he said, “I am now fifty-four; and if I get the South Land, I shall have the where-withal to rejoice. In the days of long ago, the Patriarch Duke Qiao in the south and I were great friends, and we came to an agreement on certain matters, for I knew his two daughters—Elder Qiao and Younger Qiao—were lovely beyond words. Then by some means, they became wives to Sun Ce and Zhou Yu. But now my palace of rest is built on the River Zhang, and victory over the South Land will mean that I marry these two fair women. I will put them in the Bronze Bird Tower, and they shall rejoice my declining years. My desires will then be completely attained.”

He smiled at the anticipation.

Du Mu, a famous poet of the Tang Dynasty, in one poem says:

A broken halberd buried in the sand,
With deep rust eaten,
Loud tells of ancient battles on the strand,
When Cao Cao was beaten.
Had eastern winds Zhou Yu’s plan refused to aid
And fan the blaze,
The two fair Qiaos, in the Bronze Bird’s shade,
Would have been locked at spring age.

But suddenly amid the merriment was heard the hoarse cry of a raven flying toward the south.

“Why does the raven thus cry in the night?” said Cao Cao to those about him.

“The moon is so bright that it thinks it is day,” said they, “and so it leaves its tree.”

Cao Cao laughed. By this time he was quite intoxicated. He set up his spear in the prow of the ship and poured a libation into the river and then drank three brimming goblets.

As he lowered the spear, he said, “This is the spear that broke up the Yellow Scarves, captured Lu Bu, destroyed Yuan Shao, and subdued Yuan Shu, whose armies are now mine. In the north it reached to Liaodong, and it stretched out over the whole south. It has never failed in its task. The present scene moves me to the depths, and I will sing a song in which you shall accompany me.”

And so he sang:

“When goblets are brimming then sang is near birth,
 But life is full short and has few days of mirth,
 Life goes as the dew drops fly swiftly away,
 Beneath the glance of the glowing hot ruler of day.
 Human’s life may be spent in the noblest enterprise,
 But sorrowful thoughts in his heart oft arise.
 Let us wash clean away the sad thoughts that intrude,
 With bumpers of wine such as Du Kang once brewed.
 Gone is my day of youthful fire
 And still ungained is my desire.
 The deer feed on the level plain
 And joyful call, then feed again.
 My noble guests are gathered round.
 The air is trilled with joyful sound.
 Bright my future lies before me.
 As the moonlight on this plain;
 But I strive in vain to reach it.
 When shall I my wish attain?
 None can answer; and so sadness
 Grips my inmost heart again.
 Far north and south,
 Wide east and west,
 We safety seek;
 Vain is the quest.
 Human’s heart oft yearns
 For converse sweet.
 And my heart burns
 When old friends greet.
 The stars are paled by the full moon’s light,
 The raven wings his southward flight.
 And thrice he circles round a tree,
 No place thereon to rest finds he.
 They weary not the mountains of great height,
 The waters deep of depth do not complain,
 Duke Zhou no leisure found by day or night
 Stern toil is his who would the empire gain.”

The song made they sang it with him and were all exceedingly merry, save one guest who suddenly said, “When the great army is on the point of battle and lives are about to be risked, why do you, O Prime Minister, speak such ill words?”

Cao Cao turned quickly toward the speaker, who was Liu Fu, Imperial Protector of Yangzhou. This Liu Fu sprang from Hefei. When first appointed to his post, he had gathered in the terrified and frightened people and restored order. He had founded schools and encouraged the people to till the land. He had long served under Cao Cao and rendered valuable service.

When Liu Fu spoke, Cao Cao dropped his spear to the level and said, “What ill-omened words did I use?”

“You spoke of the moon paling the stars and the raven flying southward without finding a resting place. These

are ill-omened words.”

“How dare you try to belittle my endeavor?” cried Cao Cao, very wrathful. And with that he smote Liu Fu with his spear and slew him.

The assembly broke up, and the guests dispersed in fear and confusion. Next day, when Cao Cao had recovered from his drunken bout, he was very grieved at what he had done. When the murdered man’s son, Liu Xi, came to crave the body of his father for burial, Cao Cao wept and expressed his sorrow.

“I am guilty of your father’s death. I was drunk yesterday. I regret the deed exceedingly. Your father shall be interred with the honors of a minister of the highest rank.”

Cao Cao sent an escort of soldiers to take the body to the homeland for burial.

A few days after, the two leaders of the naval force, Mao Jie and Yu Jin, came to say the ships were all connected together by chains as had been ordered, and all was now ready. They asked for the command to start.

Thereupon the leaders of both land and naval forces were assembled on board a large ship in the center of the squadron to receive orders. The various armies and squadrons were distinguished by different flags: Mao Jie and Yu Jin led the central naval squadron with yellow flag; Zhang He, the leading squadron, red flag; Lu Qian, the rear squadron, black flag; Wen Ping, the left squadron, blue flag; and Li Tong, the right squadron, white flag. On shore Xu Huang commanded the horsemen with red flag; Li Dian, the vanguard, black flag; Yue Jing, the left wing, blue flag; and Xiahou Yuan, the right wing, white flag. Xiahou Dun and Cao Hong were in reserve, and the general staff was under the leadership of Xu Chu and Zhang Liao. The other leaders were ordered to remain in camps, but ready for action.

All being ready, the squadron drums beat the roll thrice, and the ships sailed out under a strong northwest wind on a trial cruise. When they got among the waves, they were found to be as steady and immovable as the dry land itself. The northern soldiers showed their delight at the absence of motion by capering and flourishing their weapons. The ships moved on, the squadrons keeping quite distinct. Fifty light cruisers sailed to and fro keeping order and urging progress.

Cao Cao watched his navy from the Command Terrace and was delighted with their evolutions and maneuvers. Surely this meant complete victory. He ordered the recall and the squadrons returned in perfect order to their base.

Then Cao Cao went to his tent and summoned his advisers.

He said, “If Heaven had not been on my side, should I have got this excellent plan from the Young Phoenix? Now that the ships are attached firmly to each other, one may traverse the river as easily as walking on firm earth.”

“The ships are firmly attached to each other,” said Cheng Yu, “but you should be prepared for an attack by fire so that they can scatter to avoid it.”

Cao Cao laughed.

“You look a long way ahead,” said he, “but you see what cannot happen.”

“Cheng Yu speaks much to the point, my lord,” said Xun You. “Why do you laugh at him?”

Cao Cao said, “Anyone using fire depends upon the wind. This is now winter and only west winds blow. You will get neither east nor south winds. I am on the northwest, and the enemy is on the southeast bank. If they use fire, they will destroy themselves. I have nothing to fear. If it was the tenth moon, or early spring, I would provide against fire.”

“The Prime Minister is indeed wise,” said the others in chorus. “None can equal him.”

“With northern troops unused to shipboard, I could never have crossed the river but for this chaining plan,” said Cao Cao.

Then he saw two of the secondary leaders stand up, and they said, “We are from the north, but we are also sailors. Pray give us a small squadron, and we will seize some of the enemy’s flags and drums for you that we may prove ourselves adepts on the water.”

The speakers were two men who had served under Yuan Shao, named Jiao Chu and Zhang Neng.

“I do not think naval work would suit you two, born and brought up in the north,” said Cao Cao. “The southern soldiers are thoroughly accustomed to ships. You should not regard your lives as a child’s plaything.”

They cried, “If we fail, treat us according to army laws!”

“The fighting ships are all chained together, there are only small, twenty-men boats free. They are unsuitable for fighting.”

“If we took large ships, where would be the wonderful in what we will do? No! Give us a score of the small ships, and we will take half each and go straight to the enemy’s naval port. We will just seize a flag, slay a leader, and come home.”

“I will let you have the twenty ships and five hundred of good, vigorous marines with long spears and stiff crossbows. Early tomorrow the main fleet shall make a demonstration on the river, and I will also tell Wen Ping to support you with thirty ships.”

The two men retired greatly elated.

Next morning, very early, food was prepared, and at the fifth watch all was ready for a start. Then from the naval camp rolled out the drums and the gongs clanged, as the ships moved out and took up their positions, the various flags fluttering in the morning breeze. And the two intrepid leaders with their squadron of small scouting boats went down the lines and out into the stream.

Now a few days before the sound of Cao Cao's drums had been heard on the southern bank, Zhou Yu had watched the maneuvers of the northern fleet on the open river from the top of a hill till the fleet had gone in again. So when the sound of drums was again heard, all the southern army went up the hills to watch the northern fleet. All they saw was a squadron of small ships bounding over the waves.

As the northern fleet came nearer, the news was taken to Zhou Yu who called for volunteers to go out against them. Han Dang and Zhou Tai offered themselves. They were accepted and orders were issued to the camps to remain ready for action but not to move till told.

Han Dang and Zhou Tai sailed out each with a small squadron of five ships in line.

The two braggarts from the north, Jiao Chu and Zhang Neng, really only trusted to their boldness and luck. Their ships came down under the powerful strokes of the oars. As they neared, the two leaders put on their heart-protectors, gripped their spears, and each took his station in the prow of the leading ship of his division. Jiao Chu's ship led and as soon as he came near enough, his troops began to shoot at Han Dang, who fended off the arrows with his buckler. Jiao Chu twirled his long spear as he engaged his opponent. But, at the first thrust, he was killed.

His comrade Zhang Neng with the other ships was coming up with great shouts, when Zhou Tai sailed up at an angle, and these two squadrons began shooting arrows at each other in clouds. Zhou Tai fended off the arrows with his shield and stood gripping his sword firmly till his ships came within a few spans of the enemy's ships, when he leaped across and cut down Zhang Neng. Zhang Neng's dead body fell into the water. Then the battle became confused, and the attacking ships rowed hard to get away. The southerners pursued but soon came in sight of Wen Ping's supporting fleet. Once more the ships engaged and the forces fought with each other.

Zhou Yu with his officers stood on the summit of a mountain and watched his own and the enemy ships out on the river. The flags and the ensigns were all in perfect order. Then he saw Wen Ping and his own fleets engaged in battle, and soon it was evident that the former was not a match for his own sailors. Wen Ping turned about to retire, Han Dang and Zhou Tai pursued. Zhou Yu fearing lest his sailors should go too far, then hoisted the white flag of recall.

To his officers Zhou Yu said, "The masts of the northern ships stand thick as reeds. Cao Cao himself is full of wiles. How can we destroy him?"

No one replied, for just then the great yellow flag that flapped in the breeze in the middle of Cao Cao's fleet suddenly fell over into the river.

Zhou Yu laughed.

"That is a bad omen," said he.

Then an extra violent blast of wind came by, and the waves rose high and beat upon the bank. A corner of his own flag flicked Zhou Yu on the cheek, and suddenly a thought flashed through his mind. Zhou Yu uttered a loud cry, staggered, and fell backward. They picked him up. There was blood upon his lips, and he was unconscious. Presently, however, he revived.

And once he laughed, then gave a cry,
This is hard to ensure a victory.

Zhou Yu's fate will appear as the story unfolds.

Chapter 49

On Seven-Star Altar, Zhuge Liang Sacrifices To The Winds; At Three Gorges, Zhou Yu Liberates The Fire.

In the last chapter Zhou Yu was seized with sudden illness as he watched the fleets of his enemy. He was borne to his tent, and his officers came in multitudes to inquire after him.

They looked at each other, saying, "What a pity our general should be taken ill, when Cao Cao's legions threaten so terribly! What would happen if Cao Cao attacked?"

Messengers with the evil tidings were sent to Sun Quan, while the physicians did their best for the invalid. Lu Su was particularly sad at the illness of his patron and went to see Zhuge Liang to talk it over.

"What do you make of it?" said Zhuge Liang.

"Good luck for Cao Cao; bad for us," said Lu Su.

"I could cure him," said Zhuge Liang laughing.

"If you could, Wu would be very fortunate," said Lu Su.

Lu Su prayed Zhuge Liang to go to see the sick man. They went, and Lu Su entered first. Zhou Yu lay in bed, his head covered by a quilt.

"How are you, General?" said Lu Su.

"My heart pains me. Every now and again I feel faint and dizzy."

"Have you taken any remedies?"

"My gorge rises at the thought. I could not."

"I saw Zhuge Liang just now, and he says he could heal you. He is just outside, and I will call him if you like."

"Ask him to come in."

Zhou Yu bade his servants help him to a sitting position, and Zhuge Liang entered.

"I have not seen you for days," said Zhuge Liang. "How could I guess that you were unwell?"

"How can anyone feel secure? We are constantly the playthings of luck, good or bad."

"Yes. Heaven's winds and clouds are not to be measured. No one can reckon their comings and goings, can they?"

Zhou Yu turned pale and a low groan escaped him, while his visitor went on, "You feel depressed, do you not? As though troubles were piling up in your heart?"

"That is exactly how I feel," said Zhou Yu.

"You need cooling medicine to dissipate this sense of oppression."

"I have taken a cooling draught, but it has done no good."

"You must get the humors into good order before the drugs will have any effect."

Zhou Yu began to think Zhuge Liang knew what was really the matter and resolved to test him.

"What should be taken to produce a favorable temper?" said Zhou Yu.

"I know one means of producing a favorable temper," replied Zhuge Liang.

"I wish you would tell me."

Zhuce Liang got out writing materials, sent away the servants, and then wrote a few words:

"To defeat Cao Cao
You have to use fire;
All are in your wish,
But wind from the east."

This he gave to the sick general, saying, "That is the origin of your illness."

Zhou Yu read the words with great surprise, and it confirmed his secret opinion that Zhuge Liang really was rather more than human. He decided that the only course was to be open and tell him all.

So he said, "Since you know the cause of the disease, what do you recommend as treatment? The need of a remedy is very urgent."

"I have no great talent," said Zhuge Liang, "but I have had to do with humans of no ordinary gifts from whom I have received certain magical books called 'Concealing Method'. I can call the winds and summon the rains. Since you need a southeast breeze, General, you must build an altar on the Southern Hills, the Altar of the Seven Stars. It must be nine spans high, with three steps, surrounded by a guard of one hundred and twenty humans bearing flags. On this altar I will work a spell to procure a strong southeast gale for three days and three nights. Do you approve?"

"Never mind three whole days," said Zhou Yu. "One day of strong wind will serve my purpose. But it must be done at once and without delay."

"I will sacrifice for a wind for three days from the twentieth day of the moon. Will that suit you?"

Zhou Yu was delighted and hastily rose from his couch to give the necessary orders. He commanded that five hundred men should be sent to the mountains to build the altar, and he told off the guard of one hundred and twenty to bear the flags and be at the orders of Zhuge Liang.

Zhuce Liang took his leave, went forth, and rode off with Lu Su to the mountains where they measured out the ground. He bade the soldiers build the altar of red earth from the southeast quarter. It was two hundred and forty spans in circuit, square in shape, and of three tiers, each of three spans, in all nine spans high.

On the lowest tier he placed the flags of the twenty-eight "houses" of the heavens and four constellations: On the east seven, with blue flags; on the north seven, with black flags; on the west seven, with white flags; and on the south seven, with red flags.

Around the second tier he placed sixty-four yellow flags, corresponding to the number of the diagrams of the Book of Divination, in eight groups of eight.

Four men were stationed on the highest platform, each wearing a Daoist headdress and a black silk robe em-

broidered with the phoenix and confined with wide sashes. They wore scarlet boots and square-cut skirts. On the left front stood a man supporting a tall pole bearing at its top a plume of light feathers to show by their least movement the wind's first breathing. On the right front was a man holding a tall pole whereon was a flag with the symbol of the seven stars to show the direction and force of the wind. On the left rear stood a man with a sword, and on the right rear a man with a censer.

Below the altar were forty-four men holding flags, umbrellas, spears, lances, yellow banners, white axes, red banderoles, and black ensigns. And these were spaced about the altar.

On the appointed day Zhuge Liang, having chosen a propitious moment, bathed his body and purified himself. Then he robed himself as a Daoist, loosened his locks, and approached the altar.

He bade Lu Su retire, saying, "Return to the camp and assist the General in setting out his forces. Should my prayers avail not, do not wonder."

So Lu Su left him. Then Zhuge Liang commanded the guards on no account to absent themselves, to maintain strict silence, and to be reverent. Death would be the penalty of disobedience.

Next, with solemn steps he ascended the altar, faced the proper quarter, lighted the incense, and sprinkled the water in the basins. This done he gazed into the heavens and prayed silently. The prayer ended he descended and returned to his tent. After a brief rest he allowed the soldiers by turns to go away to eat.

Thrice that day he ascended the altar and thrice descended, but there was no sign of the wind.

During that time, Zhou Yu, with Cheng Pu and Lu Su and other military officials on duty, sat waiting in the tent till the wished-for wind should blow and the attack could be launched. Messengers were also sent to Sun Quan to prepare to support the forward movement.

Huang Gai had his fire ships ready, twenty of them. The fore parts of the ships were thickly studded with large nails, and they were loaded with dry reeds, wood soaked in fish oil, and covered with sulfur, saltpeter, and other inflammables. The ships were covered in with black oiled cloth. In the prow of each was a black dragon flag with indentations. A fighting ship was attached to the stern of each to propel it forward. All were ready and awaited orders to move.

Meanwhile Cao Cao's two spies, Cai He and Cai Zhong, were being guarded carefully in an outer camp far from the river bank and daily entertained with feasting. They were not allowed to know of the preparations. The watch was so close that not a trickle of information reached the prisoners.

Presently, while Zhou Yu was anxiously awaiting in his tent for the desired wind, a messenger came to say that Sun Quan had anchored at a place thirty miles from the camp, where he awaited news from the Commander-in-Chief.

Lu Su was sent to warn all the various commanders to be ready, the ships and their weapons, sails and oars, all for instant use, and to impress upon them the penalties of being caught unprepared. The soldiers were indeed ready for the fight and yearning for the fray.

But the sky remained obstinately clear, and as night drew nigh no breath of air stirred.

"We have been cajoled," said Zhou Yu. "Indeed what possibility is there of a southeast wind in midwinter?"

"Zhuge Liang would not use vain and deceitful words," replied Lu Su.

Towards the third watch, the sound of a movement arose in the air. Soon the flags fluttered out. And when the Commander-in-Chief went out to make sure, he saw they were flowing toward the northwest. In a very short time the southeast wind was in full force.

Zhou Yu was, however, frightened at the power of the man whose help he had invoked.

He said, "Really the man has power over the heavens and authority over the earth. His methods are incalculable, beyond the ken of god or devil. He cannot be allowed to live to be a danger to our land of the south. We must slay him soon to fend off later evils."

So Zhou Yu resolved to commit a crime to remove his dangerous rival.

He called two of the generals of his guard, Ding Feng and Xu Sheng, and said to them, "Each of you take a party of one hundred troops, one along the river, the other along the road, to the altar on the mountains. As soon as you get there, without asking questions or giving reasons, you are to seize and behead Zhuge Liang. Rich reward will be given when you bring his head back."

Xu Sheng and Ding Feng went off on their errand, the former leading dagger and ax-men going as fast as oars could propel them along the river, the latter at the head of archers and bowmen on horseback. The southeast wind buffeted them as they went on their way.

High was raised the Seven Stars Altar,
On it prayed the Sleeping Dragon
For an eastern wind, and straightway
Blew the wind. Had not the wizard

Exercised his mighty magic
Nought had Zhou Yu's skill availed.

Ding Feng first arrived. He saw the guards with their flags, dropped off his steed, and marched to the altar, sword in hand. But he found no Zhuge Liang.

When he asked the guards, they told him, saying, "He has just gone down."

Ding Feng ran down the hill to search. There he met his fellow Xu Sheng, and they joined forces.

Presently a simple soldier told them, saying, "The evening before a small, fast boat anchored there near a sand spit, and Zhuge Liang was seen to go on board. Then the boat went up river."

So Xu Sheng and Ding Feng divided their party into two, one to go by water, the other by land.

Xu Sheng bade his boatmen put on all sail and take every advantage of the wind. Before very long he saw the fugitive's boat ahead, and when near enough, stood in the prow of his own and shouted, "Do not flee, O Instructor of the Army! The General requests your presence."

Zhuce Liang, who was seated in the stern of his boat, just laughed aloud, saying, "Return and tell the General to make good use of his soldiers. Tell him I am going up river for a spell and will see him again another day."

"Pray wait a little while," cried Xu Sheng. "I have something most important to tell you!"

"I knew all about it, that Zhou Yu would not let me go and that he wanted to kill me. That is why Zhao Zilong was waiting for me. You had better not approach nearer."

Seeing the other ship had no sail, Xu Sheng thought he would assuredly come up with it and so maintained the pursuit.

Then when he got too close, Zhao Zilong fitted an arrow to the bowstring and, standing up in the stern of his boat, cried, "You know who I am, and I came expressly to escort the Directing Instructor. Why are you pursuing him? One arrow would kill you, only that would cause a breach of the peace between two houses. I will shoot and just give you a specimen of my skill."

With that he shot, and the arrow whizzed overhead cutting the rope that held up the sail. Down came the sail trailing in the water and the boat swung round. Then Zhao Zilong's boat hoisted its sail, and the fair wind speedily carried it out of sight.

On the bank stood Ding Feng. He bade his comrade come to the shore and said, "Zhuge Liang is too clever for anyone; and Zhao Zilong is bravest of the brave. You remember what he did at Dangyang, at the Long Slope Bridge. All we can do is to return and report."

So they returned to camp and told their master about the preparations that Zhuge Liang had made to ensure safety. Zhou Yu was indeed puzzled at the depth of his rival's insight.

"I shall have no peace day or night while he lives," said Zhou Yu.

"At least wait till Cao Cao is done with," said Lu Su.

And Zhou Yu knew Lu Su spoke wisely.

Having summoned the leaders to receive orders, first Zhou Yu gave orders to Gan Ning: "Take with you the false deserter Cai Zhong and his soldiers, and go along the south bank, showing the flags of Cao Cao, till you reach the Black Forest just opposite the enemy's main store of grain and forage. Then you are to penetrate as deeply as possible into the enemy's lines and light a torch as a signal. Cai He is to be kept in camp for another purpose."

The next order was: "Taishi Ci is to lead two thousand troops as quickly as possible to Huangzhou and cut the enemy's communications with Hefei. When near the enemy, he is to give a signal. If he sees a red flag, he will know that our lord, Sun Quan, is at hand with reinforcements."

Gan Ning and Taishi Ci had the farthest to go and started first.

Then Lu Meng was sent into the Black Forest with three thousand troops as a support to Gan Ning who was ordered to set fire to Cao Cao's depot. A fourth party of three thousand troops was led by Ling Tong to the borders of Yiling and attack as soon as the signal from the forest was seen. A fifth party of three thousand under Dong Xi went to Hanyang to fall upon the enemy along the River Han. Their signal was a white flag; and a sixth division of three thousand commanded by Pan Zhang would support them.

When these six parties had gone off, Huang Gai got ready his fire ships and sent a soldier with a note to tell Cao Cao that he was coming over that evening. Four naval squadrons were told off to support Huang Gai.

The four squadrons, each of three hundred ships, were placed under four commanders: Han Dang, Zhou Tai, Jiang Qin, and Chen Wu. Twenty fire ships preceded each fleet. Zhou Yu and Cheng Pu went on board one of the large ships to direct the battle. Their guards were Ding Feng and Xu Sheng. Lu Su, Kan Ze, and the advisers were left to guard the camp. Cheng Pu was greatly impressed with Zhou Yu's ordering of the grand attack.

Then came a messenger bearing a mandate from Sun Quan making Lu Xun Leader of the Van. He was ordered to go to Qichun. Sun Quan himself would support Lu Xun. Zhou Yu also sent two command units, one to the Western Hills to make fire signals, and the other to the Southern Hills to hoist flags.

So all being prepared they waited for dusk.

Liu Bei was at Xiakou anxiously awaiting the return of his adviser. Then appeared a fleet, led by Liu Qi, who had come to find out how matters were progressing.

Liu Bei sent to call him to the battle tower and said, "The southeast wind had begun to blow, and that Zhao Zilong had gone to meet Zhuge Liang."

Not long after a single sail was seen coming up before the wind, and Liu Bei knew it was Zhuge Liang, the Directing Instructor of the Army.

So Liu Bei and Liu Qi went down to meet the boat. Soon the vessel reached the shore, and Zhuge Liang and Zhao Zilong disembarked.

Liu Bei was very glad, and after they had inquired after each other's well-being, Zhuge Liang said, "There is no time to tell of any other things now. Are the soldiers and ships ready?"

"They have long been ready," replied Liu Bei. "They only await you to direct how they are to be used."

The three then went to the tent and took their seats.

Zhuce Liang at once began to issue orders: "Zhao Zilong, with three thousand troops is to cross the river and go to the Black Forest by the minor road. He will choose a dense jungle and prepare an ambush. Tonight, after the fourth watch, Cao Cao will hurry along that way. When half his troops have passed, the jungle is to be fired. Cao Cao will not be wholly destroyed but many will perish."

"There are two roads," said Zhao Zilong. "One leads to the southern regions and the other to Jingzhou. I do not know by which he will come."

"The south road is too dangerous. Cao Cao will certainly pass along the Jingzhou road, so that he may get away to Xuchang."

Then Zhao Zilong went away.

Next Zhuge Liang said to Zhang Fei, "You will take three thousand troops over the river to cut the road to Yiling. You will ambush in the Hulu Valley. Cao Cao, not daring to go to South Yiling, will go to North Yiling. Tomorrow, after the rain, he will halt to refresh his troops. As soon as the smoke is seen to rise from their cooking fires, you will fire the hill side. You will not capture Cao Cao, but you will render excellent service."

So Zhang Fei left. Next was called Mi Zhu, Mi Fang, and Liu Feng. They were to take command of three squadrons and go along the river to collect beaten soldiers and their weapons.

The three left. Then Zhuge Liang said to Liu Qi, "The country around Wuchang is very important, and I wish you to take command of your own troops and station them at strategic points. Cao Cao, being defeated, will flee thither, and you will capture him. But you are not to leave the city without the best of reasons."

And Liu Qi took leave.

Then Zhuge Liang said to Liu Bei, "I wish you to remain quietly and calmly in Fankou, in a high tower, to watch Zhou Yu work out his great scheme this night."

All this time Guan Yu has been silently waiting his turn, but Zhuge Liang said no word to him.

When Guan Yu could bear this no longer, he cried, "Since I first followed my brother to battle many years ago, I have never been left behind. Now that great things are afoot, is there no work for me? What is meant by it?"

"You should not be surprised. I wanted you for service at a most important point, only that there was a something standing in the way that prevented me from sending you," said Zhuge Liang.

"What could stand in the way? I wish you would tell me."

"You see Cao Cao was once very kind to you, and you cannot help feeling grateful. Now when his soldiers have been beaten, he will have to flee along the Huarong Road. If I sent you to guard it, you would have to let him pass. So I will not send you."

"You are most considerate, Instructor. But though it is true that he treated me well, yet I slew two of his most redoubtable opponents, Yan Liang and Wen Chou, by way of repayment, beside raising a siege. If I happened upon him on this occasion, I should hardly let him go."

"But what if you did?"

"You could deal with me by military rules."

"Then put that in writing."

So Guan Yu wrote a formal undertaking and gave the document to Zhuge Liang.

"What happens if Cao Cao does not pass that way?" said Guan Yu.

"I will give you a written engagement that he will pass." Then Zhuge Liang continued, "On the hills by the Huarong Valley, you are to raise a heap of wood and grass to make a great column of smoke and mislead Cao Cao into coming."

"If Cao Cao sees a smoke, he will suspect an ambush and will not come," said Guan Yu.

"You are very simple," said Zhuge Liang. "Do you not know more of war's ruses than that? Cao Cao is an able leader, but you can deceive him this time. When he sees the smoke, he will take it as a subterfuge and risk going

that way. But do not let your kindness of heart rule your conduct.”

Thus was his duty assigned Guan Yu, and he left, taking his adopted son Guan Ping, his general Zhou Cang, and five hundred swordsmen.

Said Liu Bei, “His sense of rectitude is very profound. I fear if Cao Cao should come that way, my brother will let him pass.”

“I have consulted the stars lately, and the rebel Cao Cao is not fated to come to his end yet. I have purposely designed this manifestation of kindly feeling for Guan Yu to accomplish and so act handsomely.”

“Indeed there are few such far-seeing humans as you are,” said Liu Bei.

The two then went to Fankou whence they might watch Zhou Yu’s evolutions. Sun Qian and Jian Yong were left on guard of Xiakou.

Cao Cao was in his great camp in conference with his advisers and awaiting the arrival of Huang Gai. The southeast wind was very strong that day, and Cheng Yu was insisting on the necessity for precaution.

But Cao Cao laughed, saying, “The Winter Solstice depends upon the sun and nothing else. There is sure to be a southeast wind at some one or other of its recurrences. I see nothing to wonder at.”

Just then they announced the arrival of a small boat from the other shore with a letter from Huang Gai. The bearer of the letter was brought in and presented it. Cao Cao read it:

“Zhou Yu has kept such strict watch that there has been no chance of escape. But now some grain is coming down river, and I, Huang Gai, have been named as Escort Commander which will give me the opportunity I desire. I will slay one of the known generals and bring his head as an offering when I come. This evening at the third watch, if boats are seen with dragon toothed flags, they will be the grain boats.”

This letter delighted Cao Cao who, with his officers, went to the naval camp and boarded a great ship to watch for the arrival of Huang Gai.

In the South Land, when evening fell, Zhou Yu sent for Cai He and bade the soldiers bind him.

The unhappy man protested, saying, “I have committed no crime!”

But Zhou Yu said, “What sort of a fellow are you, think you, to come and pretend to desert to my side? I need a small sacrifice for my flag, and your head will serve my purpose. So I am going to use it.”

Cai He being at the end of his tether unable to deny the charge suddenly cried, “Two of your own side, Kan Ze and Gan Ning, are also in the plot!”

“Under my directions!” said Zhou Yu.

Cai He was exceedingly repentant and sad, but Zhou Yu bade them take Cai He to the river bank where the black standard had been set up and there, after the pouring of a libation and the burning of paper, Cai He was beheaded, his blood being a sacrifice to the flag.

This ceremony over, the ships started, and Huang Gai took his place on the third ship. He merely wore breast armor and carried a keen blade. On his flag were written four large characters Van Leader Huang Gai. With a fair wind his fleet sailed toward the Red Cliffs.

The wind was strong and the waves ran high. Cao Cao in the midst of the central squadron eagerly scanned the river which rolled down under the bright moon like a silver serpent writhing in innumerable folds. Letting the wind blow full in his face, Cao Cao laughed aloud for he was now to obtain his desire.

Then a soldier pointing to the river said, “The whole south is one mass of sails, and they are coming up on the wind.”

Cao Cao went to a higher point and gazed at the sails intently, and his officers told him that the flags were black and dragon shaped, and indented, and among them there flew one very large banner on which was a name Huang Gai.

“That is my friend, the deserter!” said he joyfully. “Heaven is on my side today.”

As the ships drew closer, Cheng Yu said, “Those ships are treacherous. Do not let them approach the camp.”

“How know you that?” asked Cao Cao.

And Cheng Yu replied, “If they were laden with grain, they would lie deep in the water. But these are light and float easily. The southeast wind is very strong, and if they intend treachery, how can we defend ourselves?”

Cao Cao began to understand. Then he asked who would go out to stop the approaching fleet, and Wen Ping volunteered, saying, “I am well used to the waters.”

Thereupon Wen Ping sprang into a small light craft and sailed out, followed by ten cruisers which came at his signal.

Standing in the prow of his ship, Wen Ping called out to those advancing toward them, “You southern ships are not to approach! Such are the orders of the Prime Minister. Stop there in mid stream!”

The soldiers all yelled to them to lower their sails. The shout had not died away when a bowstring twanged, and

Wen Ping rolled down into the ship with an arrow in the left arm. Confusion reigned on his ship, and all the others hurried back to their camp.

When the ships were about a mile of distant, Huang Gai waved his sword and the leading ships broke forth into fire, which, under the force of the strong wind, soon gained strength and the ships became as fiery arrows. Soon the whole twenty dashed into the naval camp.

All Cao Cao's ships were gathered there, and as they were firmly chained together not one could escape from the others and flee. There was a roar of bombs and fireships came on from all sides at once. The face of the three rivers was speedily covered with fire which flew before the wind from one ship to another. It seemed as if the universe was filled with flame.

Cao Cao hastened toward the shore. Huang Gai, with a few troops at his back, leaped into a small boat, dashed through the fire, and sought Cao Cao. Cao Cao, seeing the imminence of the danger, was making for the land. Zhang Liao got hold of a small boat into which he helped his master; none too soon, for the ship was burning. They got Cao Cao out of the thick of the fire and dashed for the bank.

Huang Gai, seeing a handsomely robed person get into a small boat, guessed it must be Cao Cao and pursued.

He drew very near and he held his keen blade ready to strike, crying out, "You rebel! Do not flee. I am Huang Gai."

Cao Cao howled in the bitterness of his distress. Zhang Liao fitted an arrow to his bow and aimed at the pursuer, shooting at short range. The roaring of the gale and the flames kept Huang Gai from hearing the twang of the string, and he was wounded in the shoulder. He fell and rolled over into the water.

He fell in peril of water
When flames were high;
Ere cudgel bruises had faded,
An arrow struck.

Huang Gai's fate will be told in the next chapter.

Chapter 50

Zhuge Liang Foresees The Huarong Valley Episode; Guan Yu Lifts His Saber To Release Cao Cao.

The last chapter closed with Huang Gai in the water wounded, Cao Cao rescued from immediate danger, and confusion rampant among the soldiers. Pressing forward to attack the naval camp, Han Dang was told by his soldiers that someone was clinging to the rudder of his boat and shouting to him by his familiar name. Han Dang listened carefully and in the voice at once he recognized that Huang Gai was calling to him for help.

"That is my friend Huang Gai!" cried he, and they quickly pulled the wounded leader out of the water.

Then they saw Huang Gai was wounded for the arrow still stuck. Han Dang bit out the shaft of the arrow but the point was deeply buried in the flesh. They hastily pulled off his wet garments and cut out the metal arrowhead with a dagger, tore up one of the flags, and bound up the wound. Then Han Dang gave Huang Gai his own fighting robe to put on and sent him off in a small boat back to camp.

Huang Gai's escape from drowning must be taken as proof of his natural affinity for, or sympathy with, water. Although it was the period of great cold and he was heavy with armor when he fell into the river, yet he escaped with life.

In this great battle at the junction of the three rivers, the Three Gorges, when fire seemed to spread wide over all the wide surface of the water, when the earth quaked with the roar of battle, when land forces closed in on both wings and four battle squadrons advanced on the front, when the ferocity of fire answered the clash of weapons and weapons were aided by fire, under the thrusts of spears and the flights of arrows, burnt by fire and drowned by water, Cao Cao lost an incalculable number of troops. And a poet wrote:

When Wei and Wu together strove
For the mastery,
In the Red Cliffs fight the tall ships
Vanished from the sea,
For there the fierce flames, leaping high.
Burned them utterly.
So Zhou Yu for his liege lord
Got the victory.

And another poem runs:

The hills are high, the moon shines faint.
 The waters stretch afar;
 I sigh to think how oft this land
 Has suffered stress of war;
 And I recall how southerners
 Shrank from the northern army's might,
 And how a favoring eastern gale
 Helped them to win the fight.

While fire was consuming the naval base of Cao Cao, Gan Ning made Cai Zhong guide him into the innermost recesses of Cao Cao's camp. Then Gan Ning slew Cai Zhong with one slash of his sword. After this Gan Ning set fire to the jungle; and at this signal, Lu Meng put fire to the grass in ten places near to each other. Then other fires were started, and the noise of battle was on all sides.

Cao Cao and Zhang Liao, with a small party of horsemen, fled through the burning forest. They could see no road in front; all seemed on fire. Presently Mao Jie and Wen Ping, with a few more horsemen, joined them. Cao Cao bade the soldiers seek a way through.

Zhang Liao pointed out, saying, "The only suitable road is through the Black Forest."

And they took it.

They had gone but a short distance when they were overtaken by a small party of the enemy, and a voice cried, "Cao Cao, stop!"

It was Lu Meng, whose ensign soon appeared against the fiery background. Cao Cao urged his small party of fugitives forward, bidding Zhang Liao defend him from Lu Meng.

Soon after Cao Cao saw the light of torches in front, and from a gorge there rushed out another force. And the leader cried, "Ling Tong is here!"

Cao Cao was scared. His liver and gall both seemed torn from within.

But just then on his half right, he saw another company approach and heard a cry, "Fear not, O Prime Minister, I am here to rescue you!"

The speaker was Xu Huang, and he attacked the pursuers and held them off.

A move to the north seemed to promise escape, but soon they saw a camp on a hill top. Xu Huang went ahead to reconnoiter and found the officers in command were Cao Cao's Generals Ma Yan and Zhang Zi, who had once been in the service of Yuan Shao. They had three thousand of northern soldiers in camp. They had seen the sky redden with the flames, but knew not what was afoot so dared make no move.

This turned out lucky for Cao Cao who now found himself with a fresh force. He sent Ma Yan and Zhang Zi, with a thousand troops, to clear the road ahead while the others remained as guard. And he felt much more secure.

The two went forward, but before they had gone very far, they heard a shouting and a party of soldiers came out, the leader of them shouting, "I am Gan Ning of Wu!"

Nothing daunted the two leaders, but the redoubtable Gan Ning cut down Ma Yan. And when his brother warrior Zhang Zi set his spear and dashed forward, he too fell beneath a stroke from the fearsome sword of Gan Ning. Both leaders dead, the soldiers fled to give Cao Cao the bad news.

At this time Cao Cao expected aid from Hefei, for he knew not that Sun Quan was barring the road. But when Sun Quan saw the fires and so knew that his soldiers had won the day, he ordered Lu Xun to give the answering signal. Taishi Ci seeing this came down and his force joined up with that of Lu Xun, and they went against Cao Cao.

As for Cao Cao, he could only get away toward Yiling. On the road Cao Cao fell in with Zhang He and ordered him to protect the retreat. Cao Cao pressed on as quickly as possible.

At the fifth watch he was a long way from the glare and he felt safer. He asked, "What is this place?"

They told him, "It is west of the Black Forest and north of Yidu."

Seeing the thickly crowded trees all about him, and the steep hills and narrow passes, Cao Cao threw up his head and laughed.

Those about him asked, "Why are you, Sir, so merry?"

And he said, "I am only laughing at the stupidity of Zhou Yu and the ignorance of Zhuge Liang. If they have only set an ambush there, as I would have done, why, there is no escape."

Cao Cao had scarcely finished his explanation when from both sides came a deafening roll of drums and flames sprang up to heaven. Cao Cao nearly fell off his horse—he was so startled.

And from the side dashed in a troop, with Zhao Zilong leading, who cried, "I am Zhao Zilong, and long have I been waiting here!"

Cao Cao ordered Xu Huang and Zhang He to engage this new opponent, and he himself rode off into the smoke and fire. Zhao Zilong did not pursue; he only captured the banners, and Cao Cao escaped.

The faint light of dawn showed a great black cloud all around, for the southeast wind had not ceased. Suddenly began a heavy downpour of rain, wetting everyone to the skin, but still Cao Cao maintained his headlong flight till the starved faces of the soldiers made a halt imperative. He told the men to forage in the villages about for grain and the means of making a fire. But when these had been found and they began to cook a meal, another pursuing party came along, and Cao Cao again was terrified. However, these proved to be Li Dian and Xu Chu escorting some of his advisers whom he saw with joy.

When giving the order to advance again, Cao Cao asked, "What places lay ahead?"

They told him, "There are two roads. One was the highway to South Yiling, and the other a mountain road to North Yiling."

"Which is the shorter way to Jiangling?" asked Cao Cao.

"The best way is to take the south road through Hulu Valley," was the reply.

So Cao Cao gave orders to march that way. By the time Hulu Valley was reached, the soldiers were almost starving and could march no more; horses too were worn out. Many had fallen by the roadside. A halt was then made, food was taken by force from the villagers, and as there were still some boilers left, they found a dry spot beside the hills where they could rest and cook. And there they began to prepare a meal, boiling grain, and roasting strips of horse flesh. Then they took off their wet clothes and spread them to dry. The beasts, too, were unsaddled and turned out to graze.

Seated comfortably in a somewhat open spot, Cao Cao suddenly looked up and began to laugh loud and long.

His companions, remembering the sequel of his last laugh, said, "Not long since, Sir, you laughed at Zhou Yu and Zhuge Liang. That resulted in the arrival of Zhao Zilong and great loss of troops to us. Why do you now laugh?"

"I am laughing again at the ignorance of the same two men. If I were in their place, and conducting their campaign, I should have had an ambush here, just to meet us when we were tired out. Then, even if we escaped with our lives, we should suffer very severely. They did not see this, and therefore I am laughing at them."

Even at that moment behind them rose a great yell. Thoroughly startled, Cao Cao threw aside his breastplate and leaped upon his horse. Most of the soldiers failed to catch theirs, and then fires sprang up on every side and filled the mouth of the valley. A force was arrayed before them and at the head was the man of ancient Yan, Zhang Fei, seated on his steed with his great spear leveled.

"Whither would you flee, O rebel?" shouted he.

The soldiers grew cold within at the sight of the terrible warrior. Xu Chu, mounted on a bare-backed horse, rode up to engage him, and Zhang Liao and Xu Huang galloped up to his aid. The three gathered about Zhang Fei and a melee began, while Cao Cao made off at top speed. The other leaders set off after him, and Zhang Fei pursued. However, Cao Cao by dint of hard riding got away, and gradually the pursuers were out-distanced. But many had received wounds.

As they were going, the soldiers said, "There are two roads before us. Which shall we take?"

"Which is the shorter?" asked Cao Cao.

"The high road is the more level, but it is fifteen miles longer than the bye road which goes to Huarong Valley. Only the latter road is narrow and dangerous, full of pits and difficult."

Cao Cao sent men up to the hill tops to look around.

They returned, saying: "There are several columns of smoke rising from the hills along the bye road. The high road seems quiet."

Then Cao Cao bade them lead the way along the bye road.

"Where smoke arises there are surely soldiers," remarked the officers. "Why go this way?"

"Because the 'Book of War' says that the hollow is to be regarded as solid, and the solid as hollow. That fellow Zhuge Liang is very subtle and has sent people to make those fires so that we should not go that way. He has laid an ambush on the high road. I have made up my mind, and I will not fall a victim to his wiles."

"O Prime Minister, your conclusions are most admirable. None other can equal you," said the officers.

And the soldiers were sent along the bye road. They were very hungry and many almost too weak to travel. The horses too were spent. Some had been scorched by the flames, and they rode forward resting their heads on their whips. The wounded struggled on to the last of their strength. All were soaking wet and all were feeble. Their arms and accouterments were in a deplorable state, and more than half had been left upon the road they had traversed. Few of the horses had saddles or bridles, for in the confusion of pursuit they had been left behind. It was the time of greatest winter cold, and the suffering was indescribable.

Noticing that the leading party had stopped, Cao Cao sent to ask the reason.

The messenger returned, saying, "The rain water collected in the pits makes the ground a mire, and the horses

cannot not move.”

Cao Cao raged. He said, “When soldiers come to hills, they cut a road; when they happen upon streams, they bridge them. Such a thing as mud cannot stay an army.”

So he ordered the weak and wounded to go to the rear and come on as they could, while the robust and able were to cut down trees, and gather herbage and reeds to fill up the holes. And it was to be done without delay, or death would be the punishment of the disobedient or remiss.

So the soldiers dismounted and felled trees and cut bamboos, and they leveled the road. And because of the imminence and fear of pursuit, a party of one hundred under Zhang Liao, Xu Chu, and Xu Huang was told off to hasten the workers and slay any that idled.

The soldiers made their way along the shallower parts, but many fell, and cries of misery were heard the whole length of the way.

“What are you howling for?” cried Cao Cao. “The number of your days is fixed by fate. Anyone who howls shall be put to death.”

The remnant of the army, now divided into three, one to march slowly, a second to fill up the waterways and hollows, and a third to escort Cao Cao, gradually made its way over the precipitous road. When the going improved a little and the path was moderately level, Cao Cao turned to look at his following and saw he had barely three hundred soldiers. And these lacked clothing and armor and were tattered and disordered.

But he pressed on, and when the officers told him the horses were quite spent and must rest, he replied, “Press on to Jingzhou, and there we shall find repose.”

So they pressed on. But they had gone only one or two miles when Cao Cao flourished his whip and broke once again into loud laughter.

“What is there to laugh at?” asked the officers.

“People say those two, Zhou Yu and Zhuge Liang, are able and crafty. I do not see it. They are a couple of incapables. If an ambush had been placed here, we should all be prisoners.”

Cao Cao had not finished this speech when the explosion of a bomb broke the silence, and a company of five hundred troops with swords in their hands appeared and barred the way. The leader was Guan Yu, holding his green-dragon saber, bestriding the Red Hare. At this sight, the spirits of Cao Cao’s soldiers left them, and they gazed into each others’ faces in panic.

“Now we have but one course,” said Cao Cao. “We must fight to the death!”

“How can we?” said the officers. “Though the leaders may have some strength left, the horses are spent.”

Cheng Yu said, “I have always heard that Guan Yu is haughty to the proud but kindly to the humble; he despises the strong, but is gentle with the weak. He discriminates between love and hate and is always righteous and true. You, O Prime Minister, have shown him kindness in the past. If you will remind him of that, we shall escape this evil.”

Cao Cao agreed to try. He rode out to the front, bowed low and said, “General, I trust you have enjoyed good health.”

“I had orders to await you, O Prime Minister,” replied Guan Yu, bowing in return, “and I have been expecting you these many days.”

“You see before you one Cao Cao—defeated and weak. I have reached a sad pass, and I trust you, O General, will not forget the kindness of former days.”

“Though indeed you were kind to me in those days, yet I slew your enemies for you and relieved the siege of Baima. As to the business of today, I cannot allow private feelings to outweigh public duty.”

“Do you remember my six generals, slain at the five passes? The noble person values righteousness. You are well versed in the histories and must recall the action of Yu Gong, the archer, when he released his master Zi Zhuo, for he determined not to use Zi Zhuo’s teaching to kill Zi Zhuo.”

Guan Yu was indeed a very mountain of goodness and could not forget the great kindness he had received at Cao Cao’s hands, and the magnanimity Cao Cao had shown over the deeds at the five passes. He saw the desperate straits to which his benefactor was reduced, and tears were very near to the eyes of both. He could not press Cao Cao hard.

He pulled at the bridle of his steed and turned away saying to his followers, “Break up the formation!”

From this it was evident that his design was to release Cao Cao, who then went on with his officers. When Guan Yu turned to look back, they had all passed. He uttered a great shout, and Cao Cao’s soldiers jumped off their horses and knelt on the ground crying for mercy. But he also had pity for them. Then Zhang Liao, whom he knew well, came along and was allowed to go free also.

Cao Cao, his army lost, fled to the Huarong Valley;
There in the throat of the gorge met he Guan Yu.

Grateful was Guan Yu, and mindful of former kindness,
Wherefore slipped he the bolt and freed the imprisoned dragon.

Having escaped this danger, Cao Cao hastened to get out of the valley. As the throat opened out, he glanced behind him and saw only forty-seven horsemen. As evening fell, they reached Jiangling, and they came upon an army that they took to be more enemies.

Cao Cao thought the end had surely come, but to his delight they were his own soldiers and he regained all his confidence.

Cao Ren, who was the leader, said, "I heard of your misfortunes, my lord, but I was afraid to venture far from my charge, else I would have met you before."

"I thought I would never see you again," said Cao Cao.

The fugitives found repose in the city, where Zhang Liao soon joined them. He also praised the magnanimity of Guan Yu.

When Cao Cao mustered the miserable remnant of his officers, he found nearly all were wounded and he bade them rest. Cao Ren poured the wine of consolation whereby his master might forget his sorrows.

As Cao Cao drank among his familiars, he became exceedingly sad.

Wherefore they said, "O Prime Minister, when you were in the cave of the tiger and trying to escape, you showed no sign of sorrow. Now that you are safe in a city, where you have food and the horses have forage, where all you have to do is to prepare for revenge, suddenly you lose heart and grieve. Why thus?"

Replied Cao Cao, "I am thinking of my friend Guo Jia: Had he been alive, he would not have let me suffer this loss."

He beat his breast and wept, saying, "Alas for Guo Jia! I grieve for Guo Jia! I sorrow for Guo Jia!"

The reproach shamed the advisers, who were silent.

Next day Cao Cao called Cao Ren and said, "I am going to the capital to prepare another army for revenge. You are to guard this region and, in case of necessity, I leave with you a sealed plan. You are only to open the cover when hard-pressed, and then you are to act as directed. The South Land will not dare to look this way."

"Who is to guard Hefei and Xiangyang?"

"Jingzhou is particularly your care, and Xiahou Dun is to hold Xiangyang. As Hefei is most important, I am sending Zhang Liao thither with good aids of Li Dian and Yue Jing. If you get into difficulties, send at once to tell me."

Having made these dispositions, Cao Cao set off at once with a few followers. He took with him the officers who had come over to his side when Jingzhou fell into his hands.

Cao Ren placed Cao Hong in charge of Yiling and Jiangling.

After having allowed the escape of Cao Cao, Guan Yu found his way back to headquarters. By this time the other detachments had returned bringing spoil of horses and weapons and supplies of all kinds. Only Guan Yu came back empty-handed. When he arrived, Zhuge Liang was with his brother congratulating him on his success. When Guan Yu was announced, Zhuge Liang got up and went to welcome him, bearing a cup of wine.

"Joy! O General," said Zhuge Liang. "You have done a deed that overtops the world. You have removed the empire's worst foe and ought to have been met at a distance and felicitated."

Guan Yu muttered inaudibly, and Zhuge Liang continued, "I hope it is not because we have omitted to welcome you on the road that you seem sad."

Turning to those about him, Zhuge Liang said, "Why did you not tell us Guan Yu was coming?"

"I am here to ask for death," said Guan Yu.

"Surely Cao Cao came through the valley?"

"Yes, he came that way. But I could not help it: I let him go."

"Then whom have you captured?"

"No one."

"Then you remembered the old kindness of Cao Cao and so allowed him to escape. But your acceptance of the task with its conditions is here. You will have to suffer the penalty."

Zhuce Liang called in the lictors and told them to take away Guan Yu and put him to death.

Guan Yu risked life when he spared
Cao Cao in direst need,
And age-long admiration gained
For kindly deed.

What actually befell will be seen in the next chapter.

Chapter 51

Cao Ren Withstands The South Land; Zhuge Liang Angers Zhou Yu.

Guan Yu would have died there but for his elder brother, who said to Zhuge Liang, "We three pledged ourselves to live and die together. Although my brother Guan Yu has offended, I cannot bear to break our oath. I hope you will only record this against him and let him atone later for the fault by some specially meritorious service."

So the sentence was remitted.

In the meantime, Zhou Yu mustered his officers and called over his soldiers, noted the special services of each, and sent full reports to his master. The soldiers who had surrendered were all transported across the river. All this done they spread the feast of victory.

The next step was to attack and capture Nanjun. The van of the army camped on the river bank. There were five camps and the Commander-in-Chief's tent was in the center. He summoned his officers to a council. At this moment Sun Qian arrived with congratulations from Liu Bei.

Zhou Yu received him and, having saluted in proper form, Sun Qian said, "My lord sent me on this special mission to felicitate the General on his great virtue and offer some unworthy gifts."

"Where is Liu Bei?" asked Zhou Yu.

"He is now encamped at Youkou, the mouth of River You."

"Is Zhuge Liang there?" asked Zhou Yu, taken aback.

"Both are there," said Sun Qian.

"Then return quickly, and I will come in person to thank them."

The presents handed over, Sun Qian was sent back forthwith to his own camp. Then Lu Su asked Zhou Yu why he had started when he heard where Liu Bei was camped.

"Because," replied Zhou Yu, "camping at the mouth of River You means that he has the intention of taking Nanjun. Having spent much military energy and spared no expenditure, we thought the territory should fall to us easily. Those others are opposed to us, and they wish to get the advantage of what we have already accomplished. However, they must remember that I am not dead yet."

"How can you prevent them?" asked Lu Su.

"I will go myself and speak with them. If all goes well, then, let it be so. In case it does not, then I shall immediately settle up with Liu Bei without waiting for Nanjun to be taken."

"I should like to accompany you," said Lu Su.

The commander and his adviser started, taking with them a guard of three thousand light horse. Having arrived at Youkou, they sought out Sun Qian, who, in turn, went in to see Liu Bei and told him Zhou Yu had come to render thanks.

"Why has he come?" asked Liu Bei of his Directing Instructor.

"He is not likely to come out of simple politeness. Surely he has come in connection with Nanjun."

"But if he brings an army, can we stand against it?" asked Liu Bei.

"When he comes, you may reply thus and thus."

Then they drew up the warships in the river and ranged the soldiers upon the bank. When the arrival of Zhou Yu was formally announced, Zhao Zilong, with some horsemen, went to welcome him. When Zhou Yu saw what bold soldiers they looked, he began to feel uncomfortable, but he went on his way. Being met at the camp gates by Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang, he was taken in to the chief tent, where the ceremonies were performed and preparations for a banquet had been made.

Presently Liu Bei raised his cup in felicitation on the recent victory gained by his guest. The banquet proceeded.

After a few more courses Zhou Yu said, "Of course you are camped here with no other idea than to take Nanjun?"

Liu Bei said, "We heard you were going to take the place and came to assist. Should you not take it, then we will occupy it."

Zhou Yu laughed, saying, "We of the South Land have long wished for this territory. Now that it is within our grasp, we naturally shall take it."

Liu Bei said, "There is always some uncertainty. Cao Cao left Cao Ren to guard the region, and you may be certain that there is good strategy behind Cao Ren, to say nothing of his boldness as a warrior. I fear you may not get it."

"Well, if we do not take it then, Sir, you may have it," said Zhou Yu.

"Here are witnesses to your words," said Liu Bei, naming Lu Su, Zhuge Liang, and those at table. "I hope you will never repent what you have just said."

Lu Su stammered and seemed unwilling to be cited as one of the witnesses, but Zhou Yu said, "When the word

of a noble person has gone forth, it is ended. He never regrets.”

“This speech of yours, Sir, is very generous,” interjected Zhuge Liang. “The South Land shall try first. But if the place does not fall, there is no reason why my lord should not capture it.”

The two visitors then took their leave and rode away.

As soon as they had left, Liu Bei turned to Zhuge Liang and said, “O Master, you bade me thus reply to Zhou Yu. But though I did so, I have turned it over and over in my mind without finding any reason in what I said. I am alone and weak, without a single foot of land to call my own. I desired to get possession of Nanjun that I might have, at least, a temporary shelter, yet I have said that Zhou Yu may attack it first. If it falls to the South Land, how can I get possession?”

Zhuce Liang laughed and replied, “First I advised you to attack Jingzhou, but you would not listen. Do you remember?”

“But it belonged to Liu Biao, and I could not bear to attack it then. Now it belongs to Cao Cao, I might do so.”

“Do not be anxious,” replied the adviser. “Let Zhou Yu go and attack it. Some day, my lord, I shall make you sit in the high place thereof.”

“But what design have you?”

“So and so,” said Zhuge Liang, whispering.

Liu Bei was satisfied with the reply, and only strengthened his position at Youkou.

In the meantime Zhou Yu and Lu Su returned to their own camp, and the latter said, “Why did you tell Liu Bei that he might attack Nanjun?”

“I can take it with a flick of my finger,” replied Zhou Yu, “but I just manifested a little pretended kindness.”

Then he inquired among his officers for a volunteer to attack the city. Jiang Qin offered himself, and was put in command of the vanguard, with Xu Sheng and Ding Feng as helpers. He was given five thousand of veterans, and they moved across the river. Zhou Yu promised to follow with supports.

On the other side Cao Ren ordered Cao Hong to guard Yiling, and so hold one corner of an ox-horn defense.

When the news came that the South Land’s force had crossed the River Han, Cao Ren said, “We will defend and not offer battle.”

But General Niu Jin said impetuously, “To let the enemy approach the walls and not offer battle is timidity. Our troops, lately worsted, need heartening and must show their mettle. Let me have five hundred of veterans, and I will fight to a finish.”

Cao Ren could not withstand this offer, and so the five hundred went out of the city. At once Ding Feng came to challenge the leader, and they fought a few bouts. Then Ding Feng pretended to be defeated, gave up the fight, and retreated into his own lines. Niu Jin followed him hard. When he had got within the South Land’s formation, at a signal from Ding Feng, the army closed round and Niu Jin was surrounded. He pushed right and left, but could find no way out. Seeing Niu Jin in the toils, Cao Ren, who had watched the fight from the wall, donned his armor and came out of the city at the head of his own bold company of horsemen and burst in among the forces of the South Land to try to rescue his colleague. Beating back Xu Sheng, Cao Ren fought his way in and presently rescued Niu Jin.

However, having got out, Cao Ren saw several score of horsemen still in the middle unable to make their way out, whereupon he turned again to the battle and dashed in to their rescue. This time he met Jiang Qin on whom Cao Ren and Niu Jin made a violent attack. Then his brother Cao Chun came up with supports, and the great battle ended in a defeat for the troops of the South Land.

So Cao Ren went back victor, while the unhappy Jiang Qin returned to report his failure. Zhou Yu was very angry and would have put to death his hapless subordinate but for the intervention of the other officers. Then Zhou Yu prepared for another attack where he himself would lead.

But Gan Ning said, “General, do not be in too great hurry. Let me go first and attack Yiling, the supporting angle of the ox-horn formation. After that the conquest of Nanjun will be easy.”

Zhou Yu accepted the plan and Gan Ning, with three thousand troops, went to attack Yiling.

When news of the approaching army reached him, Cao Ren called to his side Chen Jiao, who said, “If Yiling be lost, then Nanjun is lost too. So help must be sent quickly.”

Thereupon Cao Chun and Niu Jin were sent by secret ways to the aid of Cao Hong. Cao Chun sent a messenger to the city to ask that they should cause a diversion by a sortie at the time the reinforcements should arrive.

So when Gan Ning drew near, Cao Hong went out to meet and engage him. They fought a score of rounds, but Cao Hong was overcome at last, and Gan Ning took the city. However, as evening fell the reinforcements under Cao Chun and Niu Jin came up, and the captor was surrounded in the city he had taken. The scouts went off immediately to tell Zhou Yu of this sudden change of affairs which greatly alarmed him.

“Let us hasten to his rescue,” said Cheng Pu.

“Our place is of the greatest importance,” said Zhou Yu, “and I am afraid to leave it undefended lest Cao Ren should attack.”

“But Gan Ning is one of our first leaders and must be rescued,” said Lu Meng.

“I should like to go myself to his aid, but whom can I leave here in my place?” said Zhou Yu.

“Leave Ling Tong here,” said Lu Meng. “I will push on ahead, and you can protect my advance. In less than ten days we shall be singing the paeon of victory.”

“Are you willing?” said Zhou Yu to the man who was to act for him.

Ling Tong said, “If the ten-day period is not exceeded, I may be able to carry on for that time. I am unequal to more than that.”

Ling Tong’s consent pleased Zhou Yu who started at once, leaving ten thousand troops for the defense of the camp.

Lu Meng said to his chief, “South of Yiling is a little-used road that may prove very useful in an attack on Nanjun. Let us send a party to fell trees and barricade this road so that horses cannot pass. In case of defeat, the defeated will take this road and will be compelled to abandon their horses, which we shall capture.”

Zhou Yu approved, and the men set out. When the main army drew near Yiling, Zhou Yu asked who would try to break through the besiegers, and Zhou Tai offered himself. He girded on his sword, mounted his steed, and burst straight into the Cao Hong’s army. He got through to the city wall.

From the city wall Gan Ning saw the approach of his friend Zhou Tai and went out to welcome him. Zhou Tai told him the Commander-in-Chief was on the way to his relief, and Gan Ning at once bade the defenders prepare from within to support the attack of the rescuers.

When the news of the approach of Zhou Yu had reached Yiling, Cao Hong, Cao Chun, and Niu Jin had sent to tell Cao Ren, who was at Nanjun, and at the same time they prepared to repel the assailants.

As the army of the South Land came near, they at once attacked. Simultaneously Gan Ning and Zhou Tai went out to attack on two sides, and the troops of Cao Hong were thrown into confusion. The soldiers of the South Land fell on lustily, and the three leaders all fled by a bye road, but, finding the way barred with felled trees and other obstacles, they had to abandon their horses and go afoot. In this way the troops of the South Land gained some five hundred steeds.

Zhou Yu, pressing on as quickly as possible toward Nanjun, came upon Cao Ren and his army marching to save Yiling. The two armies engaged and fought a battle which lasted till late in the evening. Then both drew off, and Cao Ren withdrew into the city.

During the night he called his officers to a council.

Then said Cao Hong, “The loss of Yiling has brought us to a dangerous pass. Now it seems the time to open the guide-letter of the Prime Minister, and see what plans he arranged for our salvation in this peril.”

“You but say what I think,” replied Cao Ren.

Whereupon he tore open the guide-letter and read it. His face lighted up with joy, and he at once issued orders to have the morning meal prepared at the fifth watch. At daylight the whole army moved out of the city through three gates, but they left a semblance of occupation in the shape of banners on the walls.

Zhou Yu went up to the tower of observation and looked over the city. He saw that the flags along the battlements had no guards behind them, and he noticed that all troops carried bundles at their waists behind so that they were ready for a long march.

Thought Zhou Yu to himself, “Cao Ren must be prepared for a long march.”

So Zhou Yu went down from the tower of observation and sent out an order for two wings of the army to be ready. One of these was to attack and, in case of its success, the other was to pursue at full speed till the clanging of the gongs should call them to return. He took command of the leading force in person, and Cheng Pu commanded the other. Thus they advanced to attack the city.

The armies being arrayed facing each other, the drums rolled out across the plain. Cao Hong rode forth and challenged, and Zhou Yu, from his place by the standard, bade Han Dang respond. The two champions fought near two score bouts, and then Cao Hong fled. Thereupon Cao Ren came out to help him, and Zhou Tai rode out at full speed to meet him. These two exchanged a half score passes and then Cao Ren tied.

Cao Ren’s army fell into confusion. Thereupon Zhou Yu gave the signal for the advance of both his wings, and the forces of Cao Ren were sore smitten and defeated. Zhou Yu pursued to the city wall, but Cao Ren’s troops did not enter the city. Instead, they went away northwest. Han Dang and Zhou Tai pressed them hard.

Zhou Yu, seeing the city gates standing wide open and no guards upon the walls, ordered the raiding of the city. A few score horsemen rode in first, Zhou Yu followed and whipping his steed. As he galloped into the enclosure around the gate, Chen Jiao stood on the defense tower. When he saw Zhou Yu enter, in his heart he applauded the god-like perspicacity of the Prime Minister Cao Cao.

Then was heard the clap-clap of a watchman’s rattle. At this signal the archers and crossbowmen let fly, and the arrows and bolts flew forth in a sudden fierce shower, while those who had won their way to the van of the inrush went headlong into a deep trench. Zhou Yu managed to pull up in time, but turning to escape, he was wounded in

the left side and fell to the ground. Niu Jin rushed out from the city to capture the chief, but Xu Sheng and Ding Feng at the risk of their lives got him away safe. Then the troops of Cao Ren dashed out of the city and wrought confusion among the troops of the South Land, who trampled each other down and many more fell into the trenches. Cheng Pu tried to draw off, but Cao Ren and Cao Hong came toward him from different directions, and the battle went hardly against the soldiers of Zhou Yu, till help came from Ling Tong, who bore back their assailants. Satisfied with their success, Cao Ren led his forces into the city, while the losers marched back to their own camp.

Zhou Yu, sorely wounded, was taken to his own tent and the army physician called in. With iron forceps, he extracted the sharp bolt and dressed the wound with a lotion designed to counteract the poison of the metal. But the pain was intense, and the patient rejected all nourishment.

The physician said, "The missile had been poisoned, and the wound will require a long time to heal. You, General, must be kept quiet and especially free from any irritation, which will cause the wound to reopen."

Thereupon Cheng Pu gave orders that each division was to remain in camp. Three days later, Niu Jin came within sight and challenged the men of the South Land to battle, but they did not stir. The enemy hurled at them taunts and insults till the sun had fallen low in the sky, but it was of no avail and Niu Jin withdrew.

Next day Niu Jin returned and repeated his insulting abuse. Cheng Pu dared not tell the wounded general. The third day, waxing bolder, the enemy came to the very gates of the stockade, the leader shouting that he had come for the purpose of capturing Zhou Yu.

Then Cheng Pu called together his officers, and they discussed the feasibility of retirement into the South Land that they might seek the opinion of Sun Quan.

Ill as he was, Zhou Yu still retained control of the expedition. He knew that the enemy came daily to the gates of his camp and reviled him, although none of his officers told him. One day Cao Ren came in person, and there was much rolling of drums and shouting. Cheng Pu, however, steadily refused to accept the challenge and would not let anyone go out.

Then Zhou Yu summoned the officers to his bedside and said, "What mean the drums and the shouting?"

"The soldiers are drilling," was the reply.

"Why do you deceive me?" said Zhou Yu angrily. "Do I not know that our enemies come day by day to our gates and insult us? Yet Cheng Pu suffers this in silence and makes no use of his powers and authority."

He sent for Cheng Pu and, when he arrived, asked him why he acted thus.

"Because you are ill, and the physician said you were on no account to be provoked to anger. Wherefore, although the enemy challenged us to battle, I kept it from you."

"And if you do not fight, what think you should be done?" said Zhou Yu.

And they all said they desired to return to the South Land till he had recovered from his wound, when they would make another expedition.

Zhou Yu lay and listened. Suddenly he sprang up, crying, "The noble person who has eaten of his lord's bounty should die in his lord's battles. To return home dead and wrapped in a horse's hide is a happy fate. Am I the sort of people to bring to nought the grand designs of my lord?"

So speaking he proceeded to gird on his armor, and he mounted his horse. The wonder of the officers only redoubled when their General placed himself at the head of some hundreds of horsemen and went out of the camp gates toward the enemy, then fully arrayed. Cao Ren, their general, stood beneath the great standard.

At sight of the opponents, Cao Ren flourished his whip and began to hurl abuse at them, "Zhou Yu, you babe! I think your fate has met you. You dare not face my army!"

The stream of insult never ceased.

Presently Zhou Yu could stand it no longer. Riding out to the front he cried, "Here I am, base churl. Look at me!"

The whole Cao Ren's army were taken aback. But Cao Ren turned to those about him and said, "Let us all revile him!"

And the whole army yelled insults.

Zhou Yu grew angry and sent Pan Zhang out to fight. But before he had delivered his first blow, Zhou Yu suddenly uttered a loud cry, and he fell to the ground with blood gushing from his mouth.

At this Cao Ren's army rushed to the battle, and the army of the South Land pressed forward to meet them. A fierce struggle waged around Zhou Yu's body, but he was borne off safely and taken to his tent.

"Do you feel better?" asked Cheng Pu anxiously.

"It was a ruse of mine," whispered Zhou Yu in reply.

"But what avails it?"

"I am not suffering, but I did that to make our enemies think I was very ill and so oppose them by deceit. I will send a few trusty men to pretend desertion and tell them I am dead. That will cause them to try a night raid on the camp, and we shall have an ambush ready for them. We shall get Cao Ren easily."

"The plan seems excellent," said Cheng Pu.

Soon from the tent there arose the sound of wailing as for the dead. The soldiers around took up the cry and said one to another, "The General is dead of his wound!" and they all put on the symbols of mourning.

Meanwhile Cao Ren was consulting with his officers.

Said he, "Zhou Yu lost his temper, and that has caused his wound to reopen and brought on that flow of blood. You saw him fall to the ground, and he will assuredly die soon."

Just then there came in one who said that a few men had come over from the enemy asking to be allowed to join the army of Cao Ren. Among them were two of Cao Cao's men who had been made prisoners. Cao Ren sent for the deserters and questioned them.

They told him, saying, "Zhou Yu's wound reopened at his anger, and he died in the camp that day. The leaders are all clothing in white and in mourning. We desert because we have been put to shame by the second in command."

Pleased at this news, Cao Ren at once began to arrange to make a night attack on the camp and, if possible, get the head of the dead general to send to the capital.

"Success depends upon promptitude, so act without delay," said Chen Jiao.

Niu Jin was told off as Van Leader, Cao Ren himself led the center, while the rear was commanded by Cao Hong and Cao Chun. Chen Jiao and a small force were left to guard Nanjun.

At the first watch they left the city and took the way toward Zhou Yu's camp. When they drew near, not a soldier was visible in the camp, but flags and banners and spears were all there, evidently to keep up an appearance of preparation. Feeling at once that they had been tricked, they turned to retreat.

But a bomb exploded, and this was the signal for an attack on all four sides. Han Dang and Jiang Qin pressed in from the east; Zhou Tai and Pan Zhang, from the west; Chen Wu and Lu Meng, from the north; and Xu Sheng and Ding Feng, from the south. The result was a severe defeat for the raiders, and the army of Cao Ren was entirely broken and scattered abroad so that no one part of the beaten army could aid the other.

Cao Ren, with a few horsemen got out of the press and presently met Cao Hong. The two leaders ran away together, and by the fifth watch they had got near Nanjun. Then they heard a beating of drums, and Ling Tong appeared barring the way. There was a small skirmish, and Cao Ren went off at an angle. But he fell in with Gan Ning, who attacked him vigorously. Cao Ren dared not go back to Nanjun, but he made for Xiangyang along the main road. The forces of the South Land pursued him for a time and then desisted.

Zhou Yu and Cheng Pu then made their way to Nanjun where they were startled to see flags on the walls and every sign of occupation.

Before they had recovered from their surprise, there appeared one who cried, "Pardon, General! I had orders from the Directing Instructor to take this city. I am Zhao Zilong of Changshan."

Zhou Yu was fiercely angry and gave orders to assault the city, but the defenders sent down flights and flights of arrows, and his troops could not stay near the rampart. So he withdrew and took counsel. In the meantime he decided to send Gan Ning with a force of several thousand to capture Jingzhou City, and Ling Tong with another army to take Xiangyang. Nanjun could be taken later.

But even as these orders were being given, the scouts came in hurriedly to report, saying, "After Nanjun fell, Zhuge Liang, suddenly forging a military commission, induced the guards of Jingzhou City to leave it and go to the rescue of Cao Ren. Whereupon Zhang Fei occupied the capital."

Soon after another messenger came, saying, "Xiahou Dun, at Xiangyang, received from Zhuge Liang dispatches, supported by a commission in due form, saying that Cao Ren was in danger and needed help, whereupon Xiahou Dun marched off, and Guan Yu seized that city."

Thus the two cities that Zhou Yu wanted had fallen, without the least effort, into the hands of his rival Liu Bei.

"How did Zhuge Liang get this military commission with which he has imposed on the generals?" asked Zhou Yu.

Cheng Pu replied, "He seized that of Chen Jiao and so has got all this region into his power."

Zhou Yu uttered a great cry, for at that moment his wound had suddenly burst open.

A city falls, but not to us the gain;
The guerdon is another's; ours the pain.

The next chapter will say what befell Zhou Yu.

Japan

Japan's classical and medieval periods roughly converge with the European Middle Ages that generally range from the fifth to fifteenth centuries. By the eighth century, the Yamato clan had taken control of Japan, and in 710 C.E. Nara became the first stable capital. During the Nara period (710-784 C.E.), Japan produced two historical chronicles that legitimize Yamato's authority historically. *Records of Ancient Matters* (712 C.E.) connects the Yamato clan to Amaterasu, the sun goddess, and *Chronicles of Japan* (720 C.E.) explains the creation of the Japanese islands. Religiously and philosophically influential by this period were Shintoism (a polytheistic Japanese indigenous religion), Confucianism (which probably arrived in Japan in the fifth century), and Buddhism (adopted via China and Korea in the sixth century). During the Nara period, Japan also produced *Florilegium of Cherished Airs* (751 C.E.), the Chinese-style poetry of Japan's earliest extant poetry anthology, and *The Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*) (ca. 8th century C.E.), the earliest vernacular poetry anthology.

In 794 C.E., the emperor Kammu shifted his capital to Heian, modern-day Kyoto, to stop the involvement of the Buddhist clergy in Nara in the state affairs. In the tenth century, *kana*, the new phonetic writing system, was developed, which led to the flourishing of rich vernacular prose literature, especially by women writers, although literature was still created by and for the capital elite during the Heian period (794-1185 C.E.). Up to that point, Japan had borrowed Chinese characters for writing. Two of the noteworthy literary works of this time are *The Tale of Genji* (ca. 1010 C.E.) and *The Pillow Book* (ca. 1000 C.E.), written by prestigious court ladies, Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shōnagon respectively. Lady Murasaki and others in the Heian court used a writing system called *onnade*, i.e., “woman's hand,” which used Chinese characters, but modified them to be phonological, making composition much easier and thus facilitating writing. Also, *waka*, a poetic form consisting of thirty-one syllables, was an integral part of the lives of the aristocracy.

The prolonged civil war between the Heike and the Genji and the rise of the warrior class led to the dissolution of the Heian period in the second half of the twelfth century. These factors resulted in the establishment of a military state in Kamakura, southeast of modern-day Tokyo and ushered in the medieval age (1192–1600 C.E.) in Japan. Military clans dominated Japan until the restoration of imperial power in 1868 C.E. The battle between the Heike and the Genji is recorded in the well-known Japanese medieval tale *The Tale of the Heike* (ca. 1240 C.E.). The military rulers, or shoguns, became patrons of the arts beyond the imperial court. For example, the shoguns supported theatre performances, including Noh theatre. In this cultural milieu, Zeami Mokokiyo (1363-1443 C.E.) was able to produce numerous exemplary Noh plays. Although medieval Japanese literature is still connected to Heian values in many ways, it is also characterized by the influence of the warrior culture and diverse cultural elements beyond the imperial court.

As already indicated above, the selections in this chapter, *The Tale of Genji* and Zeami's plays, are good examples of the Heian period and Medieval Japan under military rule, respectively. While marked by the different periods and their different literary characteristics, they also show shared literary, cultural, and religious values.



IMAGE 8.1: BYŌDŌ-IN'S PHOENIX HALL | A picture of Buddhist temple and Japanese National Treasure, Byōdō-in, built in the Heian period in the eleventh century

Author: User “663highland”

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AS YOU READ, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- In what specific ways do *The Tale of Genji* and Zeami's plays reveal the characteristics of the Heian period and the Medieval Japan of military rule?
- How does *The Tale of Genji*, a novel focusing on a prince and his legacy, reveal a woman's perspective?
- How might some of Zeami's plays dramatize and even reconcile conflicts between opposites—e.g., warrior culture vs. Buddhism, warrior ethos vs. Heian aristocratic values, the past vs. the present, the dead vs. the living, etc.?

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

- You can watch the whole performance of the Noh play "Atsumori" on the following website:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mXuGC16ix4>

Written by Kyounghye Kwon

NOH PLAYS

Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443 C.E.)

Appeared distinctively in the fourteenth century
Japan

Noh (also spelled Nō, meaning "talent" or "skill") theatre is a traditional Japanese theatrical form that came to have a distinctive form in the fourteenth century and continued to develop up to the Tokugawa period (1603-1867). Noh theatre, one of the oldest extant theatre forms in the world, has been handed down from generation to generation, keeping its early forms fairly intact. Unlike performers of Kabuki (another traditional Japanese theatrical form) who use elaborate makeup, Noh performers wear masks. Compared to typical western theatre, a Noh play is relatively short without a lot of action; instead, Noh performers emphasize sounds and movements as visual metaphors suggesting the story on stage. Traditionally, they were performed mainly for the warrior class, whereas currently this theatre is protected and supported at the national level. Zeami Motokiyo, along with his father, wrote many of the most exemplary Noh plays. Zeami also formulated the principles of the Noh theatre. There are five types of Noh plays: the plays about 1) gods, 2) warriors, 3) a female protagonist, 4) a madwoman in a contemporary setting, and 5) devils, monsters, and supernatural beings. Zeami's play "Atsumori," for example, belongs to the plays about warriors. It dramatizes a well-known episode from *The Tale of the Heike* (ca. 1240 C.E.), a famous, medieval Japanese epic.

Written by Kyounghye Kwon

THE NŌ PLAYS OF JAPAN

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Arthur Waley

Introduction

The theatre of the West is the last stronghold of realism. No one treats painting or music as mere transcripts of life. But even pioneers of stage-reform in France and Germany appear to regard the theatre as belonging to life and not to art. The play is an organized piece of human experience which the audience must as far as possible be allowed to share with the actors.

A few people in America and Europe want to go in the opposite direction. They would like to see a theatre that aimed boldly at stylization and simplification, discarding entirely the pretentious lumber of 19th century stageland. That such a theatre exists and has long existed in Japan has been well-known here for some time. But hitherto very few plays have been translated in such a way as to give the Western reader an idea of their literary value. It is only through accurate scholarship that the "soul of Nō" can be known to the West. Given a truthful rendering of the texts the American reader will supply for himself their numerous connotations, a fact which Japanese writers do not

always sufficiently realize. The Japanese method of expanding a five-line poem into a long treatise in order to make it intelligible to us is one which obliterates the structure of the original design. Where explanations are necessary they have been given in footnotes. I have not thought it necessary to point out (as a Japanese critic suggested that I ought to have done) that, for example, the “mood” of *Komachi* is different from the “mood” of *Kumasaka*. Such differences will be fully apparent to the American reader, who would not be the better off for knowing the technical name of each *kurai* or class of Nō. Surely the Japanese student of Shakespeare does not need to be told that the *kurai* of “Hamlet” is different from that of “Measure for Measure”?

It would be possible to burden a book of this kind with as great a mass of unnecessary technicality as irritates us in a smart sale-catalogue of Japanese Prints. I have avoided such terms to a considerable extent, treating the plays as literature, not as some kind of Delphic mystery.

In this short introduction I shall not have space to give a complete description of modern Nō, nor a full history of its origins. But the reader of the translations will find that he needs some information on these points. I have tried to supply it as concisely as possible, sometimes in a schematic rather than a literary form.

These are some of the points about which an American reader may wish to know more:

The Nō Stage

The actual stage is about 18 feet square. On the boards of the back wall is painted a pine-tree; the other sides are open. A gallery (called *hashigakari*) leads to the green-room, from which it is separated by a curtain which is raised to admit the actor when he makes his entry. The audience sits either on two or three sides of the stage. The chorus, generally in two rows, sit (or rather squat) in the recess. The musicians sit in the recess at the back of the stage, the stick-drum nearest the “gallery,” then the two hand-drums and the flute. A railing runs round the musician’s recess, as also along the gallery. To the latter railing are attached three real pine-branches. The stage is covered by a roof of its own, imitating in form the roof of a Shintō temple.

The Performers

The Actors

The first actor who comes on to the stage (approaching from the gallery) is the *waki* or assistant. His primary business is to explain the circumstances under which the principal actor (called *shite* or “doer”) came to dance the central dance of the play. Each of these main actors (*waki* and *shite*) has “adjuncts” or “companions.”

Some plays need only the two main actors. Others use as many as ten or even twelve. The female rôles are of course taken by men. The *waki* is always a male rôle.

The Chorus

This consists of from eight to twelve persons in ordinary native dress seated in two rows at the side of the stage. Their sole function is to sing an actor’s words for him when his dance-movements prevent him from singing comfortably. They enter by a side-door before the play begins and remain seated till it is over.

The Musicians

Nearest to the gallery sits the “big-drum,” whose instrument rests on the ground and is played with a stick. This stick-drum is not used in all plays.

Next comes a hand-drummer who plays with thimble finger; next a second who plays with the bare hand.

Finally, the flute. It intervenes only at stated intervals, particularly at the beginning, climax and end of plays.

Costume

Though almost wholly banishing other extrinsic aids, the Nō relies enormously for its effects on gorgeous and elaborate costume. Some references to this will be found in Oswald Sickert’s letters at the end of my book.

Masks are worn only by the *shite* (principal actor) and his subordinates. The *shite* always wears a mask if playing the part of a woman or very old man. Young men, particularly warriors, are usually unmasked. In child-parts



IMAGE 8.2: TAIRA NO ATSUMORI | The samurai Atsumori plays a woodwind instrument.

Author: Kikuchi Yosai
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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(played by boy-actors) masks are not worn. The reproduction of a female mask will be found on Plate I. The masks are of wood. Many of those still in use are of great antiquity and rank as important specimens of Japanese sculpture.

Properties

The properties of the Nō stage are of a highly conventionalized kind. An open frame-work represents a boat; another differing little from it denotes a chariot. Palace, house, cottage, hovel are all represented by four posts covered with a roof. The fan which the actor usually carries often does duty as a knife, brush or the like. Weapons are more realistically represented. The short-sword, belt-sword, pike, spear and Chinese broad-sword are carried; also bows and arrows.

Dancing and Acting

Every Nō play (with, I think, the sole exception of *Hachi no Ki*) includes a *mai* or dance, consisting usually of slow steps and solemn gestures, often bearing little resemblance to what is in America associated with the word "dance." When the *shite* dances, his dance consists of five "movements" or parts; a "subordinate's" dance consists of three. Both in the actors' miming and in the dancing an important element is the stamping of beats with the shoeless foot.

The Plays

The plays are written partly in prose, partly in verse. The prose portions serve much the same purpose as the iambs in a Greek play. They are in the Court or upper-class colloquial of the 14th century, a language not wholly dead to-day, as it is still the language in which people write formal letters.

The chanting of these portions is far removed from singing; yet they are not "spoken." The voice falls at the end of each sentence in a monotonous cadence.

A prose passage often gradually heightens into verse. The chanting, which has hitherto resembled the intoning of a Roman Catholic priest, takes on more of the character of "recitativo" in opera, occasionally attaining to actual song. The verse of these portions is sometimes irregular, but on the whole tends to an alternation of lines of five and seven syllables.

The verse of the lyric portions is marked by frequent use of pivot-words and puns, particularly puns on place-names. The 14th century Nō-writer, Seami, insists that pivot-words should be used sparingly and with discretion. Many Nō-writers did not follow this advice; but the use of pivot-words is not in itself a decoration more artificial than rhyme, and I cannot agree with those European writers to whom this device appears puerile and degraded. Each language must use such embellishments as suit its genius.

Another characteristic of the texts is the use of earlier literary material. Many of the plays were adapted from dance-ballads already existing and even new plays made use of such poems as were associated in the minds of the audience with the places or persons named in the play. Often a play is written round a poem or series of poems, as will be seen in the course of this book.

This use of existing material exceeds the practice of Western dramatists; but it must be remembered that if we were to read Webster, for example, in editions annotated as minutely as the Nō-plays, we should discover that he was far more addicted to borrowing than we had been aware. It seems to me that in the finest plays this use of existing material is made with magnificent effect and fully justifies itself.

The reference which I have just made to dance-ballads brings us to another question. What did the Nō-plays grow out of?

Origins

Nō as we have it to-day dates from about the middle of the 14th century. It was a combination of many elements.

These were:

- Sarugaku, a masquerade which relieved the solemnity of Shintō ceremonies. What we call Nō was at first called Sarugaku no Nō.
- Dengaku, at first a rustic exhibition of acrobatics and jugglery; later, a kind of opera in which performers alternately danced and recited.
- Various sorts of recitation, ballad-singing, etc.
- The Chinese dances practised at the Japanese Court.

Nō owes its present form to the genius of two men. Kwanami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384 A. D.) and his son Seami Motokiyo (1363-1444 A. D.)

Kwanami was a priest of the Kasuga Temple near Nara. About 1375 the Shōgun Yoshimitsu saw him performing in a Sarugaku no Nō at the New Temple (one of the three great temples of Kumano) and immediately took him under his protection.

This Yoshimitsu had become ruler of Japan in 1367 at the age of ten. His family had seized the Shōgunate in 1338 and wielded absolute power at Kyōto, while two rival Mikados, one in the north and one in the south, held impotent and dwindling courts.

The young Shōgun distinguished himself by patronage of art and letters; and by his devotion to the religion of the Zen Sect. It is probable that when he first saw Kwanami he also became acquainted with the son Seami, then a boy of twelve.

A diary of the period has the following entry for the 7th day of the 6th month, 1368:

For some while Yoshimitsu has been making a favourite of a Sarugaku-boy from Yamato, sharing the same meat and eating from the same vessels. These Sarugaku people are mere mendicants, but he treats them as if they were Privy Counsellors.

From this friendship sprang the art of Nō as it exists to-day. Of Seami we know far more than of his father Kwanami. For Seami left behind him a considerable number of treatises and autobiographical fragments. These were not published till 1908 and have not yet been properly edited. They establish, among other things, the fact that Seami wrote both words and music for most of the plays in which he performed. It had before been supposed that the texts were supplied by the Zen priests. For other information brought to light by the discovery of Seami's *Works* see Appendix II.

Yūgen

It is obvious that Seami was deeply imbued with the teachings of Zen, in which cult his patron Yoshimitsu may have been his master. The difficult term *yūgen* which occurs constantly in the *Works* is derived from Zen literature. It means "what lies beneath the surface"; the subtle as opposed to the obvious; the hint, as opposed to the statement. It is applied to the natural grace of a boy's movements, to the restraint of a nobleman's speech and bearing. "When notes fall sweetly and flutter delicately to the ear," that is the *yūgen* of music. The symbol of *yūgen* is "a white bird with a flower in its beak." "To watch the sun sink behind a flower-clad hill, to wander on and on in a huge forest with no thought of return, to stand upon the shore and gaze after a boat that goes hid by far-off islands, to ponder on the journey of wild-geese seen and lost among the clouds"—such are the gates to *yūgen*.

I will give a few specimens of Seami's advice to his pupils:

Patrons

The actor should not stare straight into the faces of the audience, but look between them. When he looks in the direction of the Daimyōs he must not let his eyes meet theirs, but must slightly avert his gaze.

At Palace-performances or when acting at a banquet, he must not let his eyes meet those of the Shōgun or stare straight into the Honourable Face. When playing in a large enclosure he must take care to keep as close as possible to the side where the Nobles are sitting; if in a small enclosure, as far off as possible. But particularly in Palace-performances and the like he must take the greatest pains to keep as far away as he possibly can from the August Presence.

Again, when the recitations are given at the Palace it is equally essential to begin at the right moment. It is bad to begin too soon and fatal to delay too long.

It sometimes happens that the "noble gentlemen" do not arrive at the theatre until the play has already reached its Development and Climax. In such cases the play is at its climax, but the noble gentlemen's hearts are ripe only for Introduction. If they, ready only for Introduction, are forced to witness a Climax, they are not likely to get pleasure from it. Finally even the spectators who were there before, awed by the entry of the "exalted ones," become so quiet that you would not know they were there, so that the whole audience ends by returning to the Introductory mood. At such a moment the Nō cannot possibly be a success. In such circumstances it is best to take Development-Nō and give it a slightly "introductory" turn. Then, if it is played gently, it may win the August Attention.

It also happens that one is suddenly sent for to perform at a Shōgunal feast or the like. The audience is already in a "climax-mood"; but "introductory" Nō must be played. This is a great difficulty. In such circumstances the best plan is to tinge the introduction with a *nuance* of "development." But this must be done without "stickiness," with the lightest possible touch, and the transition to the real Development and Climax must be made as quickly as possible.

In old times there were masters who perfected themselves in Nō without study. But nowadays the nobles and gentlemen have become so critical that they will only look with approbation on what is good and will not give attention to anything bad.

Their honourable eyes have become so keen that they notice the least defect, so that even a masterpiece that is as pearls many times polished or flowers choicely culled will not win the applause of our gentlemen to-day.

At the same time, good actors are becoming few and the Art is gradually sinking towards its decline. For this reason, if very strenuous study is not made, it is bound to disappear altogether.

When summoned to play before the noble gentlemen, we are expected to give the regular “words of good-wish” and to divide our performance into the three parts, Introduction, Development and Climax, so that the pre-arranged order cannot be varied.... But on less formal occasions, when, for example, one is playing not at a Shōgunal banquet but on a common, everyday (*yo no tsune*) stage, it is obviously unnecessary to limit oneself to the set forms of “happy wish.”

One’s style should be easy and full of graceful *yūgen*, and the piece selected should be suitable to the audience. A ballad (*ko-utai*) or dance-song (*kuse-mai*) of the day will be best. One should have in one’s repertory a stock of such pieces and be ready to vary them according to the character of one’s audience.

In the words and gestures (of a farce, *kyōgen*) there should be nothing low. The jokes and repartee should be such as suit the august ears of the nobles and gentry. On no account must vulgar words or gestures be introduced, however funny they may be. This advice must be carefully observed.

Introduction, Development and Climax must also be strictly adhered to when *dancing* at the Palace. If the chanting proceeds from an “introductory-mood,” the dancing must belong to the same mood.... When one is suddenly summoned to perform at a riotous banquet, one must take into consideration the state of the noble gentlemen’s spirits.

Imitation (Monomane)

In imitation there should be a tinge of the “unlike.” For if imitation be pressed too far it impinges on reality and ceases to give an impression of likeness. If one aims only at the beautiful, the “flower” is sure to appear. For example, in acting the part of an old man, the master actor tries to reproduce in his dance only the refinement and venerability of an old gentleman. If the actor is old himself, he need not think about producing an impression of old age....

The appearance of old age will often be best given by making all movements a little late, so that they come just after the musical beat. If the actor bears this in mind, he may be as lively and energetic as he pleases. For in old age the limbs are heavy and the ears slow; there is the will to move but not the corresponding capacity.

It is in such methods as this that true imitation lies.... Youthful movements made by an old person are, indeed, delightful; they are like flowers blossoming on an old tree.

If, because the actor has noticed that old men walk with bent knees and back and have shrunken frames, he simply imitates these characteristics, he may achieve an appearance of decrepitude, but it will be at the expense of the “flower.” And if the “flower” be lacking there will be no beauty in his impersonation.

Women should be impersonated by a young actor.... It is very difficult to play the part of a Princess or lady-in-waiting, for little opportunity presents itself of studying their august behaviour and appearance. Great pains must be taken to see that robes and cloaks are worn in the correct way. These things do not depend on the actor’s fancy but must be carefully ascertained.

The appearance of ordinary ladies such as one is used to see about one is easy to imitate.... In acting the part of a dancing-girl, mad-woman or the like, whether he carry the fan or some fancy thing (a flowering branch, for instance) the actor must carry it loosely; his skirts must trail low so as to hide his feet; his knees and back must not be bent, his body must be poised gracefully. As regards the way he holds himself—if he bends back, it looks bad when he faces the audience; if he stoops, it looks bad from behind. But he will not look like a woman if he holds his head too stiffly. His sleeves should be as long as possible, so that he never shows his fingers.

Apparitions

Here the outward form is that of a ghost; but within is the heart of a man.

Such plays are generally in two parts. The beginning, in two or three sections, should be as short as possible. In the second half the *shite* (who has hitherto appeared to be a man) becomes definitely the ghost of a dead person.

Since no one has ever seen a real ghost from the Nether Regions, the actor may use his fancy, aiming only at the beautiful. To represent real life is far more difficult.

If ghosts are terrifying, they cease to be beautiful. For the terrifying and the beautiful are as far apart as black and white.

Child Plays

In plays where a lost child is found by its parents, the writer should not introduce a scene where they clutch and cling to one another, sobbing and weeping....

Plays in which child-characters occur, even if well done, are always apt to make the audience exclaim in disgust, "Don't harrow our feelings in this way!"

Restraint

In representing anger the actor should yet retain some gentleness in his mood, else he will portray not anger but violence.

In representing the mysterious (*yūgen*) he must not forget the principle of energy.

When the body is in violent action, the hands and feet must move as though by stealth. When the feet are in lively motion, the body must be held in quietness. Such things cannot be explained in writing but must be shown to the actor by actual demonstration.

It is above all in "architecture," in the relation of parts to the whole, that these poems are supreme. The early writers created a "form" or general pattern which the weakest writing cannot wholly rob of its beauty. The plays are like those carved lamp-bearing angels in the churches at Seville; a type of such beauty was created by a sculptor of the sixteenth century that even the most degraded modern descendant of these masterpieces retains a certain distinction of form.

First comes the *jidai* or opening-couplet, enigmatic, abrupt. Then in contrast to this vague shadow come the hard outlines of the *waki's* exposition, the formal naming of himself, his origin and destination. Then, shadowy again, the "song of travel," in which picture after picture dissolves almost before it is seen.

But all this has been mere introduction—the imagination has been quickened, the attention grasped in preparation for one thing only—the hero's entry. In the "first chant," in the dialogue which follows, in the successive dances and climax, this absolute mastery of construction is what has most struck me in reading the plays.

Again, Nō does not make a frontal attack on the emotions. It creeps at the subject warily. For the action, in the commonest class of play, does not take place before our eyes, but is lived through again in mimic and recital by the ghost of one of the participants in it. Thus we get no possibility of crude realities; a vision of life indeed, but painted with the colours of memory, longing or regret.

In a paper read before the Japan Society in 1919 I tried to illustrate this point by showing, perhaps in too fragmentary and disjointed a manner, how the theme of Webster's "Duchess of Malfi" would have been treated by a Nō writer. I said then (and the Society kindly allows me to repeat those remarks):

The plot of the play is thus summarized by Rupert Brooke in his "John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama": "The Duchess of Malfi is a young widow forbidden by her brothers, Ferdinand and the Cardinal, to marry again. They put a creature of theirs, Bosola, into her service as a spy. The Duchess loves and marries Antonio, her steward, and has three children. Bosola ultimately discovers and reports this. Antonio and the Duchess have to fly. The Duchess is captured, imprisoned and mentally tortured and put to death. Ferdinand goes mad. In the last Act he, the Cardinal, Antonio and Bosola are all killed with various confusions and in various horror."

Just as Webster took his themes from previous works (in this case from Painter's "Palace of Pleasure"), so the Nō plays took theirs from the Romances or "Monogatari." Let us reconstruct the "Duchess" as a Nō play, using Webster's text as our "Monogatari."

Great simplification is necessary, for the Nō play corresponds in length to one act of our five-act plays, and has no space for divagations. The comic is altogether excluded, being reserved for the *kyōgen* or farces which are played as interludes between the Nō.

The persons need not be more than two—the Pilgrim, who will act the part of *waki*, and the Duchess, who will be *shite* or Protagonist. The chorus takes no part in the action, but speaks for the *shite* while she is miming the more engrossing parts of her rôle.

The Pilgrim comes on to the stage and first pronounces in his *Jidai* or preliminary couplet, some Buddhist aphorism appropriate to the subject of the play. He then names himself to the audience thus (in prose):

"I am a pilgrim from Rome. I have visited all the other shrines of Italy, but have never been to Loretto. I will journey once to the shrine of Loretto."

Then follows (in verse) the "Song of Travel" in which the Pilgrim describes the scenes through which he passes on his way to the shrine. While he is kneeling at the shrine, *Shite* (the Protagonist) comes on to the stage. She is a young woman dressed, "contrary to the Italian fashion," in a loose-bodied gown. She carries in her hand an unripe apricot. She calls to the Pilgrim and engages him in conversation. He asks her if it were not at this shrine that the Duchess of Malfi took refuge. The young woman answers with a kind of eager exaltation, her words gradually rising from prose to poetry. She tells the story of the Duchess's flight, adding certain intimate touches which force the

priest to ask abruptly, “Who is it that is speaking to me?”

And the girl shuddering (or it is hateful to a ghost to name itself) answers: “*Hazukashi ya!* I am the soul of the Duke Ferdinand’s sister, she that was once called Duchess of Malfi. Love still ties my soul to the earth. *Toburai tabi-tamaye!* Pray for me, oh, pray for my release!”

Here closes the first part of the play. In the second the young ghost, her memory quickened by the Pilgrim’s prayers (and this is part of the medicine of salvation), endures again the memory of her final hours. She mimes the action of kissing the hand (*vide* Act IV, Scene 1), finds it very cold:

I fear you are not well after your travel. Oh! horrible! What witchcraft does he practise, that he hath left A dead man’s hand here?

And each successive scene of the torture is so vividly mimed that though it exists only in the Protagonist’s brain, it is as real to the audience as if the figure of dead Antonio lay propped upon the stage, or as if the madmen were actually leaping and screaming before them.

Finally she acts the scene of her own execution:

Heaven-gates are not so highly arched
As princes’ palaces; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees. [*She kneels.*]
Come, violent death,
Serve for mandragora to make me sleep!
Go tell my brothers, when I am laid out,
They then may feed in quiet.
[*She sinks her head and folds her hands.*]

The chorus, taking up the word “quiet,” chant a phrase from the Hokkekyō: *Sangai Mu-an*, “In the Three Worlds there is no quietness or rest.”

But the Pilgrim’s prayers have been answered. Her soul has broken its bonds: is free to depart. The ghost recedes, grows dimmer and dimmer, till at last

use-ni-keri
use-ni-keri

it vanishes from sight.

Note on Buddhism



IMAGE 8.3: NOH STAGE | An illustration depicting a traditional Noh stage and the styles and positions of the performers.

Author: User “Toto-tarou”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The Buddhism of the Nō plays is of the kind called the “Greater Vehicle,” which prevails in China, Japan and Tibet. Primitive Buddhism (the “Lesser Vehicle”), which survives in Ceylon and Burma, centres round the person of Shāk-yamuni, the historical Buddha, and uses Pāli as its sacred language. The “Greater Vehicle,” which came into being about the same time as Christianity and sprang from the same religious impulses, to a large extent replaces Shāk-yamuni by a timeless, ideal Buddha named Amida, “Lord of Boundless Light,” perhaps originally a sun-god, like Ormuzd of the Zoroastrians. Primitive Buddhism had taught that the souls of the faithful are absorbed into Nirvāna, in other words into Buddha. The “Greater Vehicle” promised to its adherents an after-life in Amida’s Western Paradise. It produced scriptures in the Sanskrit language, in which Shāk-yamuni himself describes this Western Land and recommends the worship of Amida; it inculcated too the worship of the Bodhisattvas, half-Buddhas, intermediaries

between Buddha and man. These Bodhisattvas are beings who, though fit to receive Buddhahood, have of their own free will renounced it, that they may better alleviate the miseries of mankind.

Chief among them is Kwannon, called in India Avalokiteshvara, who appears in the world both in male and female form, but it is chiefly thought of as a woman in China and Japan; Goddess of Mercy, to whom men pray in war, storm, sickness or travail.

The doctrine of Karma and of the transmigration of souls was common both to the earlier and later forms of Buddhism. Man is born to an endless chain of re-incarnations, each one of which is, as it were, the fruit of seed sown in that which precedes.

The only escape from this “Wheel of Life and Death” lies in *satori*, “Enlightenment,” the realization that material phenomena are thoughts, not facts.

Each of the four chief sects which existed in medieval Japan had its own method of achieving this Enlightenment.

1. The Amidists sought to gain *satori* by the study of the *Hokke Kyō*, called in Sanskrit *Saddharma Pundarīka Sūtra* or “Scripture of the Lotus of the True Law,” or even by the mere repetition of its complete title “Myōhō Renge Hokke Kyō.” Others of them maintained that the repetition of the formula “Praise to Amida Buddha” (*Namu Amida Butsu*) was in itself a sufficient means of salvation.
2. Once when Shākyamuni was preaching before a great multitude, he picked up a flower and twisted it in his fingers. The rest of his hearers saw no significance in the act and made no response; but the disciple Kāshyapa smiled.

In this brief moment a perception of transcendental truth had flashed from Buddha’s mind to the mind of his disciple. Thus Kāshyapa became the patriarch of the Zen Buddhists, who believe that Truth cannot be communicated by speech or writing, but that it lies hidden in the heart of each one of us and can be discovered by “Zen” or contemplative introspection.

At first sight there would not appear to be any possibility of reconciling the religion of the Zen Buddhists with that of the Amidists. Yet many Zen masters strove to combine the two faiths, teaching that Amida and his Western Paradise exist, not in time or space, but mystically enshrined in men’s hearts.

Zen denied the existence of Good and Evil, and was sometimes regarded as a dangerous sophistry by pious Buddhists of other sects, as, for example, in the story of Shunkwan and in *The Hōka Priests*, where the murderer’s interest in Zen doctrines is, I think, definitely regarded as a discreditable weakness and is represented as the cause of his undoing.

The only other play, among those I have here translated, which deals much with Zen tenets, is *Sotoba Komachi*. Here the priests represent the *Shingon Shū* or Mystic Sect, while Komachi, as becomes a poetess, defends the doctrines of Zen. For Zen was the religion of artists; it had inspired the painters and poets of the Sung dynasty in China; it was the religion of the great art-patrons who ruled Japan in the fifteenth century.

It was in the language of Zen that poetry and painting were discussed; and it was in a style tinged with Zen that Seami wrote of his own art. But the religion of the Nō plays is predominantly Amidist; it is the common, average Buddhism of medieval Japan.

3. I have said that the priests in *Sotoba Komachi* represent the Mystic Sect. The followers of this sect sought salvation by means of charms and spells, corruptions of Sanskrit formulae. Their principal Buddha was Dainichi, “The Great Sun.” To this sect belonged the Yamabushi, mountain ascetics referred to in *Tanikō* and other plays.
4. Mention must be made of the fusion between Buddhism and Shintō. The Tendai Sect which had its headquarters on Mount Hiei preached an eclectic doctrine which aimed at becoming the universal religion of Japan. It combined the cults of native gods with a Buddhism tolerant in dogma, but magnificent in outward pomp, with a leaning towards the magical practices of Shingon.

The Little Saint of Yokawa in the play *Aoi no Uye* is an example of the Tendai ascetic, with his use of magical incantations.

Hatsuyuki appeared in “Poetry,” Chicago, and is here reprinted with the editor’s kind permission.

Atsumori, Ikuta, and Tsunemasa

In the eleventh century two powerful clans, the Taira and the Minamoto, contended for mastery. In 1181 Kiyomori the chief of the Tairas died, and from that time their fortunes declined. In 1183 they were forced to flee from Kyōto, carrying with them the infant Emperor. After many hardships and wanderings they camped on the shores of Suma, where they were protected by their fleet.

Early in 1184 the Minamotos attacked and utterly routed them at the Battle of Ichi-no-Tani, near the woods of Ikuta. At this battle fell Atsumori, the nephew of Kiyomori, and his brother Tsunemasa.

When Kumagai, who had slain Atsumori, bent over him to examine the body, he found lying beside him a bamboo-flute wrapped in brocade. He took the flute and gave it to his son.

The bay of Suma is associated in the mind of a Japanese reader not only with this battle but also with the stories of Prince Genji and Prince Yukihira.

“Atsumori” from The Nō Plays of Japan

Seami, translated by Arthur Waley

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PERSONS:

The Priest Rensei (formerly the warrior Kumaga).

A Young Reaper, *who turns out to be the ghost of Atsumori.*

His Companion.

Chorus.

PRIEST

Life is a lying dream, he only wakes
Who casts the World aside.

I am Kumagai no Naozane, a man of the country of Musashi.

I have left my home and call myself the priest Rensei; this I have done because of my grief at the death of Atsumori, who fell in battle by my hand. Hence it comes that I am dressed in priestly guise. And now I am going down to Ichi-no-Tani to pray for the salvation of Atsumori's soul.

[He walks slowly across the stage, singing a song descriptive of his journey.]

I have come so fast that here I am already at Ichi-no-Tani, in the country of Tsu.

Truly the past returns to my mind as though it were a thing of to-day.

But listen! I hear the sound of a flute coming from a knoll of rising ground. I will wait here till the flute-player passes, and ask him to tell me the story of this place.

REAPERS [*together*]

To the music of the reaper's flute
No song is sung
But the sighing of wind in the fields.

YOUNG REAPER

They that were reaping,
Reaping on that hill,
Walk now through the fields
Homeward, for it is dusk.

REAPERS [*together*]

Short is the way that leads
From the sea of Suma back to my home.
This little journey, up to the hill
And down to the shore again, and up to the hill—
This is my life, and the sum of hateful tasks.
If one should ask me I too would answer
That on the shores of Suma I live in sadness.
Yet if any guessed my name,
Then might I too have friends.
But now from my deep misery
Even those that were dearest
Are grown estranged.
Here must I dwell abandoned
To one thought's anguish:
That I must dwell here.

PRIEST

Hey, you reapers! I have a question to ask you.

YOUNG REAPER

Is it to us you are speaking? What do you wish to know?

PRIEST

Was it one of you who was playing on the flute just now?

YOUNG REAPER

Yes, it was we who were playing.

PRIEST

It was a pleasant sound, and all the pleasanter because one does not look for such music from men of your condition.

YOUNG REAPER

Unlooked for from men of our condition, you say!
Have you not read:—
“Do not envy what is above you
Nor despise what is below you”?
Moreover the songs of woodmen and the flute-playing of herdsmen,
Flute-playing even of reapers and songs of wood-fellers
Through poets’ verses are known to all the world.
Wonder not to hear among us
The sound of a bamboo-flute.

PRIEST

You are right. Indeed it is as you have told me.
Songs of woodmen and flute-playing of herdsmen...

REAPER

Flute-playing of reapers...

PRIEST

Songs of wood-fellers...

REAPER

Guide us on our passage through this sad world.

PRIEST

Song...

REAPER

And dance...

PRIEST

And the flute...

REAPER

And music of many instruments...

CHORUS

These are the pastimes that each chooses to his taste.
Of floating bamboo-wood
Many are the famous flutes that have been made;
Little-Branch and Cicada-Cage,

And as for the reaper's flute, Its name is Green-leaf;
On the shore of Sumiyoshi
The Corean flute they play.
And here on the shore of Suma
On Stick of the Salt-kilns
The fishers blow their tune.

PRIEST

How strange it is! The other reapers have all gone home, but you alone stay loitering here. How is that?

REAPER

How is it, you ask? I am seeking for a prayer in the voice of the evening waves. Perhaps you will pray the Ten Prayers for me?

PRIEST

I can easily pray the Ten Prayers for you, if you will tell me who you are.

REAPER

To tell you the truth—I am one of the family of Lord Atsumori.

PRIEST

One of Atsumori's family? How glad I am!
Then the priest joined his hands [*he kneels down*] and prayed:—

NAMU AMIDABU

Praise to Amida Buddha!
“If I attain to Buddhahood,
In the whole world and its ten spheres
Of all that dwell here none shall call on my name
And be rejected or cast aside.”

CHORUS

“Oh, reject me not!
One cry suffices for salvation,
Yet day and night
Your prayers will rise for me.
Happy am I, for though you know not my name,
Yet for my soul's deliverance
At dawn and dusk henceforward I know that you will pray.”
So he spoke. Then vanished and was seen no more.
[*Here follows the Interlude between the two Acts, in which a recitation concerning Atsumori's death takes place. These interludes are subject to variation and are not considered part of the literary text of the play.*]

PRIEST

Since this is so, I will perform all night the rites of prayer for the dead, and calling upon Amida's name will pray again for the salvation of Atsumori.

[*The ghost of Atsumori appears, dressed as a young warrior.*]

ATSUMORI

Would you know who I am
That like the watchmen at Suma Pass
Have wakened at the cry of sea-birds roaming
Upon Awaji shore?
Listen, Rensei. I am Atsumori.

PRIEST

How strange! All this while I have never stopped beating my gong and performing the rites of the Law. I cannot for a moment have dozed, yet I thought that Atsumori was standing before me. Surely it was a dream.

ATSUMORI

Why need it be a dream?
It is to clear the karma of my waking life that
I am come here in visible form before you.

PRIEST

Is it not written that one prayer will wipe away ten thousand sins?
Ceaselessly I have performed the ritual of the
Holy Name that clears all sin away.
After such prayers, what evil can be left?
Though you should be sunk in sin as deep...

ATSUMORI

As the sea by a rocky shore,
Yet should I be salvaged by prayer.

PRIEST

And that my prayers should save you...

ATSUMORI

This too must spring
From kindness of a former life.

PRIEST

Once enemies ...

ATSUMORI

But now...

PRIEST

In truth may we be named...

ATSUMORI

Friends in Buddha's Law.

CHORUS

There is a saying, "Put away from you a wicked friend; summon to your side a virtuous enemy." For you it was said, and you have proven it true.

And now come tell with us the tale of your confession, while the night is still dark.

He bids the flowers of Spring
Mount the tree-top that men may raise their eyes
And walk on upward paths;
He bids the moon in autumn waves be drowned
In token that he visits laggard men
And leads them out from valleys of despair.

ATSUMORI

Now the clan of Taira, building wall to wall,
Spread over the earth like the leafy branches of a great tree:

CHORUS

Yet their prosperity lasted but for a day;
It was like the flower of the convolvulus.
There was none to tell them
That glory flashes like sparks from flint-stone,
And after,—darkness.
Oh wretched, the life of men!

ATSUMORI

When they were on high they afflicted the humble;
 When they were rich they were reckless in pride.
 And so for twenty years and more
 They ruled this land.
 But truly a generation passes like the space of a dream.
 The leaves of the autumn of Juyei
 Were tossed by the four winds;
 Scattered, scattered (like leaves too) floated their ships.
 And they, asleep on the heaving sea, not even in dreams
 Went back to home.
 Caged birds longing for the clouds,—
 Wild geese were they rather, whose ranks are broken
 As they fly to southward on their doubtful journey.
 So days and months went by; Spring came again
 And for a little while
 Here dwelt they on the shore of Suma
 At the first valley.
 From the mountain behind us the winds blew down
 Till the fields grew wintry again.
 Our ships lay by the shore, where night and day
 The sea-gulls cried and salt waves washed on our sleeves.
 We slept with fishers in their huts
 On pillows of sand.
 We knew none but the people of Suma.
 And when among the pine-trees
 The evening smoke was rising,
 Brushwood, as they call it,
 Brushwood we gathered
 And spread for carpet.
 Sorrowful we lived
 On the wild shore of Suma,
 Till the clan Taira and all its princes
 Were but villagers of Suma.

But on the night of the sixth day of the second month
 My father Tsunemori gathered us together.
 “To-morrow,” he said, “we shall fight our last fight.
 To-night is all that is left us.”
 We sang songs together, and danced.

PRIEST

Yes, I remember; we in our siege-camp
 Heard the sound of music
 Echoing from your tents that night;
 There was the music of a flute...

ATSUMORI

The bamboo-flute! I wore it when I died.

PRIEST

We heard the singing...

ATSUMORI

Songs and ballads...

PRIEST

Many voices

ATSUMORI

Singing to one measure.
[*Atsumori dances.*]

First comes the Royal Boat.

CHORUS

The whole clan has put its boats to sea.
He will not be left behind;
He runs to the shore.
But the Royal Boat and the soldiers' boats
Have sailed far away.

ATSUMORI

What can he do?
He spurs his horse into the waves.
He is full of perplexity.
And then

CHORUS

He looks behind him and sees
That Kumagai pursues him;
He cannot escape.
Then Atsumori turns his horse
Knee-deep in the lashing waves,
And draws his sword.
Twice, three times he strikes; then, still saddled,
In close fight they twine; roll headlong together
Among the surf of the shore.
So Atsumori fell and was slain, but now the
Wheel of Fate Has turned and brought him back.
[*Atsumori rises from the ground and advances toward the Priest with uplifted sword.*]

“There is my enemy,” he cries, and would strike,
But the other is grown gentle
And calling on Buddha's name
Has obtained salvation for his foe;
So that they shall be re-born together
On one lotus-seat.
“No, Rensei is not my enemy.
Pray for me again, oh pray for me again.”

“Ikuta” from The Nō Plays of Japan

Zembō Motoyasu (1453-1532), translated by Arthur Waley

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PERSONS:

Priest (*a follower of Hōnen Shōnin*).
Atsumori's Child.
Atsumori.
Chorus.

PRIEST

I am one that serves Hōnen Shōnin of Kurodani; and as for this child here,—once when Hōnen was on a visit to the Temple of Kamo he saw a box lying under a trailing fir-tree; and when he raised the lid, what should he find inside but a lovely man-child one year old! It did not seem to be more than a common foundling, but my master in his compassion took the infant home with him. Ever since then he has had it in his care, doing all that was needful for it; and now the boy is over ten years old.

But it is a hard thing to have no father or mother, so one day after his preaching the Shōnin told the child's story. And sure enough a young woman stepped out from among the hearers and said it was her child. And when he took her aside and questioned her, he found that the child's father was Taira no Atsumori, who had fallen in battle at Ichi-no-Tani years ago. When the boy was told of this, he longed earnestly to see his father's face, were it but in a dream, and the Shōnin bade him go and pray at the shrine of Kamo. He was to go every day for a week, and this is the last day.

That is why I have brought him out with me.
But here we are at the Kamo shrine.
Pray well, boy, pray well!

BOY

How fills my heart with awe
When I behold the crimson palisade
Of this abode of gods!
Oh may my heart be clean
As the River of Ablution;
And the God's kindness deep
As its unfathomed waters. Show to me,
Though it were but in dream,
My father's face and form.
Is not my heart so ground away with prayer,
So smooth that it will slip
Unfelt into the favour of the gods?
But thou too, Censor of our prayers,
God of Tadasu, on the gods prevail
That what I crave may be!
How strange! While I was praying I fell half-asleep and had a wonderful dream.

PRIEST

Tell me your wonderful dream.

BOY

A strange voice spoke to me from within the Treasure Hall, saying, "If you are wanting, though it were but in a dream, to see your father's face, go down from here to the woods of Ikuta in the country of Settsu." That is the marvellous dream I had.

PRIEST

It is indeed a wonderful message that the God has sent you. And why should I go back at once to Kurodani? I had best take you straight to the forest of Ikuta. Let us be going.

PRIEST [*describing the journey*]

From the shrine of Kamo,
From under the shadow of the hills,
We set out swiftly;
Past Yamazaki to the fog-bound
Shores of Minasé;
And onward where the gale
Tears travellers' coats and winds about their bones.
"Autumn has come to woods where yesterday
We might have plucked the green."
To Settsu, to those woods of Ikuta
Lo! We are come.

We have gone so fast that here we are already at the woods of Ikuta in the country of Settsu. I have heard tell in the Capital of the beauty of these woods and the river that runs through them. But what I see now surpasses all that I have heard.

Look! Those meadows must be the Downs of Ikuta. Let us go nearer and admire them.
But while we have been going about looking at one view and another, the day has dusked.
I think I see a light over there. There must be a house. Let us go to it and ask for lodging.

ATSUMORI [*speaking from inside a hut*]

Beauty, perception, knowledge, motion, consciousness,—
The Five Attributes of Being,—
All are vain mockery.
How comes it that men prize
So weak a thing as body?
For the soul that guards it from corruption
Suddenly to the night-moon flies,
And the poor naked ghost wails desolate
In the autumn wind.
Oh! I am lonely. I am lonely!

PRIEST

How strange! Inside that grass-hut I see a young soldier dressed in helmet and breastplate. What can he be doing there?

ATSUMORI

Oh foolish men, was it not to meet me that you came to this place? I am—oh! I am ashamed to say it,—I am the ghost of what once was ... Atsumori.

BOY

Atsumori? My father...

CHORUS

And lightly he ran,
Plucked at the warrior's sleeve,
And though his tears might seem like the long woe
Of nightingales that weep,
Yet were they tears of meeting-joy,
Of happiness too great for human heart.
So think we, yet oh that we might change
This fragile dream of joy
Into the lasting love of waking life!

ATSUMORI

Oh pitiful!
To see this child, born after me,
Darling that should be gay as a flower,
Walking in tattered coat of old black cloth.
Alas!
Child, when your love of me
Led you to Kamo shrine, praying to the God
That, though but in a dream,
You might behold my face,
The God of Kamo, full of pity, came
To Yama, king of Hell.
King Yama listened and ordained for me
A moment's respite, but hereafter, never.

CHORUS

"The moon is sinking.
Come while the night is dark," he said,
"I will tell my tale."

ATSUMORI

When the house of Taira was in its pride,
 When its glory was young,
 Among the flowers we sported,
 Among birds, wind and moonlight;
 With pipes and strings, with song and verse
 We welcomed Springs and Autumns.
 Till at last, because our time was come,
 Across the bridges of Kiso a host unseen
 Swept and devoured us.
 Then the whole clan
 Our lord leading
 Fled from the City of Flowers.
 By paths untrodden
 To the Western Sea our journey brought us.
 Lakes and hills we crossed
 Till we ourselves grew to be like wild men.
 At last by mountain ways—
 We too tossed hither and thither like its waves—
 To Suma came we,
 To the First Valley and the woods of Ikuta.
 And now while all of us,
 We children of Taira, were light of heart
 Because our homes were near,
 Suddenly our foes in great strength appeared.

CHORUS

Noriyori, Yoshitsune,—their hosts like clouds,
 Like mists of spring.
 For a little while we fought them,
 But the day of our House was ended,
 Our hearts weakened
 That had been swift as arrows from the bowstring.
 We scattered, scattered; till at last
 To the deep waters of the Field of Life.
 We came, but how we found there Death, not Life,
 What profit were it to tell?

ATSUMORI

Who is that?
 [*Pointing in terror at a figure which he sees off the stage.*]

Can it be Yama's messenger? He comes to tell me that I have out-stayed my time. The Lord of Hell is angry: he asks why I am late?

CHORUS

So he spoke. But behold
 Suddenly black clouds rise,
 Earth and sky resound with the clash of arms;
 War-demons innumerable
 Flash fierce sparks from brandished spears.

ATSUMORI

The Shura foes who night and day
 Come thick about me!

CHORUS

He waves his sword and rushes among them,
Hither and thither he runs slashing furiously;
Fire glints upon the steel.
But in a little while
The dark clouds recede;
The demons have vanished,
The moon shines unsullied;
The sky is ready for dawn.

ATSUMORA

Oh! I am ashamed.... And the child to see me so....

CHORUS

“To see my misery!
I must go back.
Oh pray for me; pray for me
When I am gone,” he said,
And weeping, weeping,
Dropped the child’s hand.
He has faded; he dwindles
Like the dew from rush-leaves
Of hazy meadows.
His form has vanished.

“Tsunemasa” from The Nō Plays of Japan

Seami, translated by Arthur Waley

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PERSONS:

The Priest Gyōkei.
The Ghost of Taira No Tsunemasa.
Chorus.

GYŌKEI

I am Gyōkei, priest of the imperial temple Ninnaji. You must know that there was a certain prince of the House of Taira named Tsunemasa, Lord of Tajima, who since his boyhood has enjoyed beyond all precedent the favour of our master the Emperor. But now he has been killed at the Battle of the Western Seas.

It was to this Tsunemasa in his lifetime that the Emperor had given the lute called Green Hill. And now my master bids me take it and dedicate it to Buddha, performing a liturgy of flutes and strings for the salvation of Tsunemasa’s soul. And that was my purpose in gathering these musicians together.

Truly it is said that strangers who shelter under the same tree or draw water from the same pool will be friends in another life. How much the more must intercourse of many years, kindness and favour so deep...

Surely they will be heard,
The prayers that all night long
With due performance of rites
I have reverently repeated in this Palace
For the salvation of Tsunemasa
And for the awakening of his soul.

CHORUS

And, more than all, we dedicate
The lute Green Hill for this dead man;
While pipe and flute are joined to sounds of prayer.
For night and day the Gate of Law

Stands open and the Universal Road
Rejects no wayfarer.

TSUNEMASA [*speaking off the stage*]

“The wind blowing through withered trees: rain from a cloudless sky.
The moon shining on level sands: frost on a summer’s night.”
Frost lying... but I, because I could not lie at rest,
Am come back to the World for a while,
Like a shadow that steals over the grass.
I am like dews that in the morning
Still cling to the grasses. Oh pitiful the longing
That has beset me!

GYŌKEI

How strange! Within the flame of our candle that is burning low because the night is far spent, suddenly I
seemed to see a man’s shadow dimly appearing. Who can be here?

TSUNEMASA [*his shadow disappearing*]

I am the ghost of Tsunemasa. The sound of your prayers has brought me in visible shape before you.

GYŌKEI

“I am the ghost of Tsunemasa,” he said, but when I looked to where the voice had sounded nothing was there,
neither substance nor shadow!

TSUNEMASA

Only a voice,

GYŌKEI

A dim voice whispers where the shadow of a man Visibly lay, but when I looked

TSUNEMASA

It had vanished—

GYŌKEI

This flickering form ...

TSUNEMASA

Like haze over the fields.

CHORUS

Only as a tricking magic,
A bodiless vision,
Can he hover in the world of his lifetime,
Swift-changing Tsunemasa.
By this name we call him, yet of the body
That men named so, what is left but longing?
What but the longing to look again, through the wall of death,
On one he loved?
“Sooner shall the waters in its garden cease to flow
Than I grow weary of living in the Palace of my Lord.”
Like a dream he has come,
Like a morning dream.

GYŌKEI

How strange! When the form of Tsunemasa had vanished, his voice lingered and spoke to me! Am I dreaming
or waking? I cannot tell. But this I know,—that by the power of my incantations I have had converse with the dead.
Oh! marvellous potency of the Law!

TSUNEMASA

It was long ago that I came to the Palace. I was but a boy then, but all the world knew me; for I was marked with the love of our Lord, with the favour of an Emperor. And, among many gifts, he gave to me once while I was in the World this lute which you have dedicated. My fingers were ever on its strings.

CHORUS

Plucking them even as now
This music plucks at your heart;
The sound of the plectrum, then as now
Divine music fulfilling
The vows of Sarasvati.
But this Tsunemasa,
Was he not from the days of his childhood pre-eminent
In faith, wisdom, benevolence,
Honour and courtesy; yet for his pleasure
Ever of birds and flowers,
Of wind and moonlight making
Ballads and songs to join their harmony
To pipes and lutes? So springs and autumns passed he.
But in a World that is as dew,
As dew on the grasses, as foam upon the waters,
What flower lasteth?

GYŌKEI

For the dead man's sake we play upon this lute Green Hill that he loved when he was in the World. We follow the lute-music with a concord of many instruments.

[*Music.*]

TSUNEMASA

And while they played the dead man stole up behind them. Though he could not be seen by the light of the candle, they felt him pluck the lute-strings....

GYŌKEI

It is midnight. He is playing *Yabanraku*, the dance of midnight-revel. And now that we have shaken sleep from our eyes...

TSUNEMASA

The sky is clear, yet there is a sound as of sudden rain....

GYŌKEI

Rain beating carelessly on trees and grasses. What season's music ought we to play?

TSUNEMASA

No. It is not rain. Look! At the cloud's fringe

CHORUS

The moon undimmed
Hangs over the pine-woods of Narabi Hills.
It was the wind you heard;
The wind blowing through the pine-leaves
Pattered, like the falling of winter rain.
O wonderful hour!
"The big strings crashed and sobbed
Like the falling of winter rain.
And the little strings whispered secretly together.
The first and second string
Were like a wind sweeping through pine-woods,

Murmuring disjointedly,
The third and fourth string
Were like the voice of a caged stork
Crying for its little ones at night
In low, dejected notes.”
The night must not cease.
The cock shall not crow
And put an end to his wandering.

TSUNEMASA

“One note of the phoenix-flute

CHORUS

Shakes the autumn clouds from the mountain-side.”
The phoenix and his mate swoop down
Charmed by its music, beat their wings
And dance in rapture, perched upon the swaying boughs
Of kiri and bamboo.
[*Dance.*]

TSUNEMASA

Oh terrible anguish!
For a little while I was back in the World and my heart set on its music, on revels of midnight. But now the hate
is rising in me....

GYŌKEI

The shadow that we saw before is still visible. Can it be Tsunemasa?

TSUNEMASA

Oh! I am ashamed; I must not let them see me. Put out your candle.

CHORUS

“Let us turn away from the candle and watch together
The midnight moon.”
Lo, he who holds the moon,
The god Indra, in battle appeareth
Warring upon demons.
Fire leaps from their swords,
The sparks of their own anger fall upon them like rain.
To wound another he draws his sword,
But it is from his own flesh
That the red waves flow;
Like flames they cover him.
“Oh, I am ashamed of the woes that consume me.
No man must see me.
I will put out the candle!” he said;
For a foolish man is like a summer moth that flies into the flame.
The wind that blew out the candle
Carried him away.
In the darkness his ghost has vanished.
The shadow of his ghost has vanished.

PILLOW BOOK

Sei Shonagon (966–1025)

1002

Japan

Sei Shonagon's *Pillow Book* (*Makura no Soshi*) is the private journal of a lady-in-waiting to the Empress of Japan written during the 990s. Sei served her empress during the late Heian Period (a particularly vibrant time for Japanese arts and the beginning of Japan's feudal age) and was a contemporary of another lady-in-waiting, Murasaki Shikibu, author of the *Tale of Genji* (also in this anthology). Both Sei and Murasaki wrote about court life, but unlike Murasaki's epic romance, Sei's journal entries offer a more personal and informal glimpse into the life of a woman at court. The selections in this anthology are meant to showcase the variety of Sei's musings and anecdotes.

Questions to consider while reading this selection:

1. What can we infer about the rules of etiquette at the Japanese court?
2. How would you categorize and characterize the different types of entries in the *Pillow Book*?
3. What can we infer about the rules for love affairs?
4. What is Sei's tone, and what does it reflect about her attitude toward herself, the court, and people?
5. Would you have liked Sei? What kind of friend do you think she would be?

Written by Rhonda L. Kelley

THE PILLOW-BOOK OF SEI SHONAGON

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Sei Shonagon, translated by Ivan Morris

Especially Delightful Is the First Day

Especially delightful is the first day of the First Month, when the mists so often shroud the sky. Everyone pays great attention to his appearance and dresses with the utmost care. What a pleasure it is to see them all offer their congratulations to the Emperor and celebrate their own new year!

This is the day when members of the nobility who live outside the Palace arrive in their magnificently decorated carriages to admire the blue horses. As the carriages are drawn over the ground-beam of the Central Gate, there is always a tremendous bump, and the heads of the women passengers are knocked together; the combs fall out of their hair, and may be smashed to pieces if the owners are not careful. I enjoy the way everyone laughs when this happens.

I remember one occasion when I visited the Palace to see the procession of blue horses. Several senior courtiers were standing outside the guard-house of the Left Division; they had borrowed bows from the escorts, and, with much laughter, were twanging them to make the blue horses prance. Looking through one of the gates of the Palace enclosure, I could dimly make out a garden fence, near which a number of ladies, several of them from the Office of Grounds, went to and fro. What lucky women, I thought, who could walk about the Nine-Fold Enclosure as though they had lived there all their lives! Just then the escorts passed close to my carriage, remarkably close, in fact, considering the vastness of the Palace grounds, and I could actually see the texture of their faces. Some of them were not properly powdered; here and there their skin showed through unpleasantly like the dark patches of earth in a garden where the snow has begun to melt. When the horses in the procession reared wildly, I shrank into the back of my carriage and could no longer see what was happening.

It is fascinating to see what happens during the period of appointments. However snowy and icy it may be, candidates of the Fourth and Fifth Ranks come to the Palace with their official requests. Those who are still young and merry seem full of confidence. For the candidates who are old and white-haired things do not go so smoothly. Such men have to apply for help from people with influence at Court; some of them even visit ladies-in-waiting in their quarters and go to great lengths in pointing out their own merits. If young women happen to be present, they are greatly amused. As soon as the candidates have left, they mimic and deride them, something that the old men cannot possibly suspect as they scurry from one part of the Palace to another, begging everyone, "Please present my petition favourably to the Emperor" and "Pray inform Her Majesty about me." It is not so bad if they finally succeed, but it really is rather pathetic when all their efforts prove in vain.

Things That Have Lost Their Power

A woman who has taken off her false locks to comb the short hair that remains. A large tree that has been blown down in a gale and lies on its side with its roots in the air. The retreating figure of a sumo wrestler who has been defeated in a match. A man of no importance reprimanding an attendant.

A woman, who is angry with her husband about some trifling matter, leaves home and goes somewhere to hide. She is certain that he will rush about looking for her; but he does nothing of the kind and shows the most infuriating indifference. Since she cannot stay away forever, she swallows her pride and returns.

Adorable Things

The face of a child drawn on a melon.

A baby of two or so is crawling, rapidly along the ground. With his sharp eyes he catches sight of a tiny object and, picking it up with his pretty little fingers, takes it to show to a grown-up person.

A baby sparrow that comes hopping up when one imitates the squeak of a mouse; or again, when one has tied it with a thread round its leg and its parents bring insects or worms and pop them in its mouth: delightful!

One picks up a pretty baby and holds him for a while in one's arms; while one is fondling him, he clings to one's neck and then falls asleep.

Pretty, white chicks who are still not fully fledged and look as if their clothes are too short for them; cheeping loudly, they follow one on their long legs, or walk close to the mother hen.

When I Make Myself Imagine

When I make myself imagine what it is like to be one of those women who live at home, faithfully serving their husbands, women who have not a single exciting prospect in life yet who believe that they are perfectly happy, I am filled with scorn. Often they are of quite good birth, yet have had no opportunity to find out what the world is like. I wish they could live for a while in our society, even if it should mean taking service as Attendants, so that they might come to know the delights it has to offer.

I cannot bear men who believe that women serving in the Palace are bound to be frivolous and wicked. Yet I suppose their prejudice is understandable. After all, women at Court do not spend their time hiding modestly behind fans and screens, but walk about, looking openly at people they chance to meet. Yes, they see everyone face to face, not only ladies-in-waiting like themselves, but even Their Imperial Majesties (whose august names I hardly dare mention), High Court Nobles, senior courtiers, and other gentlemen of high rank. In the presence of such exalted personages, the women in the Palace are all equally brazen, whether they be the maids of ladies-in-waiting, or the relations of Court ladies who have come to visit them, or housekeepers, or latrine-cleaners, or women who are of no more value than a roof-tile or a pebble. Small wonder that the young men regard them as immodest! Yet are the gentlemen themselves any less so? They are not exactly bashful when it comes to looking at the great people in the Palace. No, everyone at Court is much the same in this respect.

Women who have served in the Palace, but who later get married and live at home, are called Madam and receive the most respectful treatment. To be sure, people often consider that these women, who have displayed their faces to all and sundry during their years at Court, are lacking in feminine grace. How proud they must be, nevertheless, when they are styled Assistant Attendants, or summoned to the Palace for occasional duty, or ordered to serve as Imperial envoys during the Kamo Festival! Even those who stay at home lose nothing by having served at Court. In fact they make very good wives. For example, if they are married to a provincial governor and their daughter is chosen to take part in the Gosechi dances, they do not have to disgrace themselves by acting like provincials and asking other people about procedure. They themselves are well versed in the formalities, which is just as it should be.

Depressing Things

A dog howling in the daytime. A lying-in room when the baby has died. A cold, empty brazier. An ox-driver who hates his oxen.

A letter arrives from the provinces, but no gift accompanies it. It would be bad enough if such a letter reached one in the provinces from someone in the capital; but then at least it would have interesting news about goings-on in society, and that would be a consolation.

One has written a letter, taking pains to make it as attractive as possible, and now one impatiently awaits the reply. "Surely the messenger should be back by now," one thinks. Just then he returns; but in his hand he carries, not a reply, but one's own letter, still twisted or knotted as it was sent, but now so dirty and crumpled that even the ink-mark on the outside has disappeared. "Not at home," announces the messenger, or else, "They said they were observing a day of abstinence and would not accept it." Oh, how depressing!

Again, one has sent one's carriage to fetch someone who had said he would definitely pay one a visit on that day. Finally it returns with a great clatter, and the servants hurry out with cries of "Here they come!" But next one hears the carriage being pulled into the coach-house, and the unfastened shafts clatter to the ground. "What does this mean?" one asks. "The person was not at home," replies the driver, "and will not be coming." So saying, he leads the ox back to its stall, leaving the carriage in the coach-house.

With much bustle and excitement a young man has moved into the house of a certain family as the daughter's husband. One day he fails to come home, and it turns out that some high-ranking Court lady has taken him as her lover. How depressing! "Will he eventually tire of the woman and come back to us?" his wife's family wonders ruefully.

The nurse who is looking after a baby leaves the house, saying that she will be back presently. Soon the child starts crying for her. One tries to comfort it by games and other diversions, and even sends a message to the nurse telling her to return immediately. Then comes her reply: "I am afraid that I cannot be back this evening." This is not only depressing; it is no less than hateful. Yet how much more distressed must be the young man who has sent a messenger to fetch a lady friend and who awaits her arrival in vain!

It is quite late at night and a woman has been expecting a visitor. Hearing finally a stealthy tapping, she sends her maid to open the gate and lies waiting excitedly. But the name announced by the maid is that of someone with whom she has absolutely no connection. Of all the depressing things this is by far the worst.

One has sent a friend a verse that turned out fairly well. How depressing when there is no reply-poem! Even in the case of love poems, people should at least answer that they were moved at receiving the message, or something of the sort; otherwise they will cause the keenest disappointment.

Someone who lives in a bustling, fashionable household receives a message from an elderly person who is behind the times and has very little to do; the poem, of course, is old-fashioned and dull. How depressing!

One needs a particularly beautiful fan for some special occasion and instructs an artist, in whose talents one has full confidence, to decorate one with an appropriate painting. When the day comes and the fan is delivered, one is shocked to see how badly it has been painted. Oh, the dreariness of it!

A man has moved in as a son-in-law; yet even now, after some five years of marriage, the lying-in room has remained as quiet as on the day of his arrival.

An elderly couple who have several grown-up children, and who may even have some grand-children crawling about the house, are taking a nap in the daytime. The children who see them in this state are overcome by a forlorn feeling, and for other people it is all very depressing.

Persistent rain on the last day of the year.

One has been observing a period of fast, but neglects it for just one day: most depressing.

Hateful Things

One is in a hurry to leave, but one's visitor keeps chattering away. If it is someone of no importance, one can get rid of him by saying, "You must tell me all about it next time"; but, should it be the sort of visitor whose presence commands one's best behaviour, the situation is hateful indeed.

A man who has nothing in particular to recommend him discusses all sorts of subjects at random as though he knew everything.

A man with whom one is having an affair keeps singing the praises of some woman he used to know. Even if it is a thing of the past this can be very annoying. How much more so if he is still seeing the woman! (Yet sometimes I find that it is not as unpleasant as all that.)

The sound of dogs when they bark for a long time in chorus is ominous and hateful.

A lover who is leaving at dawn announces that he has to find his fan and his paper. "I know I put them somewhere last night," he says. Since it is pitch dark, he gropes about the room, bumping into the furniture and muttering, "Strange! Where on earth can they be?" Finally he discovers the objects. He thrusts the paper into the breast of his robe with a great rustling sound; then he snaps open his fan and busily fans away with it. Only now is he ready to take his leave. What charmless behaviour! Hateful is an understatement.

Equally disagreeable is the man who, when leaving in the middle of the night, takes care to fasten the cord of his head-dress. This is quite unnecessary; he could perfectly well put it gently on his head without tying the cord. And why must he spend time adjusting his cloak or hunting costume? Does he really think someone may see him at this time of night and criticise him for not being impeccably dressed?

A good lover will behave as elegantly at dawn as at any other time. He drags himself out of bed with a look of dismay on his face. The lady urges him on: "Come, my friend, it's getting light. You don't want anyone to find you here." He gives a deep sigh, as if to say that the night has not been nearly long enough and that it is agony to leave. Once up, he does not instantly pull on his trousers. Instead he comes close to the lady and whispers whatever was left unsaid during the night. Even when he is dressed, he still lingers, vaguely pretending to be fastening his sash.

Presently he raises the lattice, and the two lovers stand together by the side door while he tells her how he dreads the coming day, which will keep them apart; then he slips away. The lady watches him go, and this moment of parting will remain among her most charming memories.

Indeed, one's attachment to a man depends largely on the elegance of his leave-taking.

Things That Make One's Heart Beat Faster

Sparrows feeding their young. To pass a place where babies are playing. To sleep in a room where some fine incense has been burnt. To notice that one's elegant Chinese mirror has become a little cloudy.

To see a gentleman stop his carriage before one's gate and instruct his attendants to announce his arrival. To wash one's hair, make one's toilet, and put on scented robes; even if not a soul sees one, these preparations still produce an inner pleasure.

It is night and one is expecting a visitor. Suddenly one is startled by the sound of raindrops, which the wind blows against the shutters.

Things That Arouse a Fond Memory of the Past

Dried hollyhock. To find a piece of deep violet or grape-coloured material that has been pressed between the pages of a notebook.

It is a rainy day and one is feeling bored. To pass the time, one starts looking through some old papers. And then one comes across the letters of a man one used to love.

Last year's paper fan. A night with a clear moon.

Splendid Things

Chinese brocade. A sword with a decorated scabbard. The grain of the wood in a Buddhist statue. Long flowering branches of beautifully coloured wisteria entwined about a pine tree.

Despite his low station, a Chamberlain of the Sixth Rank is a splendid thing. To think that he is allowed yellowish-green robes of figured material and cloth that even young noblemen of the finest families are forbidden to wear! A mere Assistant or Subordinate Official in the Emperor's Private Office, who is the son of a commoner and who has gone completely unnoticed while serving under gentlemen of rank with official posts, becomes splendid beyond words after being appointed Chamberlain.

Awkward Things

One has gone to a house and asked to see someone; but the wrong person appears, thinking that it is he who is wanted; this is especially awkward if one has brought a present.

One has allowed oneself to speak badly about someone without really intending to do so; a young child who has overheard it all goes and repeats what one has said in front of the person in question.

Someone sobs out a pathetic story. One is deeply moved; but it so happens that not a single tear comes to one's eyes, most awkward. Though one makes one's face look as if one's going to cry, it is no use: not a single tear will come. Yet there are times when, having heard something happy, one feels the tears streaming out.

Things That Give a Clean Feeling

An earthen cup. A new metal bowl. A rush mat. The play of the light on water as one pours it into a vessel. A new wooden chest.

Things That Give an Unclean Feeling

A rat's nest. Someone who is late in washing his hands in the morning. White snivel, and children who sniffle as they walk. The containers used for oil. Little sparrows.

A person who does not bathe for a long time even though the weather is hot. All faded clothes give me an unclean feeling, especially those that have glossy colours.

THE TALE OF GENJI

Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 978-1014 C.E.)

Composed ca. 1010 C.E.

Japan

The Tale of Genji, regarded as the world's first novel, is a Japanese *monogatari* (i.e., a long, Japanese, fictional narrative of different literary elements), written by Murasaki Shikibu, an eleventh-century court lady. Written in the Heian period (794-1185 C.E.) in Japan, when Chinese was the serious scholarly language and prose was considered inferior to poetry, *The Tale of Genji* revealed a vast knowledge of both Chinese and Japanese poetry in graceful prose. The novel is about Prince Genji and his legacy in fifty-four chapters and entails about eight hundred *waka* (a poetic form consisting of 31 syllables) courtly poems. It sheds light on the aristocratic culture in early Heian Japan and conveys sensitive narratives about human emotions and natural beauty. The first complete English translation (1925-33 C.E.) was by Arthur Waley, and other English translations include Edward Seidensticker's (1976) and Royall Tyler's (2001).

Written by Kyounghe Kwon

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Murasaki Shikibu, translated by Suyematz Kenchio

Compiled and edited by Rhonda L. Kelley

GENJI MONOGATARI¹

CHAPTER I

THE CHAMBER OF KIRI²

In the reign of a certain Emperor, whose name is unknown to us, there was, among the Niogo and Kôyi³ of the Imperial Court, one who, though she was not of high birth, enjoyed the full tide of Royal favor. Hence her superiors, each one of whom had always been thinking—"I shall be the one," gazed upon her disdainfully with malignant eyes, and her equals and inferiors were more indignant still.

Such being the state of affairs, the anxiety which she had to endure was great and constant, and this was probably the reason why her health was at last so much affected, that she was often compelled to absent herself from Court, and to retire to the residence of her mother.

Her father, who was a Dainagon,⁴ was dead; but her mother, being a woman of good sense, gave her every possible guidance in the due performance of Court ceremony, so that in this respect she seemed but little different from those whose fathers and mothers were still alive to bring them before public notice, yet, nevertheless, her friendliness made her oftentimes feel very diffident from the want of any patron of influence.

These circumstances, however, only tended to make the favor shown to her by the Emperor wax warmer and warmer, and it was even shown to such an extent as to become a warning to after-generations. There had been instances in China in which favoritism such as this had caused national disturbance and disaster; and thus the matter became a subject of public animadversion,⁵ and it seemed not improbable that people would begin to allude even to the example of Yô-ki-hi.⁶

In due course, and in consequence, we may suppose, of the Divine blessing on the sincerity of their affection, a jewel of a little prince was born to her. The first prince who had been born to the Emperor was the child of Koki-

1 Which means, "The Romance of Genji." (All footnotes are from the Project Gutenberg edition of [Kenchio's translation](#), unless otherwise noted).

2 The beautiful tree, called Kiri, has been named Paulownia Imperialis, by botanists.

3 Official titles held by Court ladies.

4 The name of a Court office.

5 criticism or censure (RLK)

6 A celebrated and beautiful favorite of an Emperor of the Thang dynasty in China, whose administration was disturbed by a rebellion, said to have been caused by the neglect of his duties for her sake.

den-Niogo,⁷ the daughter of the Udaijin (a great officer of State). Not only was he first in point of age, but his influence on his mother's side was so great that public opinion had almost unanimously fixed upon him as heir-apparent. Of this the Emperor was fully conscious, and he only regarded the new-born child with that affection which one lavishes on a domestic favorite. Nevertheless, the mother of the first prince had, not unnaturally, a foreboding that unless matters were managed adroitly her child might be superseded by the younger one. She, we may observe, had been established at Court before any other lady, and had more children than one. The Emperor, therefore, was obliged to treat her with due respect, and reproaches from her always affected him more keenly than those of any others.

To return to her rival. Her constitution was extremely delicate, as we have seen already, and she was surrounded by those who would fain lay bare, so to say, her hidden scars. Her apartments in the palace were Kiri-Tsubo (the chamber of Kiri); so called from the trees that were planted around. In visiting her there the Emperor had to pass before several other chambers, whose occupants universally chafed when they saw it. And again, when it was her turn to attend upon the Emperor, it often happened that they played off mischievous pranks upon her, at different points in the corridor, which leads to the Imperial quarters. Sometimes they would soil the skirts of her attendants, sometimes they would shut against her the door of the covered portico, where no other passage existed; and thus, in every possible way, they one and all combined to annoy her.

The Emperor at length became aware of this, and gave her, for her special chamber, another apartment, which was in the Kôrô-Den, and which was quite close to those in which he himself resided. It had been originally occupied by another lady who was now removed, and thus fresh resentment was aroused.

When the young Prince was three years old the Hakamagi⁸ took place. It was celebrated with a pomp scarcely inferior to that which adorned the investiture of the first Prince. In fact, all available treasures were exhausted on the occasion. And again the public manifested its disapprobation. In the summer of the same year the Kiri-Tsubo-Kôyi became ill, and wished to retire from the palace. The Emperor, however, who was accustomed to see her indisposed, strove to induce her to remain. But her illness increased day by day; and she had drooped and pined away until she was now but a shadow of her former self. She made scarcely any response to the affectionate words and expressions of tenderness which her Royal lover caressingly bestowed upon her. Her eyes were half-closed: she lay like a fading flower in the last stage of exhaustion, and she became so much enfeebled that her mother appeared before the Emperor and entreated with tears that she might be allowed to leave. Distracted by his vain endeavors to devise means to aid her, the Emperor at length ordered a Te-gruma⁹ to be in readiness to convey her to her own home, but even then he went to her apartment and cried despairingly: «Did not we vow that we would neither of us be either before or after the other even in travelling the last long journey of life? And can you find it in your heart to leave me now?» Sadly and tenderly looking up, she thus replied, with almost failing breath:—

“Since my departure for this dark journey,
Makes you so sad and lonely,
Fain would I stay though weak and weary,
And live for your sake only!”¹⁰



IMAGE 8.4: MURASAKI SHIKIBU | Statue of Lady Murasaki kneeling down, holding folds of fabric.

Author: User “FlickreviewR”
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⁷ A Niogo who resided in a part of the Imperial palace called “Koki-den.”

⁸ The Hakamagi is the investiture of boys with trousers, when they pass from childhood to boyhood. In ordinary cases, this is done when about five years old, but in the Royal Family, it usually takes place earlier.

⁹ A carriage drawn by hands. Its use in the Court-yard of the Palace was only allowed to persons of distinction.

¹⁰ This is the first of the *tanka* or short poems that courtiers either speak or write to another. (RLK)

“Had I but known this before—”

She appeared to have much more to say, but was too weak to continue. Overpowered with grief, the Emperor at one moment would fain accompany her himself, and at another moment would have her remain to the end where she then was.

At the last, her departure was hurried, because the exorcism for the sick had been appointed to take place on that evening at her home, and she went. The child Prince, however, had been left in the Palace, as his mother wished, even at that time, to make her withdrawal as privately as possible, so as to avoid any invidious observations on the part of her rivals. To the Emperor the night now became black with gloom. He sent messenger after messenger to make inquiries, and could not await their return with patience. Midnight came, and with it the sound of lamentation. The messenger, who could do nothing else, hurried back with the sad tidings of the truth. From that moment the mind of the Emperor was darkened, and he confined himself to his private apartments.

He would still have kept with himself the young Prince now motherless, but there was no precedent for this, and it was arranged that he should be sent to his grandmother for the mourning. The child, who understood nothing, looked with amazement at the sad countenances of the Emperor, and of those around him. All separations have their sting, but sharp indeed was the sting in a case like this.

Now the funeral took place. The weeping and wailing mother, who might have longed to mingle in the same flames,¹¹ entered a carriage, accompanied by female mourners. The procession arrived at the cemetery of Otagi, and the solemn rites commenced. What were then the thoughts of the desolate mother? The image of her dead daughter was still vividly present to her—still seemed animated with life. She must see her remains become ashes to convince herself that she was really dead. During the ceremony, an Imperial messenger came from the Palace, and invested the dead with the title of Sammi. The letters patent were read, and listened to in solemn silence. The Emperor conferred this title now in regret that during her lifetime he had not even promoted her position from a Kôyi to a Niogo, and wishing at this last moment to raise her title at least one step higher. Once more several tokens of disapprobation were manifested against the proceeding. But, in other respects, the beauty of the departed, and her gracious bearing, which had ever commanded admiration, made people begin to think of her with sympathy. It was the excess of the Emperor's favor which had created so many detractors during her lifetime; but now even rivals felt pity for her; and if any did not, it was in the Koki-den. “When one is no more, the memory becomes so dear,” may be an illustration of a case such as this.

Some days passed, and due requiem services were carefully performed. The Emperor was still plunged in thought, and no society had attractions for him. His constant consolation was to send messengers to the grandmother of the child, and to make inquiries after them. It was now autumn, and the evening winds blew chill and cold. The Emperor—who, when he saw the first Prince, could not refrain from thinking of the younger one—became more thoughtful than ever; and, on this evening, he sent Yugei-no Miôbu¹² to repeat his inquiries. She went as the new moon just rose, and the Emperor stood and contemplated from his veranda the prospect spread before him. At such moments he had usually been surrounded by a few chosen friends, one of whom was almost invariably his lost love. Now she was no more. The thrilling notes of her music, the touching strains of her melodies, stole over him in his dark and dreary reverie.

The Miôbu arrived at her destination; and, as she drove in, a sense of sadness seized upon her.

The owner of the house had long been a widow; but the residence, in former times, had been made beautiful for the pleasure of her only daughter. Now, bereaved of this daughter, she dwelt alone; and the grounds were overgrown with weeds, which here and there lay prostrated by the violence of the winds; while over them, fair as elsewhere, gleamed the mild lustre of the impartial moon. The Miôbu entered, and was led into a front room in the southern part of the building. At first the hostess and the messenger were equally at a loss for words. At length the silence was broken by the hostess, who said:—

“Already have I felt that I have lived too long, but doubly do I feel it now that I am visited by such a messenger as you.” Here she paused, and seemed unable to contend with her emotion.

“When Naishi-no-Ske returned from you,” said the Miôbu, “she reported to the Emperor that when she saw you, face to face, her sympathy for you was irresistible. I, too, see now how true it is!” A moment's hesitation, and she proceeded to deliver the Imperial message:—

“The Emperor commanded me to say that for some time he had wandered in his fancy, and imagined he was but in a dream; and that, though he was now more tranquil, he could not find that it was only a dream. Again, that there is no one who can really sympathize with him; and he hopes that you will come to the Palace, and talk with him. His Majesty said also that the absence of the Prince made him anxious, and that he is desirous that you should speedily make up your mind. In giving me this message, he did not speak with readiness. He seemed to fear to be considered unmanly, and strove to exercise reserve. I could not help experiencing sympathy with him, and hurried

11 Cremation was very common in these days.

12 A Court lady, whose name was Yugei, holding an office called “Miôbu.”

away here, almost fearing that, perhaps, I had not quite caught his full meaning.”

So saying, she presented to her a letter from the Emperor. The lady's sight was dim and indistinct. Taking it, therefore, to the lamp, she said, “Perhaps the light will help me to decipher,” and then read as follows, much in unison with the oral message: “I thought that time only would assuage my grief; but time only brings before me more vividly my recollection of the lost one. Yet, it is inevitable. How is my boy? Of him, too, I am always thinking. Time once was when we both hoped to bring him up together. May he still be to you a memento of his mother!”

Such was the brief outline of the letter, and it contained the following:—

“The sound of the wind is dull and drear
 Across Miyagi's¹³ dewy lea,
 And makes me mourn for the motherless deer
 That sleeps beneath the Hagi tree.”

She put gently the letter aside, and said, “Life and the world are irksome to me; and you can see, then, how reluctantly I should present myself at the Palace. I cannot go myself, though it is painful to me to seem to neglect the honored command. As for the little Prince, I know not why he thought of it, but he seems quite willing to go. This is very natural. Please to inform his Majesty that this is our position. Very possibly, when one remembers the birth of the young Prince, it would not be well for him to spend too much of his time as he does now.”

Then she wrote quickly a short answer, and handed it to the Miôbu. At this time her grandson was sleeping soundly.

“I should like to see the boy awake, and to tell the Emperor all about him, but he will already be impatiently awaiting my return,” said the messenger. And she prepared to depart.

“It would be a relief to me to tell you how a mother laments over her departed child. Visit me, then, sometimes, if you can, as a friend, when you are not engaged or pressed for time. Formerly, when you came here, your visit was ever glad and welcome; now I see in you the messenger of woe. More and more my life seems aimless to me. From the time of my child's birth, her father always looked forward to her being presented at Court, and when dying he repeatedly enjoined me to carry out that wish. You know that my daughter had no patron to watch over her, and I well knew how difficult would be her position among her fellow-maidens. Yet, I did not disobey her father's request, and she went to Court. There the Emperor showed her a kindness beyond our hopes. For the sake of that kindness she uncomplainingly endured all the cruel taunts of envious companions. But their envy ever deepening, and her troubles ever increasing, at last she passed away, worn out, as it were, with care. When I think of the matter in that light, the kindest favors seem to me fraught with misfortune. Ah! that the blind affection of a mother should make me talk in this way!”

“The thoughts of his Majesty may be even as your own,” said the Miôbu. “Often when he alluded to his overpowering affection for her, he said that perhaps all this might have been because their love was destined not to last long. And that though he ever strove not to injure any subject, yet for Kiri-Tsubo, and for her alone, he had sometimes caused the ill-will of others; that when all this has been done, she was no more! All this he told me in deep gloom, and added that it made him ponder on their previous existence.”

The night was now far advanced, and again the Miôbu rose to take leave. The moon was sailing down westward and the cool breeze was waving the herbage to and fro, in which numerous mushi were plaintively singing.¹⁴ The messenger, being still somehow unready to start, hummed—

“Fain would one weep the whole night long,
 As weeps the Sudu-Mushi's song,
 Who chants her melancholy lay,
 Till night and darkness pass away.”

As she still lingered, the lady took up the refrain—

“To the heath where the Sudu-Mushi sings,
 From beyond the clouds¹⁵ one comes from on high
 And more dews on the grass around she flings,
 And adds her own, to the night wind's sigh.”

13 Miyagi is the name of a field which is famous for the Hagi or Lespedeza, a small and pretty shrub, which blooms in the Autumn. In poetry it is associated with deer, and a male and female deer are often compared to a lover and his love, and their young to their children.

14 In Japan there is a great number of “mushi” or insects, which sing in herbage grass, especially in the evenings of Autumn. They are constantly alluded to in poetry.

15 In Japanese poetry, persons connected with the Court, are spoken of as “the people above the clouds.”

A Court dress and a set of beautiful ornamental hairpins, which had belonged to Kiri-Tsubo, were presented to the Miôbu by her hostess, who thought that these things, which her daughter had left to be available on such occasions, would be a more suitable gift, under present circumstances, than any other.

On the return of the Miôbu she found that the Emperor had not yet retired to rest. He was really awaiting her return, but was apparently engaged in admiring the Tsubo-Senzai—or stands of flowers—which were placed in front of the palaces, and in which the flowers were in full bloom. With him were four or five ladies, his intimate friends, with whom he was conversing. In these days his favorite topic of conversation was the “Long Regret.”¹⁶ Nothing pleased him more than to gaze upon the picture of that poem, which had been painted by Prince Teishi-In, or to talk about the native poems on the same subject, which had been composed, at the Royal command, by Ise, the poetess, and by Tsurayuki, the poet. And it was in this way that he was engaged on this particular evening.

To him the Miôbu now went immediately, and she faithfully reported to him all that she had seen, and she gave to him also the answer to his letter. That letter stated that the mother of Kiri-Tsubo felt honored by his gracious inquiries, and that she was so truly grateful that she scarcely knew how to express herself. She proceeded to say that his condescension made her feel at liberty to offer to him the following:—

“Since now no fostering love is found,
And the Hagi tree is dead and sere,
The motherless deer lies on the ground,
Helpless and weak, no shelter near.”

The Emperor strove in vain to repress his own emotion; and old memories, dating from the time when he first saw his favorite, rose up before him fast and thick. “How precious has been each moment to me, but yet what a long time has elapsed since then,” thought he, and he said to the Miôbu, “How often have I, too, desired to see the daughter of the Dainagon in such a position as her father would have desired to see her. ‘Tis in vain to speak of that now!”

A pause, and he continued, “The child, however, may survive, and fortune may have some boon in store for him; and his grandmother’s prayer should rather be for long life.”

The presents were then shown to him. “Ah,” thought he, “could they be the souvenirs sent by the once lost love,” as he murmured—

“Oh, could I find some wizard sprite,
To bear my words to her I love,
Beyond the shades of envious night,
To where she dwells in realms above!”

Now the picture of beautiful Yô-ki-hi, however skilful the painter may have been, is after all only a picture. It lacks life and animation. Her features may have been worthily compared to the lotus and to the willow of the Imperial gardens, but the style after all was Chinese, and to the Emperor his lost love was all in all, nor, in his eyes, was any other object comparable to her. Who doubts that they, too, had vowed to unite wings, and intertwine branches! But to what end? The murmur of winds, the music of insects, now only served to cause him melancholy.

In the meantime, in the Koki-Den was heard the sound of music. She who dwelt there, and who had not now for a long time been with the Emperor, was heedlessly protracting her strains until this late hour of the evening.

How painfully must these have sounded to the Emperor!

“Moonlight is gone, and darkness reigns
E’en in the realms ‘above the clouds,
‘Ah! how can light, or tranquil peace,
Shine o’er that lone and lowly home!”

Thus thought the Emperor, and he did not retire until “the lamps were trimmed to the end!” The sound of the night watch of the right guard¹⁷ was now heard. It was five o’clock in the morning. So, to avoid notice, he withdrew to his bedroom, but calm slumber hardly visited his eyes. This now became a common occurrence.

16 A famous Chinese poem, by Hak-rak-ten. The heroine of the poem was Yô-ki-hi, to whom we have made reference before. The story is, that after death she became a fairy, and the Emperor sent a magician to find her. The works of the poet Peh-lo-tien, as it is pronounced by modern Chinese, were the only poems in vogue at that time. Hence, perhaps, the reason of its being frequently quoted.

17 There were two divisions of the Imperial guard, right and left.

When he rose in the morning he would reflect on the time gone by when “they knew not even that the case-ment was bright.” But now, too, he would neglect “Morning Court.” His appetite failed him. The delicacies of the so-called “great table” had no temptation for him. Men pitied him much. “There must have been some divine mystery that predetermined the course of their love,” said they, “for in matters in which she is concerned he is powerless to reason, and wisdom deserts him. The welfare of the State ceases to interest him.” And now people actually began to quote instances that had occurred in a foreign Court.

Weeks and months had elapsed, and the son of Kiri-Tsubo was again at the Palace. In the spring of the following year the first Prince was proclaimed heir-apparent to the throne. Had the Emperor consulted his private feelings, he would have substituted the younger Prince for the elder one. But this was not possible, and, especially for this reason:—There was no influential party to support him, and, moreover, public opinion would also have been strongly opposed to such a measure, which, if effected by arbitrary power, would have become a source of danger. The Emperor, therefore, betrayed no such desire, and repressed all outward appearance of it. And now the public expressed its satisfaction at the self-restraint of the Emperor, and the mother of the first Prince felt at ease.

In this year, the mother of Kiri-Tsubo departed this life. She may not improbably have longed to follow her daughter at an earlier period; and the only regret to which she gave utterance, was that she was forced to leave her grandson, whom she had so tenderly loved.

From this time the young Prince took up his residence in the Imperial palace; and next year, at the age of seven, he began to learn to read and write under the personal superintendence of the Emperor. He now began to take him into the private apartments, among others, of the Koki-den, saying, “The mother is gone! now at least, let the child be received with better feeling.” And if even stony-hearted warriors, or bitter enemies, if any such there were, smiled when they saw the boy, the mother of the heir-apparent, too, could not entirely exclude him from her sympathies. This lady had two daughters, and they found in their half-brother a pleasant playmate. Everyone was pleased to greet him, and there was already a winning coquetry in his manners, which amused people, and made them like to play with him. We need not allude to his studies in detail, but on musical instruments, such as the flute and the ko-to,¹⁸ he also showed great proficiency.

About this time there arrived an embassy from Corea, and among them was an excellent physiognomist. When the Emperor heard of this, he wished to have the Prince examined by him. It was, however, contrary to the warnings of the Emperor Wuda, to call in foreigners to the Palace. The Prince was, therefore, disguised as the son of one Udaiben, his instructor, with whom he was sent to the Kôro-Kwan, where foreign embassies are entertained.

When the physiognomist saw him, he was amazed, and, turning his own head from side to side, seemed at first to be unable to comprehend the lines of his features, and then said, “His physiognomy argues that he might ascend to the highest position in the State, but, in that case, his reign will be disturbed, and many misfortunes will ensue. If, however, his position should only be that of a great personage in the country, his fortune may be different.”

This Udaiben was a clever scholar. He had with the Corean pleasant conversations, and they also interchanged with one another some Chinese poems, in one of which the Corean said what great pleasure it had given him to have seen before his departure, which was now imminent, a youth of such remarkable promise. The Coreans made some valuable presents to the Prince, who had also composed a few lines, and to them, too, many costly gifts were offered from the Imperial treasures.

In spite of all the precautions which were taken to keep all this rigidly secret, it did, somehow or other, become known to others, and among those to the Udaijin, who, not unnaturally, viewed it with suspicion, and began to entertain doubts of the Emperor’s intentions. The latter, however, acted with great prudence. It must be remembered that, as yet, he had not even created the boy a Royal Prince. He now sent for a native physiognomist, who approved of his delay in doing so, and whose observations to this effect, the Emperor did not receive unfavorably. He wisely thought to be a Royal Prince, without having any influential support on the mother’s side, would be of no real advantage to his son. Moreover, his own tenure of power seemed precarious, and he, therefore, thought it better for his own dynasty, as well as for the Prince, to keep him in a private station, and to constitute him an outside supporter of the Royal cause.

And now he took more and more pains with his education in different branches of learning; and the more the boy studied, the more talent did he evince—talent almost too great for one destined to remain in a private station. Nevertheless, as we have said, suspicions would have been aroused had Royal rank been conferred upon him, and the astrologists, whom also the Emperor consulted, having expressed their disapproval of such a measure, the Emperor finally made up his mind to create a new family. To this family he assigned the name of Gen, and he made the young Prince the founder of it.¹⁹

Some time had now elapsed since the death of the Emperor’s favorite, but he was still often haunted by her image. Ladies were introduced into his presence, in order, if possible, to divert his attention, but without success.

18 The general name for a species of musical instrument resembling the zither, but longer.

19 In these days Imperial Princes were often created founders of new families, and with some given name, the Gen being one most frequently used. These Princes had no longer a claim to the throne.

There was, however, living at this time a young Princess, the fourth child of a late Emperor. She had great promise of beauty, and was guarded with jealous care by her mother, the Empress-Dowager. The Naishi-no-Ske, who had been at the Court from the time of the said Emperor, was intimately acquainted with the Empress and familiar with the Princess, her daughter, from her very childhood. This person now recommended the Emperor to see the Princess, because her features closely resembled those of Kiri-Tsubo.

"I have now fulfilled," she said, "the duties of my office under three reigns, and, as yet, I have seen but one person who resembles the departed. The daughter of the Empress-Dowager does resemble her, and she is singularly beautiful."

"There may be some truth in this," thought the Emperor, and he began to regard her with awakening interest.

This was related to the Empress-Dowager. She, however, gave no encouragement whatever to the idea, "How terrible!" she said. "Do we not remember the cruel harshness of the mother of the Heir-apparent, which hastened the fate of Kiri-Tsubo!"

While thus discountenancing any intimacy between her daughter and the Emperor, she too died, and the princess was left parentless. The Emperor acted with great kindness, and intimated his wish to regard her as his own daughter. In consequence of this her guardian, and her brother, Prince Hiôb-Kiô, considering that life at Court would be better for her and more attractive for her than the quiet of her own home, obtained for her an introduction there.

She was styled the Princess Fuji-Tsubo (of the Chamber of Wistaria), from the name of the chamber which was assigned to her.

There was, indeed, both in features and manners a strange resemblance between her and Kiri-Tsubo. The rivals of the latter constantly caused pain both to herself and to the Emperor; but the illustrious birth of the Princess prevented any one from ever daring to humiliate her, and she uniformly maintained the dignity of her position. And to her alas! the Emperor's thoughts were now gradually drawn, though he could not yet be said to have forgotten Kiri-Tsubo.

The young Prince, whom we now style Genji (the Gen), was still with the Emperor, and passed his time pleasantly enough in visiting the various apartments where the inmates of the palace resided. He found the companionship of all of them sufficiently agreeable; but beside the many who were now of maturer years, there was one who was still in the bloom of her youthful beauty, and who more particularly caught his fancy, the Princess Wistaria. He had no recollection of his mother, but he had been told by Naishi-no-Ske that this lady was exceedingly like her; and for this reason he often yearned to see her and to be with her.

The Emperor showed equal affection to both of them, and he sometimes told her that he hoped she would not treat the boy with coldness or think him forward. He said that his affection for the one made him feel the same for the other too, and that the mutual resemblance of her own and of his mother's face easily accounted for Genji's partiality to her. And thus as a result of this generous feeling on the part of the Emperor, a warmer tinge was gradually imparted both to the boyish humor and to the awakening sentiment of the young Prince.

The mother of the Heir-apparent was not unnaturally averse to the Princess, and this revived her old antipathy to Genji also. The beauty of her son, the Heir-apparent, though remarkable, could not be compared to his, and so bright and radiant was his face that Genji was called by the public Hikal-Genji-no-Kimi (the shining Prince Gen).

When he attained the age of twelve the ceremony of Gembuk²⁰ (or crowning) took place. This was also performed with all possible magnificence. Various fêtes, which were to take place in public, were arranged by special order by responsible officers of the Household. The Royal chair was placed in the Eastern wing of the Seiriô-Den, where the Emperor dwells, and in front of it were the seats of the hero of the ceremony and of the Sadaijin, who was to crown him and to regulate the ceremonial.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon Genji appeared on the scene. The boyish style of his hair and dress excellently became his features; and it almost seemed matter for regret that it should be altered. The Okura-Kiô-Kurahito, whose office it was to rearrange the hair of Genji, faltered as he did so. As to the Emperor, a sudden thought stole into his mind. "Ah! could his mother but have lived to have seen him now!" This thought, however, he at once suppressed. After he had been crowned the Prince withdrew to a dressing-room, where he attired himself in the full robes of manhood. Then descending to the Court-yard he performed a measured dance in grateful acknowledgment. This he did with so much grace and skill that all present were filled with admiration; and his beauty, which some feared might be lessened, seemed only more remarkable from the change. And the Emperor, who had before tried to resist them, now found old memories irresistible.

Sadaijin had by his wife, who was a Royal Princess, an only daughter. The Heir-apparent had taken some notice of her, but her father did not encourage him. He had, on the other hand, some idea of Genji, and had sounded the Emperor on the subject. He regarded the idea with favor, and especially on the ground that such a union would be

20 The ceremony of placing a crown or coronet upon the head of a boy. This was an ancient custom observed by the upper and middle classes both in Japan and China, to mark the transition from boyhood to youth.

of advantage to Genji, who had not yet any influential supporters.

Now all the Court and the distinguished visitors were assembled in the palace, where a great festival was held; Genji occupied a seat next to that of the Royal Princess. During the entertainment, Sadaijin whispered something several times into his ear, but he was too young and diffident to make any answer.

Sadaijin was now summoned before the dais of the Emperor, and, according to custom, an Imperial gift, a white Ô-Uchiki (grand robe), and a suit of silk vestments were presented to him by a lady. Then proffering his own wine-cup, the Emperor addressed him thus:—

“In the first hair-knot²¹ of youth,
Let love that lasts for age be bound!”

This evidently implied an idea of matrimony. Sadaijin feigned surprise and responded:—

“Aye! if the purple²² of the cord,
I bound so anxiously, endure!”

He then descended into the Court-yard, and gave expression to his thanks in the same manner in which Genji had previously done. A horse from the Imperial stables and a falcon from the Kurand-Dokoro²³ were on view in the yard, and were now presented to him. The princes and nobles were all gathered together in front of the grand staircase, and appropriate gifts were also presented to each one of them. Among the crowd baskets and trays of fruits and delicacies were distributed by the Emperor's order, under the direction of Udaiben; and more rice-cakes and other things were given away now than at the Gembuk of the Heir-apparent.

In the evening the young Prince went to the mansion of the Sadaijin, where the espousal with the young daughter of the latter was celebrated with much splendor. The youthfulness of the beautiful boy was well pleasing to Sadaijin; but the bride, who was some years older than he was, and who considered the disparity in their age to be unsuitable, blushed when she thought of it.

Not only was this Sadaijin himself a distinguished personage in the State, but his wife was also the sister of the Emperor by the same mother, the late Empress; and her rank therefore was unequivocal. When to this we add the union of their daughter with Genji, it was easy to understand that the influence of Udaiben, the grandfather of the Heir-apparent, and who therefore seemed likely to attain great power, was not after all of very much moment.

Sadaijin had several children. One of them, who was the issue of his Royal wife, was the Kurand Shiôshiô.

Udaiben was not, for political reasons, on good terms with this family; but nevertheless he did not wish to estrange the youthful Kurand. On the contrary, he endeavored to establish friendly relations with him, as was indeed desirable, and he went so far as to introduce him to his fourth daughter, the younger sister of the Koki-Den.

Genji still resided in the palace, where his society was a source of much pleasure to the Emperor, and he did not take up his abode in a private house. Indeed, his bride, Lady Aoi (Lady Hollyhock), though her position insured her every attention from others, had few charms for him, and the Princess Wistaria much more frequently occupied his thoughts. “How pleasant her society, and how few like her!” he was always thinking; and a hidden bitterness blended with his constant reveries.

The years rolled on, and Genji being now older was no longer allowed to continue his visits to the private rooms of the Princess as before. But the pleasure of overhearing her sweet voice, as its strains flowed occasionally through the curtained casement, and blended with the music of the flute and koto, made him still glad to reside in the Palace. Under these circumstances he seldom visited the home of his bride, sometimes only for a day or two after an absence of five or six at Court.

His father-in-law, however, did not attach much importance to this, on account of his youth; and whenever they did receive a visit from him, pleasant companions were invited to meet him, and various games likely to suit his taste were provided for his entertainment.

In the Palace, Shigeisa, his late mother's quarters, was allotted to him, and those who had waited on her waited on him. The private house, where his grandmother had resided, was beautifully repaired for him by the Shuri Takmi—the Imperial Repairing Committee—in obedience to the wishes of the Emperor. In addition to the original loveliness of the landscape and the noble forest ranges, the basin of the lake was now enlarged, and similar improvements were effected throughout with the greatest pains. “Oh, how delightful would it not be to be in a place like that which such an one as one might choose!” thought Genji within himself.

21 Before the crown was placed upon the head at the Gembuk, the hair was gathered up in a conical form from all sides of the head, and then fastened securely in that form with a knot of silken cords of which the color was always purple.

22 The color of purple typifies, and is emblematical of, love.

23 A body of men who resembled “Gentlemen-at-arms,” and a part of whose duty it was to attend to the falcons.

We may here also note that the name Hikal Genji is said to have been originated by the Korean who examined his physiognomy.

CHAPTER II

THE BROOM-LIKE TREE

Hikal²⁴ Genji—the name is singularly well known, and is the subject of innumerable remarks and censures. Indeed, he had many intrigues in his lifetime, and most of them are vividly preserved in our memories. He had always striven to keep all these intrigues in the utmost secrecy, and had to appear constantly virtuous. This caution was observed to such an extent that he scarcely accomplished anything really romantic, a fact which Katano-no-Shiôshiô²⁵ would have ridiculed.

Even with such jealous watchfulness, secrets easily transpire from one to another; so loquacious is man! Moreover, he had unfortunately from nature a disposition of not appreciating anything within easy reach, but of directing his thought in undesirable quarters, hence sundry improprieties in his career.

Now, it was the season of continuous rain (namely, the month of May), and the Court was keeping a strict Monoimi.²⁶ Genji, who had now been made a Chiûjiô,²⁷ and who was still continuing his residence in the Imperial Palace, was also confined to his apartments for a considerable length of time. His father-in-law naturally felt for him, and his sons were sent to bear him company. Among these, Kurand Shiôshiô, who was now elevated to the post of Tô-no-Chiûjiô, proved to be the most intimate and interesting companion. He was married to the fourth daughter of the Udaijin, but being a man of lively disposition, he, too, like Genji, did not often resort to the mansion of the bride. When Genji went to the Sadaijin's he was always his favorite associate; they were together in their studies and in their sports, and accompanied each other everywhere. And so all stiffness and formality were dispensed with, and they did not scruple to reveal their secrets to each other.

It was on an evening in the above-mentioned season. Rain was falling drearily. The inhabitants of the Palace had almost all retired, and the apartment of Genji was more than usually still. He was engaged in reading near a lamp, but at length mechanically put his book aside, and began to take out some letters and writings from a bureau which stood on one side of the room. Tô-no-Chiûjiô happened to be present, and Genji soon gathered from his countenance that he was anxious to look over them.

"Yes," said Genji; "some you may see, but there may be others!"

"Those others," retorted Tô-no-Chiûjiô, "are precisely those which I wish to see; ordinary ones, even your humble servant may have received. I only long to look upon those which may have been written by fair hands, when the tender writer had something to complain of, or when in twilight hour she was outpouring all her yearning!"

Being so pressed, Genji allowed his brother-in-law to see them all. It is, however, highly probable that any very sacred letters would not have been loosely deposited in an ordinary bureau; and these would therefore seem, after all, to have been of second-rate importance.

"What a variety," said Tô-no-Chiûjiô, as he turned them over, and he asked several questions guessingly about this or that. About some he guessed correctly, about others he was puzzled and suspicious.²⁸ Genji smiled and spoke little, only making some obscure remark, and continuing as he took the letters: «but you, surely, must have collected many. Will not you show me some? And then my bureau also may open more easily?"

"You do not suppose that I have any worth reading, do you?" replied Tô-no-Chiûjiô. "I have only just now discovered," continued he, "how difficult it is to meet with a fair creature, of whom one can say, 'This is, indeed, the one; here is, at last, perfection.' There are, indeed, many who fascinate; many who are ready with their pens, and who, when occasion may require, are quick at repartee. But how often such girls as these are conceited about their own accomplishments, and endeavor unduly to disparage those of others! There are again some who are special pets of their parents, and most jealously watched over at home. Often, no doubt, they are pretty, often graceful; and frequently they will apply themselves with effect to music and to poetry, in which they may even attain to special excellence. But then, their friends will keep their drawbacks in the dark, and eulogize their merits to the utmost. If we were to give full credence to this exaggerated praise, we could not but fail in every single instance to be more or less disappointed."

So saying Tô-no-Chiûjiô paused, and appeared as if he were ashamed of having such an experience, when Genji smilingly remarked, "Can any one of them, however, exist without at least one good point?"

"Nay, were there any so little favored as that, no one would ever be misled at all!" replied Tô-no-Chiûjiô, and

24 "Shining" (RLK)

25 A hero of an older fiction, who is represented as the perfect ideal of a gallant.

26 A fast observed when some remarkable or supernatural event took place, or on the anniversary of days of domestic misfortune.

27 A general of the Imperial Guards.

28 Love letters generally are not signed or are signed with a fancy name.

he continued, "In my opinion, the most and the least favored are in the same proportion. I mean, they are both not many. Their birth, also, divides them into three classes. Those, however, who are especially well born, are often too jealously guarded, and are, for the most part, kept secluded from the outside gaze, which frequently tends to make their deportment shy and timid. It is those of the middle class, who are much more frequently seen by us, who afford us most chance of studying their character. As for the lower class, it would be almost useless to trouble ourselves with them."

Thus Tō-no-Chiūjiō appeared to be thoroughly at home in his description of the merits of the fair sex, which made Genji amused, and he said: "But how do you define the classes you have referred to, and classify them into three? Those who are of high birth sink sometimes in the social scale until the distinction of their rank is forgotten in the abjectness of their present position. Others, again, of low origin, rise to a high position, and, with self-important faces and in ostentatious residences, regard themselves as inferior to none. Into what class will you allot these?"

Just at this moment the Sama-no-Kami²⁹ and Tō Shikib-no-Jiō³⁰ joined the party. They came to pay their respects to Genji, and both of them were gay and light-hearted talkers. So Tō-no-Chiūjiō now made over the discussion to them, and it was carried to rather questionable lengths.

"However exalted a lady's position may be," said Sama-no-Kami, "if her origin is an unenviable one, the estimation of the public for her would be widely different from that which it shows to those who are naturally entitled to it. If, again, adverse fortune assails one whose birth is high, so that she becomes friendless and helpless, degradation here will meet our eyes, though her heart may still remain as noble as ever. Examples of both of these are very common. After much reflection, I can only come to the conclusion that both of them should be included in the middle class. In this class, too, must be included many daughters of the Duriō,³¹ who occupy themselves with local administration. These ladies are often very attractive, and are not seldom introduced at Court and enjoy high favor."

"And successes depend pretty much upon the state of one's fortune, I fancy," interrupted Genji, with a placid smile.

"That is a remark very unlikely to fall from the lips of a champion of romance," chimed in Tō-no-Chiūjiō.

"There may be some," resumed Sama-no-Kami, "who are of high birth, and to whom public respect is duly paid, yet whose domestic education has been much neglected. Of a lady such as this we may simply remark, 'Why, and how, is it that she is so brought up?' and she would only cause discredit to her class. There are, of course, some who combine in themselves every perfection befitting their position. These best of the best are, however, not within every one's reach. But, listen! Within an old dilapidated gateway, almost unknown to the world, and overgrown with wild vegetation, perchance we might find, shut up, a maiden charming beyond imagination. Her father might be an aged man, corpulent in person, and stern in mien, and her brothers of repulsive countenance; but there, in an uninviting room, she lives, full of delicacy and sentiment, and fairly skilled in the arts of poetry or music, which she may have acquired by her own exertions alone, unaided. If there were such a case, surely she deserves our attention, save that of those of us who themselves are highly exalted in position."

So saying, Sama-no-Kami winked slyly at Shikib-no-Jiō. The latter was silent: perhaps he fancied that Sama-no-Kami was speaking in the above strain, with a hidden reference to his (Shikib's) sisters, who, he imagined, answered the description.

Meantime, Genji may have thought, "If it is so difficult to choose one even from the best class, how can—Ah!" and he began to close his eyes and doze. His dress was of soft white silk, partly covered by the naoshi,³² worn carelessly, with its cord left loose and untied. His appearance and bearing formed quite a picture.

Meanwhile, the conversation went on about different persons and characters, and Sama-no-Kami proceeded: "It is unquestionable that though at first glance many women appear to be without defects, yet when we come to the actual selection of any one of them, we should seriously hesitate in our choice.

"Let me illustrate my meaning by reference to the numerous public men who may be aspiring to fulfil the duties of several important posts. You will at once recognize the great difficulty there would be in fixing upon the individual statesman under whose guardianship the empire could best repose. And supposing that, if at last, by good fortune, the most able man were designated, even then we must bear in mind that it is not in the power of one or two individuals, however gifted they may be, to carry on the whole administration of the kingdom alone. Public business can only be tranquilly conducted when the superior receives the assistance of subordinates, and when the subordinate yields a becoming respect and loyalty to his superior, and affairs are thus conducted in a spirit of mutual conciliation. So, too, it is in the narrow range of the domestic circle. To make a good mistress of that circle, one must possess, if our ideal is to be fully realized, many important qualifications. Were we to be constantly indulging

29 Left Master of the Horse.

30 Secretary to the Master of Ceremonies.

31 Deputy-governors of provinces. In those days these functionaries were greatly looked down upon by the Court nobles, and this became one of the causes of the feudal system.

32 The naoshi is an outer attire. It formed part of a loose and unceremonious Court dress.

in the severity of criticism, always objecting to this or that, a perfect character would be almost unattainable. Men should therefore bear with patience any trifling dissatisfaction which they may feel, and strive constantly to keep alive, to augment, and to cherish, the warmth of their early love. Only such a man as this can be called faithful, and the partner of such a man alone can enjoy the real happiness of affection. How unsatisfactory to us, however, seems the actual world if we look round upon it. Still more difficult must it be to satisfy such as you who seek your companions but from among the best!

“How varied are the characters and the dispositions of women! Some who are youthful and favored by Nature strive almost selfishly to keep themselves with the utmost reserve. If they write, they write harmlessly and innocently; yet, at the same time, they are choice in their expressions, which have delicate touches of bewitching sentiment. This might possibly make us entertain a suddenly conceived fancy for them; yet they would give us but slight encouragement. They may allow us just to hear their voices, but when we approach them they will speak with subdued breath, and almost inaudibly. Beware, however, lest among these you chance to encounter some astute artiste, who, under a surface that is smooth, conceals a current that is deep. This sort of lady, it is true, generally appears quite modest; but often proves, when we come closer, to be of a very different temperament from what we anticipated. Here is one drawback to be guarded against.

“Among characters differing from the above, some are too full of sentimental sweetness—whenever occasion offers them romance they become spoilt. Such would be decidedly better if they had less sentiment, and more sense.

“Others, again, are singularly earnest—too earnest, indeed—in the performance of their domestic duty; and such, with their hair pushed back,³³ devote themselves like household drudges to household affairs. Man, whose duties generally call him from home all the day, naturally hears and sees the social movements both of public and private life, and notices different things, both good and bad. Of such things he would not like to talk freely with strangers, but only with someone closely allied to him. Indeed, a man may have many things in his mind which cause him to smile or to grieve. Occasionally something of a political nature may irritate him beyond endurance. These matters he would like to talk over with his fair companion, that she might soothe him, and sympathize with him. But a woman as above described is often unable to understand him, or does not endeavor to do so; and this only makes him more miserable. At another time he may brood over his hopes and aspirations; but he has no hope of solace. She is not only incapable of sharing these with him, but might carelessly remark, ‘What ails you?’ How severely would this try the temper of a man!

“If, then, we clearly see all these, the only suggestion I can make is that the best thing to do is to choose one who is gentle and modest, and strive to guide and educate her according to the best ideal we may think of. This is the best plan; and why should we not do so? Our efforts would not be surely all in vain. But no! A girl whom we thus educate, and who proves to be competent to bear us company, often disappoints us when she is left alone. She may then show her incapability, and her occasional actions may be done in such an unbecoming manner that both good and bad are equally displeasing. Are not all these against us men?—Remember, however, that there are some who may not be very agreeable at ordinary times, yet who flash occasionally upon us with a potent and almost irresistible charm.”

Thus Sama-no-Kami, though eloquent, not having come to one point or another, remained thoughtful for some minutes, and again resumed:—

“After all, as I have once observed, I can only make this suggestion: That we should not too much consider either birth or beauty, but select one who is gentle and tranquil, and consider her to be best suited for our last haven of rest. If, in addition, she is of fair position, and is blessed with sweetness of temper, we should be delighted with her, and not trouble ourselves to search or notice any trifling deficiency. And the more so as, if her conscience is clear and pure, calmness and serenity of features can naturally be looked for.

“There are women who are too diffident, and too reserved, and carry their generosity to such an extent as to pretend not to be aware even of such annoyances as afford them just grounds of complaint. A time arrives when their sorrows and anxieties become greater than they can bear. Even then, however, they cannot resort to plain speaking, and complain. But, instead thereof, they will fly away to some remote retreat among the mountain hamlets, or to some secluded spot by the seaside, leaving behind them some painful letter or despairing verses, and making themselves mere sad memories of the past. Often when a boy I heard such stories read by ladies, and the sad pathos of them even caused my tears to flow; but now I can only declare such deeds to be acts of mere folly. For what does it all amount to? Simply to this: That the woman, in spite of the pain which it causes her, and discarding a heart which may be still lingering towards her, takes to flight, regardless of the feelings of others—of the anguish, and of the anxiety, which those who are dearest to her suffer with her. Nay, this act of folly may even be committed simply to test the sincerity of her lover’s affection for her. What pitiable subtlety!

“Worse than this, the woman thus led astray, perhaps by ill advice, may even be beguiled into more serious errors. In the depth of her despairing melancholy she will become a nun. Her conscience, when she takes the fatal

33 This alludes to a common habit of women, who push back their hair before commencing any task.

vow, may be pure and unsullied, and nothing may seem able to call her back again to the world which she forsook. But, as time rolls on, some household servant or aged nurse brings her tidings of the lover who has been unable to cast her out of his heart, and whose tears drop silently when he hears aught about her. Then, when she hears of his affections still living, and his heart still yearning, and thinks of the uselessness of the sacrifice she has made voluntarily, she touches the hair³⁴ on her forehead, and she becomes regretful. She may, indeed, do her best to persevere in her resolve, but if one single tear bedews her cheek, she is no longer strong in the sanctity of her vow. Weakness of this kind would be in the eyes of Buddha more sinful than those offences which are committed by those who never leave the lay circle at all, and she would eventually wander about in the <wrong passage.>³⁵

“But there are also women, who are too self-confident and obtrusive. These, if they discover some slight inconsistency in men, fiercely betray their indignation and behave with arrogance. A man may show a little inconsistency occasionally, but yet his affection may remain; then matters will in time be come right again, and they will pass their lives happily together. If, therefore, the woman cannot show a tolerable amount of patience, this will but add to her unhappiness. She should, above all things, strive not to give way to excitement; and when she experiences any unpleasantness, she should speak of it frankly but with moderation. And if there should be anything worse than unpleasantness she should even then complain of it in such a way as not to irritate the men. If she guides her conduct on principles such as these, even her very words, her very demeanor, may in all probability increase his sympathy and consideration for her. One’s self-denial and the restraint which one imposes upon one’s self, often depend on the way in which another behaves to us. The woman who is too indifferent and too forgiving is also inconsiderate. Remember ‘the unmoored boat floats about.’ Is it not so?”

Tô-no-Chiûjîô quickly nodded assent, as he said, “Quite true! A woman who has no strength of emotion, no passion of sorrow or of joy, can never be holders of us. Nay even jealousy, if not carried to the extent of undue suspicion, is not undesirable. If we ourselves are not in fault, and leave the matter alone, such jealousy may easily be kept within due bounds. But stop”—added he suddenly—“Some women have to bear, and do bear, every grief that they may encounter with un murmuring and suffering patience.”

So said Tô-no-Chiûjîô, who implied by this allusion that his sister was a woman so circumstanced. But Genji was still dozing, and no remark came from his lips.

Sama-no-Kami had been recently made a doctor of literature, and (like a bird) was inflating his feathers, so Tô-no-Chiûjîô, willing to draw him out as much as possible, gave him every encouragement to proceed with his discourse.

Again, therefore, he took up the conversation, and said, “Call to your mind affairs in general, and judge of them. Is it not always true that reality and sincerity are to be preferred to merely artificial excellence? Artisans, for instance, make different sorts of articles, as their talents serve them. Some of them are keen and expert, and cleverly manufacture objects of temporary fashion, which have no fixed or traditional style, and which are only intended to strike the momentary fancy. These, however, are not the true artisans. The real excellence of the true artisan is tested by those who make, without defects or sensational peculiarities, articles to decorate, we will say, some particular building, in conformity with correct taste and high æsthetic principles. Look for another instance at the eminence which has been attained by several of the artists of the Imperial College of Painting. Take the case of draughtsmen in black ink. Pictures, indeed, such as those of Mount Horai,³⁶ which has never been beheld by mortal eye, or of some raging monstrous fish in a rough sea, or of a wild animal of some far-off country, or of the imaginary face of the demon, are often drawn with such striking vividness that people are startled at the sight of them. These pictures, however, are neither real nor true. On the other hand, ordinary scenery, of familiar mountains, of calm streams of water, and of dwellings just before our eyes, may be sketched with an irregularity so charming, and with such excellent skill, as almost to rival Nature. In pictures such as these, the perspective of gentle mountain slopes, and sequestered nooks surrounded by leafy trees, are drawn with such admirable fidelity to Nature that they carry the spectator in imagination to something beyond them. These are the pictures in which is mostly evinced the spirit and effectiveness of the superior hand of a master; and in these an inferior artist would only show dullness and inefficiency.

“Similar observations are applicable to handwriting.³⁷ Some people boldly dash away with great freedom and endless flourishes, and appear at the first glance to be elegant and skillful. But that which is written with scrupulous neatness, in accordance with the true rules of penmanship, constitutes a very different handwriting from the above. If perchance the upstrokes and downstrokes do not, at first sight, appear to be fully formed, yet when we take it up

34 Some kinds of nuns did not shave their heads, and this remark seems to allude to the common practice of women who often involuntarily smooth their hair before they see people, which practice comes, no doubt, from the idea that the beauty of women often depends on the tidiness of their hair.

35 This means that her soul, which was sinful, would not go at once to its final resting-place, but wander about in unknown paths.

36 A mountain spoken of in Chinese literature. It was said to be in the Eastern Ocean, and people of extraordinary long lives, called Sennin, were supposed to dwell there.

37 In China and Japan handwriting is considered no less an art than painting.

and critically compare it with writing in which dashes and flourishes predominate, we shall at once see how much more of real and sterling merit it possesses.

“Such then is the nature of the case in painting, in penmanship, and in the arts generally. And how much more then are those women undeserving of our admiration, who though they are rich in outward and in fashionable display, attempting to dazzle our eyes, are yet lacking in the solid foundations of reality, fidelity, and truth! Do not, my friends, consider me going too far, but let me proceed to illustrate these observations by my own experience.”

So saying, Sama-no-Kami advanced his seat, and Genji awoke. Tò-no-Chiùjiô was quite interested in the conversation, and was keeping his eye upon the speaker, leaning his cheek upon his hand. This long discourse of Sama-no-Kami reminds us of the preacher’s sermon, and amuses us. And it seems that, on occasions like these, one may easily be carried away by circumstances, until he is willing to communicate even his own private affairs.

“It was at a time,” continued Sama-no-Kami, “when I was in a still more humble position, that there was a girl to whom I had taken a fancy. She was like one of those whom I described in the process of my discourse; not a regular beauty. Although for this reason my youthful vanity did not allow me to pledge myself to her forever, I still considered her a pleasant companion. Nevertheless, from occasional fits of restlessness, I roamed often here and there. This she always resented fiercely, and with so much indignation that I sighed for a sweeter temper and more moderation. Indeed, there were times when her suspicion and spitefulness were more than I could endure. But my irritation was generally calmed down, and I even felt sorry myself, when I reflected how strong and devoted her affection for me was, in spite of the mean state of my circumstances. As to her general character, her only endeavor seemed to be to do everything for my sake, even what was beyond her powers, while she struggled to perfect herself in anything in which she might be deficient, and took the most faithful care of all my interests, striving constantly and earnestly to please me. She appeared at first even too zealous, but in time became more moderate. She seemed as if she felt uneasy lest her plain face should cause me displeasure, and she even denied herself the sight of other people, in order to avoid unbecoming comment.

“As time went by, the more I became accustomed to observe how really simple-hearted she was, the more I sympathized with her. The one thing that I could not bear, however, was that jealousy of hers. Sincere and devoted as she is, thought I, is there no means of ridding her of this jealous weakness? Could I but do that, it would not matter even if I were to alarm her a little. And I also thought that since she was devoted to me, if I showed any symptoms of getting tired of her, she would, in all probability, be warned by it. Therefore, I purposely behaved to her with great coolness and heartlessness. This she resented as usual. I then said to her, that though our affection had been of old date, I should not see her again; ‘if you wish to sever from me you may suspect me as much as you like. If you prefer to enjoy long happiness with me in future, be modest and patient in trifling matters. If you can only be so, how can I do otherwise than love you? My position also may in time be improved, and then we may enjoy greater happiness!’

“In saying this, I thought I had managed matters very ingeniously. Without meaning it, however, I had in fact spoken a little too harshly. She replied, with a bitter smile, that ‘to put up with a life of undistinguished condition, even though with faint hopes of future promotion, was not a thing about which we ought to trouble ourselves, but that it was indeed a hard task to pass long wearisome days in waiting until a man’s mind should be restored to a sense of propriety. And that for this reason we had, perhaps, better separate at once.’

“This she said with such sarcastic bitterness that I was irritated and stung to the quick, and overwhelmed her with a fresh torrent of reproaches. At this juncture she gave way to an uncontrollable fit of passion, and snatching up my hand, she thrust my little finger into her mouth and bit off the end of it. Then, notwithstanding my pain, I became quite cool and collected, and calmly said, ‘insulted and maimed as I have now been, it is most fitting that I should absent myself for the future from polite society. Office and title would ill become me now. Your spite has now left me without spirit to face the world in which I should be ridiculed, and has left me no alternative but to withdraw my maimed person from the public gaze!’ After I had alarmed her by speaking in this exalted strain, I added, ‘to-day we meet for the last time,’ and bending these fingers (pointing to them as she spoke) I made the farewell remark:—

When on my fingers, I must say
I count the hours I spent with thee,
Is this, and this alone, I pray
The only pang you’ve caused to me?

You are now quits with me,’ At the instant I said so, she burst into tears and without premeditation, poured forth the following:—

‘From me, who long bore grievous harms,
From that cold hand and wandering heart,

You now withdraw your sheltering arms,
And coolly tell me, we must part.'

"To speak the truth, I had no real intention of separating from her altogether. For some time, however, I sent her no communication, and was passing rather an unsettled life. Well! I was once returning from the palace late one evening in November, after an experimental practice of music for a special festival in the Temple of Kamo. Sleet was falling heavily. The wind blew cold, and my road was dark and muddy. There was no house near where I could make myself at home. To return and spend a lonely night in the palace was not to be thought of. At this moment a reflection flashed across my mind. 'How cold must she feel whom I have treated so coldly,' thought I, and suddenly became very anxious to know what she felt and what she was about. This made me turn my steps towards her dwelling, and brushing away the snow that had gathered on my shoulders I trudged on: at one moment shyly biting my nails, at another thinking that on such a night at least all her enmity towards me might be all melted away. I approached the house. The curtains were not drawn, and I saw the dim light of a lamp reflected on the windows. It was even perceivable that a soft quilt was being warmed and thrown over the large couch. The scene was such as to give you the notion that she was really anticipating that I might come at least on such an evening. This gave me encouragement, but alas! she whom I hoped to see was not at home. I was told she had gone to her parents that very evening. Previous to that time, she had sent me no sad verses, no conciliatory letter, and this had already given birth to unpleasant feelings on my part. And at this moment, when I was told that she had gone away, all these things seemed to have been done almost purposely, and I involuntarily began to suspect that her very jealousy had only been assumed by her on purpose to cause me to become tired of her.

"As I reflected what our future might be after such an estrangement as this, I was truly depressed. I did not, however, give up all hope, thinking that she would not be so determined as to abandon me forever. I had even carefully selected some stuff for a dress for her. Some time, however, passed away without anything particularly occurring. She neither accepted nor refused the offers of reconciliation which I made to her. She did not, it is true, hide herself away like any of those of whom I have spoken before. But, nevertheless, she did not evince the slightest symptom of regret for her previous conduct.

"At last, after a considerable interval, she intimated to me that her final resolve was not to forgive me any more if I intended in future to behave as I had done before; but that, on the other hand, she should be glad to see me again if I would thoroughly change my habits, and treat her with the kindness which was her due. From this I became more convinced that she still entertained longings for me. Hence, with the hope of warning her a little more, I made no expressions of any intention to make a change in my habits, and I tried to find out which of us had the most patience.

"While matters were in this state, she, to my great surprise, suddenly died, perhaps broken-hearted.

"I must now frankly confess that she certainly was a woman in whom a man might place his confidence. Often, too, I had talked with her on music and on poetry, as well as on the more important business of life, and I found her to be by no means wanting in intellect and capability. She had too the clever hands of Tatyta-himè³⁸ and Tanabata.³⁹

"When I recall these pleasant memories my heart still clings to her endearingly."

"Clever in weaving, she may have been like Tanabata, that is but a small matter," interposed Tò-no-Chiûjiô, "we should have preferred to have seen your love as enduring as Tanabata's.⁴⁰ Nothing is so beautiful as the brilliant dyes spread over the face of Nature, yet the red tints of autumn are often not dyed to a color so deep as we desire, because of the early drying of the dew, so we say, 'such is the uncertain fate of this world,' and so saying, he made a sign to Sama-no-Kami to go on with his story. He went on accordingly.

"About that time I knew another lady. She was on the whole a superior kind of person. A fair poetess, a good musician, and a fluent speaker, with good enunciation, and graceful in her movements. All these admirable qualities I noticed myself, and heard them spoken of by others. As my acquaintance with her commenced at the time when I was not on the best of terms with my former companion, I was glad to enjoy her society. The more I associated with her the more fascinating she became.

"Meanwhile my first friend died, at which I felt truly sorry, still I could not help it, and I therefore paid frequent visits to this one. In the course of my attentions to her, however, I discovered many unpleasant traits. She was not very modest, and did not appear to be one whom a man could trust. On this account, I became somewhat disappointed, and visited her less often. While matters were on this footing I accidentally found out that she had another lover to whom she gave a share of her heart.

38 An ideal woman patroness of the art of dyeing.

39 The weaver, or star Vega. In the Chinese legend she is personified as a woman always engaged in weaving.

40 In the same legend, it is said that this weaver, who dwells on one side of the Milky Way in the heavens, meets her lover—another star called Hikoboshi, or the bull-driver—once every year, on the evening of the seventh day of the seventh month. He dwelt on the other side of the Milky Way, and their meeting took place on a bridge, made by birds (jays), by the intertwining of their wings. It was this which gave rise to the popular festival, which takes place on this day, both in China and Japan.

“It happened that one inviting moonlight evening in October, I was driving out from home on my way to a certain Dainagon. On the road I met with a young noble who was going in the same direction. We therefore drove together, and as we were journeying on, he told me that ‘someone might be waiting for him, and he was anxious to see her’; well! by and by we arrived at the house of my lady-love. The bright reflection of the waters of an ornamental lake was seen through crevices in the walls; and the pale moon, as she shed her full radiance over the shimmering waves, seemed to be charmed with the beauty of the scene. It would have been heartless to pass by with indifference, and we both descended from the carriage, without knowing each other’s intention.

“This youth seems to have been ‘the other one’; he was rather shy. He sat down on a mat of reeds that was spread beside a corridor near the gateway; and, gazing up at the sky, meditated for some moments in silence. The chrysanthemums in the gardens were in full bloom, whose sweet perfume soothed us with its gentle influence; and round about us the scarlet leaves of the maple were falling, as ever and anon they were shaken by the breeze. The scene was altogether romantic.

“Presently, he took a flute out of his bosom and played. He then whispered, ‘Its shade is refreshing.’

“In a few minutes the fair one struck up responsively on a sweet-toned wagon (a species of koto).

“The melody was soft and exquisite, in charming strains of modern music, and admirably adapted to the lovely evening. No wonder that he was fascinated; he advanced towards the casement from which the sounds proceeded, and glancing at the leaves scattered on the ground, whispered in invidious tones, ‘Sure no strange footsteps would ever dare to press these leaves.’ He then culled a chrysanthemum, humming, as he did so:—

‘Even this spot, so fair to view
With moon, and Koto’s gentle strain,
Could make no other lover true,
As me, thy fond, thy only swain.’⁴¹

“‘Wretched!’ he exclaimed, alluding to his poetry; and then added, ‘One tune more! Stay not your hand when one is near, who so ardently longs to hear you.’ Thus, he began to flatter the lady, who, having heard his whispers, replied thus, in a tender, hesitating voice:—

‘Sorry I am my voice too low
To match thy flute’s far sweeter sound;
Which mingles with the winds that blow
The Autumn leaves upon the ground.’

“Ah! she little thought I was a silent and vexed spectator of all this flirtation. She then took up a soh (another kind of koto with thirteen strings) and tuned it to a Banjiki key (a winter tune), and played on it still more excellently. Though an admirer of music, I cannot say that these bewitching melodies gave me any pleasure under the peculiar circumstances I stood in.

“Now, romantic interludes, such as this, might be pleasant enough in the case of maidens who are kept strictly in Court service, and whom we have very little opportunity of meeting with, but even there we should hesitate to make such a one our life companion. How much less could one ever entertain such an idea in a case like my own? Making, therefore, that evening’s experience a ground of dissatisfaction I never saw her more.

“Now, gentlemen, let us take into consideration these two instances which have occurred to myself and see how equally unsatisfactory they are. The one too jealous, the other too forward. Thus, early in life, I found out how little reliance was to be placed on such characters. And now I think so still more; and this opinion applies more especially to the latter of the two. Dewdrops on the ‘Hagi flower’ of beauty so delicate that they disappear as soon as we touch them—hailstones on the bamboo grass that melt in our hand as soon as we prick them—appear at a distance extremely tempting and attractive. Take my humble advice, however, and go not near them. If you do not appreciate this advice now, the lapse of another seven years will render you well able to understand that such adventures will only bring a tarnished fame.”

Thus Sama-no-Kami admonished them, and Tò-no-Chiûjiô nodded as usual. Genji slightly smiled; perhaps he thought it was all very true, and he said, “Your twofold experience was indeed disastrous and irritating!”

“Now,” said Tò-no-Chiûjiô, “I will tell you a story concerning myself. It was the evil fortune of Sama-no-Kami to meet with too much jealousy in one of the ladies to whom he might otherwise have given his heart; while he could feel no confidence in another owing to flirtations. It was my hard lot to encounter an instance of excessive diffidence. I once knew a girl whose person was altogether pleasing, and although I, too, had no intention, as Sama-no-Kami said, of forming an everlasting connection with her, I nevertheless took a great fancy to her. As our

41 servant (RLK)

acquaintance was prolonged, our mutual affection grew warmer. My thoughts were always of her, and she placed entire confidence in me. Now, when complete confidence is placed by one person in another, does not Nature teach us to expect resentment when that confidence is abused? No such resentment, however, seemed under any circumstances to trouble her. When I very seldom visited her, she showed no excitement or indignation, but behaved and looked as if we had never been separated from each other. This patient silence was more trying to me than reproaches. She was parentless and friendless. For this reason responsibility weighed more heavily on me. Abusing her gentle nature, however, I frequently neglected her. About this time, moreover, a certain person who lived near her, discovered our friendship, and frightened her by sending, through some channel, mischief-making messages to her. This I did not become aware of till afterwards, and, it seems, she was quite cast down and helpless. She had a little one for whose sake, it appears, she was additionally sad. One day I unexpectedly received a bunch of Nadeshiko⁴² flowers. They were from her.”

At this point Tō-no-Chiūjiō became gloomy.

“And what,” inquired Genji, “were the words of her message?”

“Sir! nothing but the verse,

Forgot may be the lowly bed
From which these darling flowerets spring,
Still let a kindly dew be shed,
Upon their early nurturing.

“No sooner had I read this than I went to her at once. She was gentle and sedate as usual, but evidently absent and preoccupied. Her eyes rested on the dew lying on the grass in the garden, and her ears were intent upon the melancholy singing of the autumn insects. It was as if we were in a real romance. I said to her:—

When with confused gaze we view
The mingled flowers on gay parterre,
Amid their blooms of radiant hue
The Tokonatz,⁴³ my love, is there.

And avoiding all allusion to the Nadeshiko flowers, I repeatedly endeavored to comfort the mother’s heart. She murmured in reply:—

‘Ah! Flower already bent with dew,
The winds of autumn cold and chill
Will wither all thy beauteous hue,
And soon, alas, unpitying kill.’

Thus she spoke sadly. But she reproached me no further. The tears came involuntarily into her eyes. She was, however, apparently sorry for this, and tried to conceal them. On the whole she behaved as if she meant to show that she was quite accustomed to such sorrows. I certainly deeply sympathized with her, yet still further abusing her patience. I did not visit her again for some time; but I was punished. When I did so she had flown, leaving no traces behind her. If she is still living she must needs be passing a miserable existence.

“Now, if she had been free from this excessive diffidence, this apathy of calmness, if she had complained when it was necessary, with becoming warmth and spirit, she need never have been a wanderer, and I would never have abused her confidence. But, as I said before, a woman who has no strength of emotion, no passionate bursts of sorrow or of joy, can never retain a dominion over us.

“I loved this woman without understanding her nature; and I am constantly, but in vain, trying to find her and her little darling, who was also very lovely; and often I think with grief and pain that, though I may succeed in forgetting her, she may possibly not be able to forget me, and, surely, there must be many an evening when she is disquieted by sad memories of the past.

“Let us now sum up our experiences, and reflect on the lessons which they teach us. One who bites your finger will easily estrange your affection by her violence. Falseness and forwardness will be the reproach of some other, in spite of her melodious music and the sweetness of her songs. A third, too self-contained and too gentle, is open to the charge of a cold silence, which oppresses one, and cannot be understood.

“Whom, then, are we to choose? All this variety, and this perplexing difficulty of choice, seems to be the

42 Little darlings—a kind of pink.

43 The Tokonatz (everlasting summer) is another name for the pink, and it is poetically applied to the lady whom we love.

common lot of humanity. Where, again, I say, are we to go to find the one who will realize our desires? Shall we fix our aspirations on the beautiful goddess, the heavenly Kichijō?⁴⁴ Ah! this would be but superstitious and impracticable.»

So mournfully finished Tō-no-Chiūjō; and all his companions, who had been attentively listening, burst simultaneously into laughter at his last allusion.

“And now, Shikib, it is your turn. Tell us your story,” exclaimed Tō-no-Chiūjō, turning to him.

“What worth hearing can your humble servant tell you?”

“Go on; be quick; don’t be shy; let us hear!”

Shikib-no-Jiō, after a little meditation, thus began:—

“When I was a student at the University, I met there with a woman of very unusual intelligence. She was in every respect one with whom, as Sama-no-Kami has said, you could discuss affairs, both public and private. Her dashing genius and eloquence were such that all ordinary scholars would find themselves unable to cope with her, and would be at once reduced to silence. Now, my story is as follows:—

“I was taking lessons from a certain professor, who had several daughters, and she was one of them. It happened by some chance or other I fell much into her society. The professor, who noticed this, once took up a wine-cup in his hand, and said to me, ‘Hear what I sing about two choices.’⁴⁵

“This was a plain offer put before me, and thenceforward I endeavored, for the sake of his tuition, to make myself as agreeable as possible to his daughter. I tell you frankly, however, that I had no particular affection for her, though she seemed already to regard me as her victim. She seized every opportunity of pointing out to me the way in which we should have to steer, both in public and private life. When she wrote to me she never employed the effeminate style of the Kana,⁴⁶ but wrote, oh! so magnificently! The great interest which she took in me induced me to pay frequent visits to her; and, by making her my tutor, I learned how to compose ordinary Chinese poems. However, though I do not forget all these benefits, and though it is no doubt true that our wife or daughter should not lack intelligence, yet, for the life of me, I cannot bring myself to approve of a woman like this. And still less likely is it that such could be of any use to the wives of high personages like yourselves. Give me a lovable nature in lieu of sharpness! I quite agree with Sama-no-Kami on this point.”

“What an interesting woman she must have been,” exclaimed Tō-no-Chiūjō, with the intention of making Shikib go on with his story.

This he fully understood, and, making a grimace, he thus proceeded:—

“Once when I went to her after a long absence—a way we all have, you know—she did not receive me openly as usual, but spoke to me from behind a screen. I surmised that this arose from chagrin at my negligence, and I intended to avail myself of this opportunity to break with her. But the sagacious woman was a woman of the world, and not like those who easily lose their temper or keep silence about their grief. She was quite as open and frank as Sama-no-Kami would approve of. She told me, in a low clear voice, ‘I am suffering from heartburn, and I cannot, therefore, see you face to face; yet, if you have anything important to say to me, I will listen to you.’ This was, no doubt, a plain truth; but what answer could I give to such a terribly frank avowal? ‘Thank you,’ said I, simply; and I was just on the point of leaving, when, relenting, perhaps, a little, she said aloud, ‘Come again soon, and I shall be all right.’ To pass this unnoticed would have been impolite; yet I did not like to remain there any longer, especially under such circumstances: so, looking askance, I said—

Here I am, then why excuse me, is my visit all in vain:
And my consolation is, you tell me, come again?

No sooner had I said this than she dashed out as follows with a brilliancy of repartee which became a woman of her genius:—

‘If we fond lovers were, and meeting every night,
I should not be ashamed, were it even in the light!’

“Nonsense, nonsense!” cried Genji and the others, who either were, or pretended to be, quite shocked. “Where can there be such a woman as that? She must have been a devil! Fearful! fearful!” And, snapping their fingers with disapproving glances, they said, “Do tell us something better—do give us a better story than that.”

44 A female divinity in Indian mythology.

45 From the Chinese poet Hak-rak-ten, who was mentioned before. He says in one of his poems: “Once upon a time a certain host invited to his abode a clever match-maker. When the guests were assembled he poured forth wine into a beautiful jar, and said to all present, ‘drink not for a moment, but hear what I say about the two choices, daughters of the rich get married soon, but snub their husbands, daughters of the poor get married with difficulty but dearly love their mothers-in-law.’”

46 A soft style of Japanese writing commonly used by ladies.

Shikib-no-Jiô, however, quietly remarked: “I have nothing else to relate,” and remained silent.

Hereupon a conversation took place to the following effect:—

“It is a characteristic of thoughtless people—and that, without distinction of sex—that they try to show off their small accomplishments. This is, in the highest degree, unpleasant. As for ladies, it may not, indeed, be necessary to be thorough master of the three great histories, and the five classical texts; yet they ought not to be destitute of some knowledge of both public and private affairs, and this knowledge can be imperceptibly acquired without any regular study of them, which, though superficial, will yet be amply sufficient to enable them to talk pleasantly about them with their friends. But how contemptible they would seem if this made them vain of it! The Manna⁴⁷ style and pedantic phrases were not meant for them; and, if they use them, the public will only say, ‘would that they would remember that they are women and not men,’ and they would only incur the reproach of being pedants, as many ladies, especially among the aristocracy, do. Again, while they should not be altogether unversed in poetical compositions, they should never be slaves to them, or allow themselves to be betrayed into using strange quotations, the only consequence of which would be that they would appear to be bold when they ought to be reserved, and abstracted when very likely they have practical duties to attend to. How utterly inappropriate, for instance, it would be on the May festival⁴⁸ if, while the attention of all present was concentrated on the solemnity of the occasion, the thoughts of these ladies were wandering on their own poetical imaginations about ‘sweet flags;’ or if, again, on the Ninth-day festival,⁴⁹ when all the nobles present were exercising their inventive faculties on the subject of Chinese poems, they were to volunteer to pour forth their grand ideas on the dew-laid flowers of the chrysanthemum, thus endeavoring to rival their opponents of the stronger sex. There is a time for everything; and all people, but more especially women, should be constantly careful to watch circumstances, and not to air their accomplishments at a time when nobody cares for them. They should practise a sparing economy in displaying their learning and eloquence, and should even, if circumstances require, plead ignorance on subjects with which they are familiar.”

As to Genji, even these last observations seemed only to encourage his reverie still to run upon a certain one, whom he considered to be the happy medium between the too much and the too little; and, no definite conclusion having been arrived at through the conversation, the evening passed away.

The long-continued rainy weather had now cleared up bright and fine, and the Prince Genji proceeded to the mansion of his father-in-law, where Lady Aoi, his bride, still resided with him. She was in her private suite of apartments, and he soon joined her there. She was dignified and stately, both in manners and demeanor, and everything about her bore traces of scrupulous neatness.

“Such may be one of those described by Sama-no-Kami, in whom we may place confidence,” he thought, as he approached her. At the same time, her lofty queenliness caused him to feel a momentary embarrassment, which he at once tried to hide by chatting with the attendant maid. The air was close and heavy, and he was somewhat oppressed by it. His father-in-law happened to pass by the apartment. He stopped and uttered a few words from behind the curtain which overhung the door. “In this hot weather,” said Genji, in a low tone, “what makes him come here?” and did not give the slightest encouragement to induce his father-in-law to enter the room; so he passed along. All present smiled significantly, and tittered. “How indiscreet!” exclaimed Genji, glancing at them reprovingly, and throwing himself back on a kiô-sok (arm-stool), where he remained calm and silent.

It was, by no means, becoming behavior on the part of the Prince.

The day was drawing to an end when it was announced that the mansion was closed in the certain celestial direction of the Naka-gami (central God).⁵⁰ His own mansion in Nijiô (the one mentioned as being repaired in a previous chapter) was also in the same line of direction.

“Where shall I go then?” said Genji, and without troubling himself any further, went off into a doze. All present expressed in different words their surprise at his unusual apathy. Thereupon someone reported that the residence of Ki-no-Kami, who was in waiting on the Prince, on the banks of the middle river (the River Kiôgok) had lately been irrigated by bringing the stream into its gardens, making them cool and refreshing.

“That’s very good, especially on such a close evening,” exclaimed Genji, rousing himself, and he at once intimated to Ki-no-Kami his desire of visiting his house. To which the latter answered simply, “Yes.” He did not, however, really like the Prince’s visit, and was reluctantly telling his fellow attendants that, owing to a certain circumstance

47 A stiff and formal style of Japanese writing.

48 The fifth of May is one of the five important national festivals. A solemn celebration of this fête used to be performed at Court. It is sometimes called the festival of the “Sweet Flags,”—calami aromatici—because it was held at the season when those beautiful water-plants were in the height of perfection.

49 Another of the five above-mentioned. It was held on the ninth of September, and it was customary on the occasion for rhymes to be given out to those present, wherewith to compose Chinese poems. It was sometimes called the “Chrysanthemum Festival,” for the same reason that the celebration of the fifth of May was termed the “Sweet Flag Festival.”

50 This is an astrological superstition. It is said that when this God is in any part of the compass, at the time being, it is most unlucky to proceed towards it, and to remain in the same line of its direction.

which had taken place at Iyo-no-Kami's⁵¹ residence, his wife (Ki-no-Kami's stepmother) had taken up her abode with him that very evening, and that the rooms were all in confusion.

Genji heard all this distinctly, but he would not change his mind, and said, "That is all the better! I don't care to stay in a place where no fair statue dwells; it is slow work."

Being thus pressed, no alternative remained for the Ki-no-Kami, and a messenger was dispatched to order the preparation of apartments for the Prince. Not long after this messenger had gone, Genji started on his way to the house of Ki-no-Kami, whose mild objections against this quick proceeding were not listened to.

He left the mansion as quietly as possible, even without taking formal leave of its master, and his escort consisted of a few favorite attendants.

The "eastern front room" in the "dwelling quarters" was wide open, and a temporary arrangement was made for the reception of the Prince, who arrived there very quickly. The scene of the garden struck him before anything else. The surface of the lake sparkled with its glittering waters. The hedges surrounded it in rustic beauty, and luxuriant shrubs grew in pleasing order. Over all the fair scene the breeze of evening swept softly, summer insects sang distinctly here and there, and the fireflies hovered about in mazy dances.

The escort took up its quarters in a position which overlooked the stream of water which ran beneath the corridor, and here began to take cups of saké. The host hastened to order also some refreshment to be prepared for Genji.

The latter was meanwhile gazing abstractedly about him, thinking such a place might belong to the class which Sama-no-Kami fairly placed in the middle category. He knew that the lady who was under the same roof was a young beauty of whom he had heard something before, and he was looking forward to a chance of seeing her.

He then noticed the rustling of a silken dress escaping from a small boudoir to the right, and some youthful voices, not without charm, were also heard, mingled with occasional sounds of suppressed laughter. The casement of the boudoir had been, until a short time before, open, but was pulled down by order of Ki-no-Kami, who, perhaps, doubted the propriety of its being as it was, and now only allowed a struggling light to issue through the paper of the "sliding screen!" He proceeded to one side of his room that he might see what could be seen, but there was no chance. He still stood there that he might be able, at least, to catch some part of the conversation. It seems that this boudoir adjoined the general family room of the female inmates, and his ears were greeted by some faint talking. He inclined his head attentively, and heard them whispering probably about himself.



IMAGE 8.5: TALE OF GENJI TOYOKUNI UTAGAWA PRINT | A man with an umbrella and a woman with a broom stand against a snowy background.

Author: Utagawa Kunisada

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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51 The deputy governor of the province Iyo; he is supposed to be in the province at this time, leaving his young wife and family behind.

"Is it not a pity that the fate of so fine a prince should be already fixed?" said one voice.

"Yet he loses no opportunity of availing himself of the favors of fortune," added another.

These remarks may have been made with no serious intention, but as to Genji, he, even in hearing them, could not help thinking of a certain fair image of which he so fondly dreamt. At the same time feeling a thrill on reflecting that, if this kind of secret were to be discovered and discussed in such a manner, what could be done.

He then heard an observation in delicate allusion to his verse which he had presented to the Princess Momo-zono (peach-gardens) with the flowers of Asagao (morning-glory, or convolvulus).

"What cautious beauties they are to talk in that way! But I wonder if their forms when seen will answer to the pictures of my fancy," thought Genji, as he retired to his original position, for he could hear nothing more interesting.

Ki-no-Kami presently entered the room, brought in some fruits, trimmed the lamp, and the visitor and host now began to enjoy a pleasant leisure.

"What has become of the ladies? Without some of them no society is cheerful," observed Genji.

"Who can there be to meet such wishes?" said the Ki-no-Kami to himself, but took no notice of Genji's remark.

There were several boys in the house who had followed Ki-no-Kami into the room. They were the sons and brothers of Ki-no-Kami. Among them there was one about twelve or thirteen, who was nicer-looking than the others. Genji, of course, did not know who they all were, and accordingly made inquiries. When he came to the last-mentioned boy, Ki-no-Kami replied:—

"He is the youngest son of the late Lord Yemon, now an orphan, and, from his sister's connections, he is now staying here. He is shrewd and unlike ordinary boys. His desire is to take Court service, but he has as yet no patron."

"What a pity! Is, then, the sister you mentioned your stepmother?"

"Yes, sir, it is so."

"What a good mother you have got. I once overheard the Emperor, to whom, I believe, a private application had been some time made in her behalf, referring to her, said, 'What has become of her?' Is she here now?" said Genji; and lowering his voice, added, "How changeable are the fortunes of the world!"

"It is her present state, sir. But, as you may perceive, it differs from her original expectation. Changeable indeed are the fortunes of this world, especially so the fortunes of women!"

"Does Iyo respect her? Perhaps he idolizes her, as his master."

"That is a question, perhaps, as a private master. I am the foremost to disapprove of this infatuation on his part."

"Are you? Nevertheless he trusts her to such a one as you. He is a kind father! But where are they all?"

"All in their private apartments."

Genji by this time apparently desired to be alone, and Ki-no-Kami now retired with the boys. All the escort were already slumbering comfortably, each on his own cool rush mat, under the pleasant persuasion of saké.

Genji was now alone. He tried to doze, but could not. It was late in the evening, and all was still around. His sharpened senses made him aware that the room next but one to his own was occupied, which led him to imagine that the lady of whom he had been speaking might be there. He rose softly, and once more proceeded to the other side of the room to listen to what he might overhear. He heard a tender voice, probably that of Kokimi, the boy spoken of before, who appeared to have just entered the room, saying:—

"Are you here?"

To which a female voice replied, "Yes, dear, but has the visitor yet retired?" And the same voice added—

"Ah! so near, and yet so far!"

"Yes, I should think so, he is so nice-looking, as they say."

"Were it daytime I would see him, too," said the lady in a drowsy voice.

"I shall go to bed, too! But what a bad light," said the boy, and Genji conjectured that he had been trimming the lamp.

The lady presently clapped her hands for a servant, and said, "Where is Chiûjiô, I feel lonely, I wish to see her."

"Madam, she is in the bath now, she will be here soon," replied the servant.

"Suppose I pay my visit to her, too? What harm! no harm, perhaps," said Genji to himself. He withdrew the fastening of the intervening door, on the other side there was none, and it opened. The entrance to the room where the lady was sitting was only screened by a curtain, with a glimmering light inside. By the reflection of this light he saw travelling trunks and bags all scattered about; through these he groped his way and approached the curtain. He saw, leaning on a cushion, the small and pretty figure of a lady, who did not seem to notice his approach, probably thinking it was Chiûjiô, for whom she had sent. Genji felt nervous, but struggling against the feeling, startled the lady by saying:—

"Chiûjiô was called for, I thought it might mean myself, and I come to offer you my devoted services."

This was really an unexpected surprise, and the lady was at a loss.

"It is, of course, natural," he said, "you should be astonished at my boldness, but pray excuse me. It is solely from my earnest desire to show at such an opportunity the great respect for you which I have felt for a very long time."

He was clever enough to know how to speak, and what to say, under all circumstances, and made the above speech in such an extremely humble and insinuating manner that the demon himself could not have taken offence, so she forbore to show any sudden resentment. She had, however, grave doubts as to the propriety of his conduct, and felt somewhat uncomfortable, saying shyly, "Perhaps you have made a mistake!"

"No, certainly not," he replied. "What mistake can I have made? On the other hand, I have no wish to offend you. The evening, however, is very irksome, and I should feel obliged if you would permit me to converse with you." Then gently taking her hand he pressed her to return with him to his lonely apartment.

She was still young and weak, and did not know what was most proper to do under these circumstances, so half yielding, half reluctantly was induced to be led there by him.

At this juncture Chiûjiô, for whom she had sent previously, entered the room. Upon which Genji exclaimed "Ha!"

Chiûjiô stared with astonishment at him, whom she at once recognized as the Prince, by the rich perfume which he carried about him.

"What does this mean?" thought Chiûjiô. She could still do nothing. Had he been an ordinary personage she would have immediately seized him. Even in that case, however, there was enough room to doubt whether it would not have been better to avoid any violent steps lest it might have given rise to a disagreeable family scandal, hence Chiûjiô was completely perplexed and mechanically followed them.

Genji was too bold to fear bystanders, a common fault with high personages, and coolly closed the door upon her saying, "She will soon return to you."

The lady being placed in such an awkward position, and not knowing what Chiûjiô might imagine, became, as it were, bewildered. Genji was, however, as artful and insinuating as might be expected in consoling her, though we do not know where he had learnt his eloquence. This was really trying for her, and she said, "Your condescension is beyond my merit. I cannot disregard it. It is, however, absolutely necessary to know 'Who is who.'"

"But such ignorance," he a little abashed, rejoined "as not to know 'Who is who,' is the very proof of my inexperience. Were I supposed to understand too well, I should indeed be sorry. You have very likely heard how little I mix in the world. This perhaps is the very reason why you distrust me. The excess of the blindness of my mind seems strange even to myself."

He spoke thus insinuatingly. She, on her part, feared that if his fascinating address should assume a warmer tone it would be still more trying for her and more difficult to withstand, so she determined, however hard she might appear, not to give any encouragement to his feelings, and showed therefore a coolness of manner. To her meek character there was thus added a firm resolution, and it seemed like a young bamboo reed with its strength and tenderness combined, difficult to bend! Still she felt the struggle very keenly, and tears moistened her eyes.

Genji could not help feeling touched. Not knowing exactly how to soothe her, he exclaimed, "What makes you treat me so coolly? It is true we are not old acquaintances, but it does not follow that this should prevent us from becoming good friends. Please don't discompose yourself like one who does not know the world at all: it pierces my heart."

This speech touched her, and her firmness began to waver.

"Were my position what it once was," said she, "and I received such attention, I might, however unworthy, have been moved by your affection, but as my position in life is now changed, its unsatisfactory condition often makes me dream of a happiness I cannot hope to enjoy." Hereupon she remained silent for some moments, and looked as if she meant to say that she could no longer help thinking of the line:—

Don't tell anyone you've seen my home.

But these few moments of silence agitated the pure waters of her virtuous mind, and the sudden recollection of her aged husband, whom she did not generally think much about, occurred tenderly to her memory. She shuddered at the idea of his seeing her in such a dilemma as this, even in a dream, and without a word fled back to her apartment, and Genji was once more alone.

Now the chanticleer began to proclaim the coming day, and the attendants rose from their couches, some exclaiming "How soundly we have slept," others, "Let us get the carriage ready."

Ki-no-Kami also came out saying, "Why so early, no need of such hurry for the Prince."

Genji also arose, and putting on his naoshi, went out on a balcony on the southern side of the house, where he leaned upon the wooden balustrade and meditated as he looked round him.

It appears that people were peeping out of the casement on the western side, probably being anxious to catch a glimpse of the Prince, whose figure was indistinctly to be seen by them from the top of a short screen standing within the trellis. Among these spectators there was one who perhaps might have felt a thrill run through her frame as she beheld him. It was the very moment when the sky was being tinted by the glowing streaks of morn, and the moon's pale light was still lingering in the far distance. The aspect of the passionless heavens becomes radiant or gloomy in response to the heart of him who looks upon it. And to Genji, whose thoughts were secretly occupied

with the events of the evening, the scene could only have given rise to sorrowful emotions.

Reflecting how he might on some future occasion convey a message to the lady, and looking back several times, he presently quitted the house and returned to the mansion of his father-in-law.

During some days succeeding the above events, he was staying at the mansion with his bride. His thoughts, however, were now constantly turning to the lady on the bank of the middle river. He therefore summoned Ki-no-Kami before him, and thus addressed him:—

“Cannot you let me have the boy, the son of the late Chiûnagon⁵² whom I saw the other day? He is a nice lad, and I wish to have him near at hand. I will also introduce him to the Emperor.”

“I receive your commands. I will talk with his sister, and see if she consents to it,” replied Ki-no-Kami with a bow.

These last words alluding to the object which occupied his thoughts caused Genji to start, but he said with apparent calmness—

“Has the lady presented you yet with a brother or a sister?”

“No, sir, not yet; she has been married now these two years, but it seems she is always thinking she is not settled in the way her parents desired, and is not quite contented with her position.”

“What a pity! I heard, however, she was a very good lady. Is it so?”

“Yes, I quite believe so; but hitherto we have lived separately, and were not very cordial, which, as all the world knows, is usual in such relationship.”

After the lapse of five or six days the boy Kokimi was brought to him. He was not tall or handsome but very intelligent, and in manners perfectly well-bred. Genji treated him with the greatest kindness, at which, in his boyish mind, he was highly delighted. Genji now asked him many questions about his sister, to which he gave such answers as he could, but often with shyness and diffidence. Hence Genji was unable to take him into his confidence, but by skillfully coaxing and pleasing him, he ventured to hand him a letter to be taken to his sister. The boy, though he possibly guessed at its meaning, did not trouble himself much, but taking it, duly delivered it to his sister. She became confused and thoughtful as she took it, and fearing what the boy might think, opened the letter and held it before her face as she read, in order to conceal the expression of her countenance.

It was a long one, and among other things contained the following lines:—

I had a dream, a dream so sweet,
Ah! would that I could dream again;
Alas, no sleep these eyes will greet,
And so I strive to dream in vain!

It was beautifully written, and as her eyes fell upon the passionate words, a mist gathered over them, and a momentary thought of her own life and position once more flashed over her mind, and without a word of comment to the boy, she retired to rest.

A few days afterwards Kokimi was again invited to join the Prince. Thereupon he asked his sister to give him an answer to the Prince's letter.

“Tell the Prince,” she said, “there is no one here who reads such letters.”

“But,” said the boy, “he does not expect such an answer as this! How can I tell him so?”

At first, she half-resolved to explain everything to Kokimi, and to make him thoroughly understand why she ought not to receive such letters, but the effort was too painful, so she simply said, “It is all the better for you not to talk in that way. If you think it so serious why should you go to him at all?”

“Yet, how can I disobey his commands to go back?” exclaimed the boy, and so he returned to Genji without any written answer to him.

“I was weary of waiting for you. Perhaps you, too, had forgotten me,” said Genji, when he saw the boy, who was, however, silent and blushed. “And what answer have you brought me?” continued Genji, and then the boy replied in the exact words which his sister had used.

“What?” cried Genji; and continued, “Perhaps you may not know, so I will tell you. I knew your sister before she knew Iyo. But she likes to treat me so because she thinks she has got a very good friend in Iyo; but do you be like a brother to me. The days of Iyo will be probably fewer than mine.”

He now returned to the Palace taking Komimi with him, and, going to his dressing-room, attired him nicely in the Court style; in a word, he treated him as a parent would do.

By the boy's assistance several more letters were conveyed to his sister. Her resolution, however, remained unshaken.

“If one's heart were once to deviate from the path,” she reflected, “the only end we could expect would be a damaged reputation and misery for life: the good and the bad result from one's self!”

Thus thinking, she resolved to return no answer. She might, indeed, have admired the person of Genji, and

probably did so, yet, whenever such feelings came into her mind, the next thought that suggested itself was, “What is the use of such idle admiration?”

Meanwhile, Genji was often thinking of paying a visit to the house where she was staying, but he did not consider it becoming to do so, without some reasonable pretext, more especially as he would have been sorry, and for her sake more than his own, to draw a suspicion upon her.

It happened, however, after a prolonged residence at the Court, that another occasion of closing the Palace in the certain celestial line of direction arrived. Catching at this opportunity he left the Palace, and suddenly turning out of his road, went straight to Ki-no-Kami's residence, with the excuse that he had just discovered the above fact on his way. Ki-no-Kami surprised at this unexpected visit, had only to bow before him, and acknowledge the honor of his presence. The boy, Kokimi, was already there before him, having been secretly informed of his intention beforehand, and he attended on him as usual in his apartment on his arrival.

The lady, who had been told by her brother that the Prince earnestly desired to see her, knew well how dangerous it was to approach an inviting flower growing on the edge of a precipice. She was not, of course, insensible to his coming in such a manner, with an excuse for the sake of seeing her, but she did not wish to increase her dreamlike inquietude by seeing him. And again, if he ventured to visit her apartment, as he did before, it might be a serious compromise for her.

For these reasons she retired while her brother was with Genji, to a private chamber of Chiûjiô, her companion, in the rear of the main building, under the pretense that her own room was too near that of the Prince, besides she was indisposed and required “Tataki,”⁵³ which she desired to have done in a retired part of the house.

Genji sent his attendants very early to their own quarters, and then, through Kokimi, requested an interview with the lady. Kokimi at first was unable to find her, till after searching everywhere, he, at last, came to the apartment of Chiûjiô, and with great earnestness endeavored to persuade her to see Genji, in an anxious and half trembling voice, while she replied in a tone slightly angry, “What makes you so busy? Why do you trouble yourself? Boys carrying such messages are highly blamable.”

After thus daunting him, she added, more mildly, “Tell the Prince I am somewhat indisposed, and also that some friends are with me, and I cannot well leave them now.” And she again cautioned the boy not to be too officious, and sent him away from her at once.

Yet, at the bottom of her heart, different feelings might have been struggling from those which her words seemed to express, and some such thoughts as these shaped themselves to her mind: “Were I still a maiden in the home of my beloved parents, and occasionally received his visits there, how happy might I not be? How trying to act as if no romantic sentiment belonged to my heart!”

Genji, who was anxiously waiting to know how the boy would succeed in persuading his sister, was soon told that all his efforts were in vain. Upon hearing this he remained for some moments silent, and then relieved his feelings with a long-drawn sigh, and hummed:—

“The Hahaki-gi⁵⁴ distant tree
Spreads broom-like o'er the silent waste;
Approach, how changed its shape we see,
In vain we try its shade to taste.”

The lady was unable to sleep, and her thoughts also took the following poetic shape:—

Too like the Hahaki-gi tree,
Lonely and humble, I must dwell,
Nor dare to give a thought to thee,
But only sigh a long farewell.

All the other inmates of the house were now in a sound slumber, but sleep came not to Genji's eyes. He did, indeed, admire her immovable and chaste nature, but this only drew his heart more towards her. He was agitated. At one moment he cried, “Well, then!” at another, “However!” “Still!” At last, turning to the boy, he passionately exclaimed, “Lead me to her at once!”

Kokimi calmly replied, “It is impossible, too many eyes are around us!”

Genji with a sigh then threw himself back on the cushion, saying to Kokimi, “You, at least, will be my friend, and shall share my apartment!”

53 Tataki, or Amma, a sort of shampooing, a very common medical treatment in Japan.

54 Hahaki-gi, the broom-like tree, is said to have been a certain tree growing in the plain of Sonohara, so called from its shape, which, at a distance, looked like a spreading broom, but when one comes near, its appearance was totally changed.

South Asia

This chapter introduces a representative poet from the late phase of the medieval *bhakti* (meaning “devotion”) movement in India. While there are many notable works from this period, the *bhakti* movement is perhaps the most representative of the meeting of two civilizations, Islam and Hinduism, a major factor in South Asia during the Middle Ages.

Arab traders brought Islam to India as early as the seventh century C.E. However, the greater influence of Islam in South Asia took place from the twelfth century on, when Muhammad of Ghor (modern-day Afghanistan) took over the northern part of India and established the Delhi Sultanate (a Sultan is a sovereign of a Muslim state). There have been interactions between Islamic and Hindu cultures from that point on, if not earlier. Further, from the early sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, most of northern India was ruled by the Mughal (also spelled Mogul) dynasty, a Muslim dynasty of Turkic-Mongol origin. During the two centuries of rule over much of India, the Mughals, who were Muslims, made attempts to integrate Hindus and Muslims into a united Indian state.

The *bhakti* movement is a prominent example of the interaction between Islam and Hinduism, which began from the twelfth century. The *bhakti* movement, which emphasized commitment and devotion to one chosen god out of many in the Hindu religion, was a movement to reform aspects of Hinduism, for example, asserting that *moksha*, or liberation, is attainable by everyone, unlike the views and practices of classical Hindu religion based on caste hierarchy. Under the influence of Islam, *bhakti* showed characteristics of monotheism, iconoclasm, and egalitarianism. Despite the synthesis of two religions, *bhakti* still emphasized the Hindu concepts of *moksha* and *karma* (the idea that good or bad actions determine the future modes of an individual’s existence). Whereas earlier *bhakti* poets like Kabir from northern India in the fifteenth century shows the mixing of Hindu and Muslim ideas, Tukaram from western Indian in the seventeenth century, while still part of the *bhakti* movement, focuses on reenergizing Hinduism in his regions.

Although Tukaram is from the seventeenth century, selected poems by Tukaram in this chapter are good examples of the medieval *bhakti* movement, a result of the crossroads of Islam and Hinduism in South Asia’s Middle Ages.

AS YOU READ, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How do Tukaram’s poems seem to convey such Hindu concepts as *karma* and *moksha*?
- Can you point out the influence of the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim ideas, or the *bhakti* movement, in Tukaram’s poems?
- Select specific poems by Tukaram and develop your own interpretive thesis statement for each poem, along with supporting ideas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

- Go to the following website for the history, timelines, culture, and maps of India:
<http://www.mapsofindia.com/history/>
- Go to the following website for a BBC documentary, “The Story of India- Episode 5,” which is about Middle Ages India.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NorPxKaqA0>
- Go to the following website for an educational video about Hinduism:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkAwQ3HqBac>

Written by Kyoungnye Kwon

TUKARAM'S SELECTED POEMS

Tukaram (1608-1649 C.E.)

Composed ca. 1621-1649 C.E.

India

Tukaram is a Marathi poet, born near Pune, India, who is often regarded as the greatest writer in the Marathi language. Tukaram was devoted to the Hindu god Vitthala, a local incarnation of Vishnu, a principal Hindu deity that has ten avatars or incarnations. He was part of the *bhakti* movement that promoted the idea that *moksha* (or liberation) is attainable by anyone, and he came into conflict with the local Brahmins (the highest Hindu caste of priesthood) because he challenged caste hierarchy in Hindu religious practices. In the areas of Maharashtra (the western region of India), he is regarded as the most important poetic and spiritual figure; for this, he is also called “Sant Tukaram,” the epithet “Sant” noting his saintly quality. The canon of Tukaram’s poetry contains about 4600 *abhangas* (short “unbroken” hymns), which are among the most famous Indian poems. These poems are designed to be sung and performed with musical instruments. J. Nelson Fraser and K. B. Marathe translated his poems into English; they were published in 1909-15 and reprinted in 1981.

Written by Kyoungnye Kwon



IMAGE 9.1: TUKARAM LEAVES FOR VAIKUNTHA, SUPREME ABODE OF GOD VISHNU | Tukaram ascends to the heaven of Vishnu.

Author: Ravi Varma Press
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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"TUKARAM" SELECTED FROM PSLAMS OF MARATHA SAINTS: ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT HYMNS

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Tukaram, Translated by Nicol Macnicol

The Mother's House

As the bride looks back to her mother's house,
 And goes, but with dragging feet;
 So my soul looks up unto thee and longs,
 That thou and I may meet.

As a child cries out and is sore distressed,
 When its mother it cannot see,
 As a fish that is taken from out the wave,
 So 'tis, says Tuka, with me.

The Suppliant

How can I know the right,—
 So helpless I—
 Since thou thy face hast hid from me,
 O thou most high!

I call and call again
 At thy high gate.
 None hears me; empty is the house
 And desolate.

If but before thy door
 A guest appear,
 Thou'lt speak to him some fitting word,
 Some word of cheer.

Such courtesy, O Lord,
 Becometh thee,
 And we,—ah, we're not lost to sense
 So utterly.

A Beggar For Love

A beggar at thy door,
 Pleading I stand;
 Give me an alms, O God,
 Love from thy loving hand.

Spare me the barren task,
 To come, and come for nought.
 A gift poor Tuka craves,
 Unmerited, unbought.

God Who Is Our Home

To the child how dull the Fair
 If his mother be not there!

So my heart apart from thee,
 O thou Lord of Pandharl I

Chatak turns from stream and lake,
 Only rain his thirst can slake.

How the lotus all the night
Dreameth, dreameth of the light!

As the stream to fishes thou,
As is to the calf the cow.

To a faithful wife how dear
Tidings of her Lord to hear!

How a miser's heart is set
On the wealth he hopes to get!

Such, says Tuka, such am I!
But for thee I'd surely die.

The Strife of Sense

Wearied by strife of sense,
By call and counter-call,
To thee I hie me thence,
And tell thee all.

Yea, Lord, thou knowest this;
I've brought my life to thee.
Cast down my burden is
And I am free!

Now all my being yearns,
Yearns with a strong desire,
My love within me burns,
A wasting fire.

If thou canst help indeed—
(Hear what I, Tuka, say)—
Narayan, help with speed,
Make no delay!

Waiting

With head on hand before my door,
I sit and wait in vain.
Along the road to Pandhari
My heart and eyes I strain.

When shall I look upon my Lord?
When shall I see him come?
Of all the passing days and hours
I count the heavy sum.

With watching long my eyelids throb,
My limbs with sore distress,
But my impatient heart forgets
My body's weariness.

Sleep is no longer sweet to me;
I care not for my bed;
Forgotten are my house and home,
All thirst and hunger fled.

Says Tuka, Blest shall be the day,
Ah, soon may it betide!
When one shall come from Pandhari
To summon back the bride.

Desolation

Sobs choke my throat; my eyes
Are wet with tears,
Still waiting for my Pandurang,
Till he appears.

So long cast off by thee,
My heart despairs.
Ah, whither hast thou gone, absorbed
In other cares?

So many tasks and cares
Are thine, while I
I am forgotten thus, alas,
And left to die.

Pilgrims and saints go past
To Pandhari,
And many messages they bear
From me to thee.

Who else but thee would run
To help my need?
O come to me, my Pandurang,
O come with speed.

How long still must I wait,
To see thy face?
Thou hast forgot thy trembling child,
Thou full of grace.

Once more remember me,
I, Tuka, pray.
O come to fetch thy darling home,
Make no delay.

Thee, Lord of Pity, I Beseech

Thee, Lord of Pity, I beseech,
Come speedily and set me free.
Yea, when he hears my piteous speech,
All eager should Narayan be.

Lo, in the empty world apart
I hearken, waiting thy footfall:
Vitthal, thou father, mother art,
Thou must not loiter at my call.

Thou, thou alone art left to me
All else when weighed is vanity.
Now, Tuka pleads, thy gift of grace complete;
Now let mine eyes behold thy equal feet.

From The Depths

O Pandurang, this once
Hark to my cry,
For I thy servant am,
Thine only I.

Save me by whatso means
Thou best may'st deem;
No longer now I make
Or plan or scheme.

How carefully my plans
And schemes I wrought!
My falsehood and my pride
Bring all to nought.

One dull of wit am I,
Of low degree,
By selfishness possessed
And vanity.

An instant and on me
Ruin may fall.
Come to my help, O God,
Come to my call.

Forsake Me Not!

If far from home the poor faun roam,
With grief its heart will break.
Thus lonely I with thee not nigh
O do not me forsake!

Thy heart within, all, all my sin
Ah, hide; make no delay.
Eternal thou look on me now
In love, I, Tuka, pray.

Mother Vithoba

Ah, Pandurang, if, as men say,
A sea of love thou art,
Then wherefore dost thou so delay?
take me to thy heart!

I cry for thee as for the hind
The faun makes sore lament.
Nowhere its mother it can find,
With thirst and hunger spent.

With milk of love, ah, suckle me
At thy abounding breast,
O Mother, haste—In thee, in thee
My sad heart findeth rest.

Me Miserable

Since little wit have I,
hear my mournful cry.

Grant now, O grant to me
That I thy feet may see.

I have no steadfastness,
Narayan, I confess.

Have mercy, Tuka prays,
On my unhappy case.

Within My Heart

I know no way by which
My faith thy feet can reach
Nor e'er depart.

How, how can I attain
That thou, O Lord, shall reign
Within my heart?

Lord, I beseech thee, hear
And grant to faith sincere,
My heart within,

Thy gracious face to see,
Driving afar from me
Deceit and sin.

O come, I, Tuka, pray,
And ever with me stay,
Mine, mine to be.

Thy mighty hand outstretch
And save a fallen wretch,
Yea, even me.

The Restless Heart

As on the bank the poor fish lies
And gasps and writhes in pain,
Or as a man with anxious eyes
Seeks hidden gold in vain,—
So is my heart distressed and cries
To come to thee again.

Thou knowest, Lord, the agony
Of the lost infant's wail,
Yearning his mother's face to see.
(How oft I tell this tale!)
O at thy feet the mystery
Of the dark world unveil!

The fire of this harassing thought
Upon my bosom preys.

Why is it I am thus forgot?
(O, who can know thy ways?)
Nay, Lord, thou seest my hapless lot;
Have mercy, Tuka says.

I Long To See Thy Face

I long to see thy face,
But ah, in me hath holiness no place.
By thy strength succour me,
So only, only I thy feet may see!
Though Sadhu's robes I've worn,
Within I'm all unshaven and unshorn.
Lost, lost, O God, am I,
Unless thou help me, Tuka,—me who cry!

Keep Me From Vanity

Keep me from vanity
Keep me from pride,
For sure I perish if
I quit thy side.
From this deceiving world
How hard to flee!
Ah, thou, Vaikuntha's Lord,
Deliver me!
If once thy gracious face
I look upon,
The world's enticement then
Is past and gone.

Aspiration

One favour grant, O God, that now by me
My flesh may be forgot;
So shall I have (for I at last have learned)
Bliss for my lot.

Give to my heart and all its moods a place
Close by thy side;
Break, break the bond that binds me to desire,
To passion, shame and pride.

Thy name to utter and the saints to know,
I beg but this of thee.
Here is no feigning, Lor; my service take
Of faith and purity!

The Only Refuge

I am a mass of sin;
Thou art all purity;
Yet thou must take me as I am
And bear my load for me.
Me Death has all consumed;
In thee all power abides.
All else forsaking, at thy feet
Thy servant Tuka hides.

Desolate

When thought of all but thee
Has from me gone,
Still by thy strength upheld
I struggle on.

Come to me, Vitthal, come!
For thee I wait.
O, wherefore hast thou me
Left desolate.

Many oppress me sore
With cruel might;
My very enemies
Are day and night.

Ah come and take thy place
At my heart's core;
Then shall the net of ill
Snare me no more.

O Save Me, Save Me!

O save me, save me, Mightiest,
Save me and set me free.
O let the love that fills my breast
Cling to thee lovingly.

Grant me to taste how sweet thou art;
Grant me but this, I pray,
And never shall my love depart
Or turn from thee away.

Then I thy name shall magnify
And tell thy praise abroad,
For very love and gladness I
Shall dance before my God.

Grant to me, Vitthal, that I rest
Thy blessed feet beside;
Ah, give me this, the dearest, best,
And I am satisfied.

Near Yet Far

There is no place, small as a sesamum,
But thou, they say, art there.
That deep in all this universe thou dwell'st
Sages and saints declare.

So, I, of old thy child, in faith of this
Come seeking help from thee.
Thou overflow'st the world, and yet, and yet,
Thy face I cannot see.

“Why should I meet this abject I to whom
There is nor bound nor end?”

Is it with such a thought thou comest not,
My father and my friend?
Ah, what shall Tuka do that he thy feet
May touch and tend?

Beyond The Mountains, God

Here tower the hills of passion and of lust,—
Far off the Infinite!
No path I find and all impassable
Fronts me the hostile height.

Ah, God is lost, my friend. Narayan now
How can I e'er attain?
Thus it appears that all my life, so dear,
I've spent, alas, in vain.

I Cannot Understand: I Love

Thy greatness none can comprehend
All dumb the Vedas are.
Forspent the powers of mortal mind;
They cannot climb so far.
How can I compass him whose light
Illumes both sun and star?

The serpent of a thousand tongues
Cannot tell all thy praise;
Then how, poor I? Thy children we,
Mother of loving ways!
Within the shadow of thy grace,
Ah, hide me, Tuka says.

Not One But Two

Advait contents me not, but dear to me
The service of thy feet.
O grant me this reward! To sing of thee
To me how sweet!

Setting us twain, lover and Lord, apart,
This joy to me display.
Grant it to Tuka—Lord of all thou art—
Some day, some day.

Man's Extremity

Ah, then, O God, the efforts all are vain
By which I've sought thy blessed feet to gain.
First there was loving faith, but faith I've none;
Nowise my restless soul can I restrain.

Then pious deeds, but no good will have I
For these; nor wealth to help the poor thereby;
I know not how to honour Brahman guests;
Alas! the springs of love in me are dry.

I cannot serve the guru or the saint;
Not mine to chant the name, with toil to faint,
Perform the sacred rites, renounce the world.
I cannot hold my senses in restraint.

My heart has never trod the pilgrim's way;
The vows I make I know not how to pay.
"Ah, God is here," I cry. Not so, not so.
For me distinctions have not passed away.

Therefore, I come, O God, to plead for grace,
I, worthy only of a servant's place.
No store of merit such an one requires.
My firm resolve is taken, Tuka says.

Though He Slay Me

Now I submit me to thy will,
Whether thou save or whether kill;
Keep thou me near or send me hence,
Or plunge me in the war of sense.

Thee in my ignorance I sought,
Of true devotion knowing nought.
Little could I, a dullard, know,
Myself the lowest of the low.

My mind I cannot steadfast hold;
My senses wander uncontrolled.
Ah, I have sought and sought for peace.
In vain ; for me there's no release.

Now bring I thee a faith complete
And lay my life before thy feet.
Do thou, O God, what seemeth best;
In thee, in thee alone is rest.

In thee I trust, and, hapless wight,
Cling to thy skirts with all my might.
My strength is spent, I, Tuka say;
Now upon thee this task I lay.

Pandurang

Who asks if spent and weary we?
Who else, O Pandurang, but thee?

Whom shall we tell our joy or grief?
Who to our thirst will bring relief?

Who else this fever will assuage?
Who bear us o'er the ocean's rage?

Who will our heart's desire impart
And clasp us to his loving heart?

What other master shall we own?
What helper else but thee alone?

Ah, Tuka says, thou knowest all,
Prostrate before thy feet I fall.

Complete Surrender

Now Pandurang I've chosen for my part,
None, none but his to be.
In all my thoughts he dwells, dwells in my heart,
Sleeping and waking he.

Yea, all my being's powers before him bow;
None other faith is aught.
See, Tuka says, mine eyes behold him now,
Standing all wrapt in thought.

To Thy Dear Feet!

To thy dear feet my love I bind:
No other longing stirs my mind.

I think of thee through days and nights,
And so discharge my holy rites.

Nought know I but thy name alone:
Thus to myself myself am known.

When comes at last the hour of death
O save me, save me, Tuka saith.

He Leadeth Me

Holding my hand thou leadest me,
My comrade everywhere.
As I go on and lean on thee,
My burden thou dost bear.

If, as I go, in my distress
I frantic words should say,
Thou settest right my foolishness
And tak'st my shame away.

Thus thou to me new hope dost send,
A new world bringest in;
Now know I every man a friend
And all I meet my kin.

So like a happy child I play
In thy dear world, O God,
And everywhere—I, Tuka, say—
Thy bliss is spread abroad.

The Joy Of The Name

Lord, let it be that when thy name
Into my thoughts shall come,
My love to thee shall mount like flame,
My lips with joy be dumb.

Filled are my eyes with happy tears,
With rapture every limb;
Yea, with thy love my frame appears
Filled to the very brim.

Thus all my body's strength I'll spend
In hymns of joyful praise;
Thy name I'll sing nor ever end
Through all the nights and days.

Yea, Tuka says, for ever so
I'll do, for this is best,
Since at the feet of saints, I know,
Is found eternal rest.

Love's Captive

Bound with cords of love I go,
By Harl captive led,
Mind and speech and body, lo,
To him surrendered.

He shall rule my life for he
Is all compassionate.
His is sole authority,
And we his will await.

The Bhakta's Duty

The duty of the man of faith
Is trust and loyalty,
A purpose hid within his heart
That cannot moved be.

A steadfast faith and passionless
In Vitthal that abides,
A faith that not an instant strays
To any god besides.

Who that is such a one as that
Was ever cast away?
Never has such a tale been told,
Never, I, Tuka, say.

Love Finds Out God

Thy nature is beyond the grasp
Of human speech or thought.
So love I've made the measure-rod,
By which I can be taught.

Thus with the measure-rod of love
I mete the Infinite.
In sooth, to measure him there is
None other means so fit.

Not Yoga's power, nor sacrifice,
Nor fierce austerity,

Nor yet the strength of thought profound
Hath ever found out thee.

And so, says Tuka, graciously,
Oh Kesav, take, we pray
Love's service that with simple hearts
Before thy feet we lay.

God Is Ours

God is ours, yea, ours is he,
Soul of all the souls that be.

God is nigh without a doubt,
Nigh to all, within, without.

God is gracious, gracious still;
Every longing he'll fulfil.

God protects, protects his own;
Strife and death he casteth down.

Kind is God, ah, kind indeed;
Tuka he will guard and lead.

One Thing I Do

I serve thee, not because
Honour I crave;
Nay, KeSav, for I am
Thy slave.

Therefore to serve thy feet,—
For this I cry;
For naught, for naught but this
Crave I.

To my Lord's service, see,
One heart I've brought,
Ever,—without, within,—
One thought.

Thus mine appointed task
Do I somehow;
Whether 'tis wrong or right
Judge thou.

He Knows Our Needs

Unwearied he bears up the universe;
How light a burden I!
Does not his care the frog within the stone
With food supply?

The bird, the creeping thing, lays up no store;
This great One knows their need.
And if I, Tuka, cast on him my load,

Will not his mercy heed?

In Him Abide

The mother knows her child, his secret heart,
His joy or woe.
Who holds the blind man's hand alone can tell
Where he desires to go.
The timid suppliant at his champion's back
Can safely hide.
Who only clings, see, the strong swimmer bears
To the stream's further side.
Vitthal, says Tuka, knows our every need;
Only in him abide.

The Boldness Of Faith

Launch upon the sea of life;
Fear not aught that thou mayst meet.
Stout the ship of Pandurang;
Not a wave shall wet thy feet.
Many saints await thee there,
Standing on the further shore:
Haste, says Tuka, haste away,
Follow those who've gone before.

Beata Culpa

How couldst thou e'er have cleansed me,
But for my sinful plight?
So first come I, and then thy grace,
O mercy infinite.

The magic stone was nothing worth,
Till iron brought it fame.
Did no one by the Wish Tree wish,
Whence would it get its name?

The Snare Of Pride

None skilled as I in craft of subtle speech;
But, ah, the root of things I cannot reach.

Therefore, O Lord of Pandharl, my heart
Is sore distressed. Who knows my inward part?

I proud became from honour that men paid
To me, and thus my upward growth was stayed.

Alas! The way of truth I cannot see,
Held fast by Self in dark captivity.

I Am Poor And Needy

No deeds I've done nor thoughts I've thought;
Save as thy servant, I am nought.

Guard me, O God, and O, control
The tumult of my restless soul.

Ah, do not, do not cast on me
The guilt of mine iniquity.

My countless sins, I, Tuka, say,
Upon thy loving heart I lay.

A Blind Leader Of The Blind

I have grown very wise
In mine own foolish eyes,
But faith has fled.
My life is vain indeed;
But worse that rage and greed
Dwell in faith's stead.
The world's possessed by sin
And envy reigns within
The human breast;
And I shall teach mankind,
Though I'm myself as blind
As all the rest.

The Pride of Knowledge

Though I'm a man of lowly birth
The saints have magnified my worth.

And so within my heart to hide
Has come the great destroyer, pride.

In my fond heart the fancy dwells
That I am wise and no one else.

O, save me, save me, Tuka prays;
Spent like the wind are all my days.

The Unveiling Of Love

Enlighten thou mine eyes
Making me lowly wise;
Thy love to me unveil.
Then in the world I'll be
As, from all soilure free,
The lotus pure and pale.

Whether men praise or jeer,
Hearing I shall not hear;
Like the rapt yogi I.
To me the world shall seem
Like visions of a dream
That, with our waking, fly.

Till we that state attain
All, all our toil is vain,
I, Tuka, testify.

The Haven

Ah, wherefore so unkind?
Let my sad breast
At the hid centre find
It's place of rest.

No wind of good or ill
Shall enter there,
But peace, supremely still,
Supremely fair.

To me the flux of things
Brings sore distress;
The world's mutation brings
But heaviness.

Therefore I, Tuka, cry,
Clinging thy feet,
"Break, break my 'me' and 'my,'
My vain conceit."

Weariness

Shall we, sham saints, the world beguile
Glutting our belly's greed the while?

O tell thy thought, if this it be,
For I am weary utterly.

Shall we the poet's mood rehearse
And string together endless verse?

Shall Tuka ope his shop again
And, O Narayan, ruin men?

God's Counterfeit

Is there a man who says of all,
Whether upon them sorrow fall,
Or whether joy— "These, these are mine"?
That is the saint: mark well the sign.
God dwells in him. The good man's breast
Is of all men's the tenderest.
Is any helpless or undone?
Be he a slave, be he a son:—
On all alike he mercy shows,
On all an equal love bestows.

How oft must I this tale repeat!
That man is God's own counterfeit.

Self-Surrender

My self I've rendered up to thee;
I've cast it from me utterly.

Now here before thee, Lord, I stand,
Attentive to thy least command.

The self within me now is dead,
And thou enthroned in its stead.

Yea, this I, Tuka, testify,
No longer now is "me" or "my."

Dying To Live

Before my eyes my dead self lies;
O, bliss beyond compare!
Joy fills the worlds, and I rejoice,
The soul of all things there.

My selfish bonds are loosed, and now
I reach forth far and free.
Gone is the soil of birth and death,
The petty sense of "me."

Narayan's grace gave me this place,
Where I in faith abide.
Now, Tuka says, my task I've done
And spread the message wide.

The Root Of Longing

Who is he would act the true gosavl's part?
Let him dig the root of longing from his heart.
If he dare not, in his pleasures let him stay
Folly were it should he choose another way.
For when longing he hath slain victoriously,
Only then shall he from all come forth set free.
Yea, says Tuka, does thy heart for union thirst?
Crush—be sure!—the seed of longing in thee first.

The Secret Of Peace

Calm is life's crown; all other joy beside
Is only pain.
Hold thou it fast, thou shalt, whate'er betide,
The further shore attain.

When passions rage and we are wrung with woe
And sore distress,
Comes calm, and then—yea, Tuka knows it—lo!
The fever vanishes.

The Fellowship Of Saints

What enters fire, its former nature lost,
Fire to itself transforms.
Touched by the magic stone, lo, iron now
Gold that the world adorns.
Into the Ganga flow the little streams,
With the great Ganga blent.
Nay, e'en its neighbour trees the sandal tree
Infects with its sweet scent.
So to the feet of saints is Tuka bound,
Linked in a blest content.

The Simple Path

Diverse men's thoughts as are their vanities,
Distract not thou thy mind to follow these.
Cling to the faith that thou hast learned, the love
That, coming, filled thee with its fragrances.

For Hari's worship is a mother,—rest
It is and peace, shade for the weariest.
Why, then, who ties a stone about his neck
And drowns himself, is but a fool confessed.

The Way Of Love

The learned in Brahma I shall make to long
With new desire; those once so safe and strong,
Set free, I bring back glad to bondage. So,
They are made one with Brahma by a song.
God is their debtor now, O glad release.
I'll bid the weary pilgrim take his ease.
The proud ascetic may forsake his pride.
Away with offerings and charities!
By love and true devotion life's high goal
I'll help men to attain—yea, Brahma's soul.
"O, happy we, who Tuka's face have seen"—
So men will say and Tuka they'll extol.

The Thief

I came to him in woful plight;
He, gracious, girded me with might.
His house I entered unaware
And stole the treasure hidden there.
So I have wrought a deep design
That all his riches shall be mine.
I kissed his feet and then by stealth
I, Tuka, robbed him of his wealth.

The Traveller

Let thy thought at all times be,—
Over life's tempestuous sea
We must fare.
Soon the body perisheth;
Life is swallowed up of Death.
O beware!
Seek the fellowship of saints;
Seek, until thy spirit faints,
Heaven's ways!
Let not dust make blind thine eyes,
Dust of worldly enterprise,
Tuka says.

By Faith Alone

In God, in God—forget him not!—
Do thou thy refuge find.
Let every other plan or plot
Go with the wind!

Why toil for nought? Wake, wake from sleep!
By learning's load weighed down,
Thou in the world's abysses deep
Art like to drown.

O, flee from thence. Only by faith
Canst thou to God attain.
And all thy knowledge, Tuka saith,
Will prove in vain.

A Steadfast Mind

Honour, dishonour that men may pay,
Bundle them up and throw them away.

Where there is ever a steadfast mind,
There thou the vision of God shalt find.

Whereso the fountains of peace abide,
Stayed is the passage of time and tide.

Calm thou the impulse that stirs thy breast;
Surely, says Tuka, a small request.

The Name Of The Living One

Hear, O God, my supplication,—
Do not grant me Liberation.

'Tis what men so much desire;
Yet how much this joy is higher!

Home of every Vaisnavite,
See, with glow of love alight!

By their door with folded hands
Full Attainment waiting stands.

Heavenly joy is not for me,
For it passeth speedily;

But that name how strangely dear
That in songs of praise we hear!

Yea, thou, dark as clouds that lower,
Knowest not thine own name's power.

Ah, says Tuka, it is this
Makes our lives so full of bliss.

The Dedicated Life

Ah, wherefore fast or wherefore go
To solitude apart?
Whether thou joy or sorrow know
Have God within thy heart.

If in his mother's arms he be

The child knows nought amiss.
Cast out, yea, cast out utterly
All other thought than this.

Love not the world nor yet forsake
Its gifts in fear and hate.
Thy life to God an offering make
And to him dedicate.

Nay, Tjukasays, ask not again,
Waking old doubts anew.
Whatever else is taught by men,
None other word is true.

The Inward Purpose

To keep the Holy Order pure,—
This ever is my purpose sure.

The Vedic statutes I proclaim;
To imitate the saints my aim.

For, with no firm resolve within,
To quit the world is deadly sin.

Vile he who does so, Tuka says,—
Evil the worship that he pays.

The Bhakta's Task

When from Vaikuntha forth we came
This of our coming was the aim—
That what the sages taught we by our lives proclaim.

Since filled the world with sedge and weed,
To sweep the paths our lowly meed,
Trod by the saints, and on their sacred scraps 3 to feed.

Gone the old wisdom, and instead
Mere words that wide have ruin spread.
Lustful men's minds, the way to God quite vanished.

Beat we the drum of Love, whose din
Brings terror to this age of sin.
Hail, Tuka bids, with joy the victory we win.

Maya

If the river be a mirage that I see
Then what need for me
Of a ford?

If the children buy and sell in make-believe,
Who should joy or grieve,
Gain or lose?

Are not maidens still in kinship just the same,
Though they wedded in a game,

Girl with girl?

Joy or sorrow that we meet with in our dreams
To us waking seems
Nothing real.

So, says Tuka, births and dying,—nought is true.
Bondage, freedom too,
Weary me.

The World Passeth Away

Who dares call aught his own
As swiftly speed the days?
Time keeps the fatal score,
And not a moment strays.

Hair, ears, and eyes grow old,
As, dullard, grow they must;
The best is nigh thee, yet
Thou fill'st thy mouth with dust.

Dying and yet thou buildst
As for eternity!
Nay, haste to Pandurang!
'Tis Tuka says it: flee!

The Way Of Death

Ah, friend, beware; see how they bear
The dead men to the ghaut.
To God on high with agony
Call and cease not.

Though 'mong the dead not numbered,
Within thy scrip is death.
Fill up, fill up with good thy cup,
While thou hast breath.

List what I say;—the narrow way
Is dense with dying men;
'Mong them at last thy lot is cast.
No succour then.

The Night Cometh

Lo, Death draws nigh; and what know I
Of rite, or vow, or prayer?
To God alone who guards his own
I flee and hide me there.

The tally's score grows more and more,
Then night and all is done.
Hear Tuka say, dear every day
From that grim robber won.

'Tis All For Naught

With whatso skill he may his verse refine,
'Tis all for naught without the breath divine.

Let him put on the holy beggar's dress;
'Tis all for naught without unworldliness.

He paints the sun or moon upon a wall;
'Tis all for naught without the light of all.

O, he may play, of course, a soldier's part;
'Tis all for naught without a warrior heart.

So, Tuka says, they've danced and songs they've sung,
'Tis naught without the love of Pandurang.

The Divine Inspiration

'Tis not I who speak so featly;
All my words my Lover's are.
Hark, Salunki singing sweetly,
Taught, as I, by One afar.
How could I, abject, achieve it?
'Tis the all-upholding One.
Deep his skill, who can conceive it?
He can make the lame to run.

Drowning Men

For men's saving I make known
These devices—this alone
My desire.
Can my heart unmoved be
When before my eyes I see
Drowning men?
I shall see them with my eyes
When their plight they realise
At the last.

Without And Within

Soon as the season of Simhasth comes in,
The barber and the priest—what wealth they win!
Thousands of sins may lurk within his heart,
If only he will shave his head and chin!
What is shaved off is gone, but what else, pray?
What sign that sin is gone? His evil way
Is still unchanged. Yea, without faith and love
All is but vanity, I, Tuka, say.

And Have Not Charity

Your heart from rage and lust has nowise turned
For all the rice and sesamum you've burned.
You've toiled for naught with learned words whose fruit
Is vain display—and Pandurang you've spurned.

By pilgrimage and grim austerity

Only your pride has grown; your "I" and "me"
Swell with your alms; the secret, Tuka says,
You've missed: your acts are sinful utterly.

The Mendicant

Lust binds the preacher, fear
The doubting hearts of those his words who hear.

He knows not what he sings:
His mouth he opes for what each comer brings.

A greedy cat, he steals
From door to door, begging from men his meals.

What Tuka says is true;
The sack is empty and the measure too.

The Proud Advaitist

To such pay thou no heed: the words he saith
Are only chaff, empty of loving faith.
He praises high *Advait* which only brings
To speaker and to hearer pain and scaithe.

He fills his belly saying, "I am Brahm."
Waste not thy words upon him; shamed and dumb
Is he, blasphemous, when he meets the saints.
Who scorns God's love Tuka calls vilest scum.

The Hypocrite: I

His speech—the hypocrite's—is well and fair,
But all his thought is how he can ensnare.

He outwardly appears a godly man;
In truth he is a very ruffian.

His forehead-mark, his beads, a saint denote,
But in the darkness he would cut your throat.

Ay, Tuka says, a very scoundrel he;
The pains of Yama wait him certainly.

The Hypocrite: II

Possessed with devils they grow long their hair.
No saints are they, nor trace of God they bear.
They tell of omens to a gaping crowd.
Rogues are they, Tuka says; Govind's not there.

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Appendix

URL LINKS FOR ORIGINAL TEXTS:

NOTE: ITEMS MARKED WITH * INDICATE THAT DUE TO SOURCES TERMS, WE CANNOT POST THE DIRECT LINK.

Autobiography of Usama ibn Munqidh

<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/usamah2.html>

Ballads of the Cid

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101068154143;view=1up;seq=20#view=1up;seq=20>

The Canterbury Tales

<http://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/translation/ct/01gppt.txt>

<http://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/translation/ct/13frantpt.txt>

<http://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/translation/ct/07wbtppt.txt>

<http://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/translation/ct/03miltpt.txt>

**The Decameron*

<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008672778>

Google search: The Decameron

“Divani Shamsi Tabriz.” *The Persian Mystics*

<https://archive.org/details/persianmystics00davigoog>

The Divine Comedy

<http://faculty.sgc.edu/rkelley/the%20inferno.pdf>

*“Genji Monogatari.” *Japanese Literature*

Google search: Genji Monogatari

“I to Myself am Unknown.” *Flowers from Persian Poets*

<https://archive.org/details/flowersfrompers00sagoog>

The Lais of Marie de France

<http://faculty.sgc.edu/rkelley/french%20mediaeval%20romances.pdf>

Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart

<http://www.heroofcamelot.com/docs/Lancelot-Knight-of-the-Cart.pdf>

“Masnavi.” *The Persian Mystics*

<https://archive.org/details/persianmystics00davigoog>

**The Nō Plays of Japan*

Google search: The Nō Plays of Japan

Old-world Love Stories from the lays of Marie de France, & other mediaeval romances & legends.

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101072852633;view=1up;seq=9>

The Parliament of Fowls

<http://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/translation/pf/pfpt.txt>

The Pillow Book

<http://faculty.sgc.edu/rkelley/the%20pillow.pdf>

**The Poet Li Po*

Google search: The Poet Li Po

The Qur'an

https://archive.org/details/Quran_20140710

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/literature/chinese/romance-of-the-three-kingdoms/>

The Rose Garden of Sa'di

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015024274873;view=1up;seq=7>

"The Sermon on the Mount" from the *Gospel of Matthew*

[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_\(King_James\)/Matthew](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Matthew)

*"Shah Nameh." *Persian Literature*

Google search: Persian Literature

The Song of Roland

<http://faculty.sgc.edu/rkelley/The%20Song%20of%20Roland.PDF>

The Tale of Genji

<http://faculty.sgc.edu/rkelley/the%20tale%20of%20genji.pdf>

**The Thousand and One Nights*

Google search: The Thousand and One Nights

The Travels of Marco Polo

<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006800127>

Tukārām Selected Poems. *Psalms of Marāthā Saint*

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t8jd4rp72;view=1up;seq=18>

URL LINKS FOR IMAGES:

Image 5.1 THE WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER FRONTISPIECE

https://ia601804.us.archive.org/BookReader/BookReaderImages.php?zip=/13/items/worksofgeoffrey-00chau_0/39999063785610_jp2.zip&file=39999063785610_jp2/39999063785610_0011.jp2&scale=4.672897196261682&rotate=0

Image 5.2 Parliament of Fowls

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Image 5.3 Canterbury Tales Title Page

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Image 5.4 Hengwrt Manuscript

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Prologue#/media/File:HengwrtChaucerOpening.jpg

Image 5.5 The Franklin's Tale

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Image 5.6 The Wife of Bath Prologue

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Image 5.7 Giovanni Boccaccio and Florentines Who Have Fled From the Plague

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Image 5.8 Boccaccio by Morghen

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Image 5.9 A Tale from the Decameron

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Image 5.10 Decameron

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Image 5.11 Portrait of Dante Alighieri

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Image 5.12 Inferno: Canto One

<http://dante-staging.cdrcs.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/1401630012.jpg>

Image 5.13 Inferno: Canto Two

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Image 5.14 Inferno: Canto Twenty-Six

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Image 5.18 Paradiso: Canto Four

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Image 5.21 Marie de France

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Image 5.24 The Lai of the Honeysuckle

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Image 5.25 Idylls of the King

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Image 5.26 Chrétien de Troyes

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Image 5.27 Knights' Tournament

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Image 5.28 Statue of the Cid

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Image 5.29 The Cid's Signature

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Image 5.31 The Travels of Marco Polo

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Image 6.4 Jalal al-Din Rumi Mathnavi-i Ma'navi

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Image 6.5 Masnavi

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Image 6.6 Statue of Ferdowsi

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Image 6.7 Ferdowsi and the Three Ghaznavid Court Poets

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Image 6.8 Sheherazade and Sultan Schariar

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Image 6.9 The Story of Seyf ol-Molûk and Badî`ol-Jamâl

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Image 7.1 Kublai Khan

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Image 7.2 Eighty Seven Celestials

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Image 8.5 Tale of Genji Toyokuni Utagawa Print

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Image 9.1 Tukaram Leaves for Vaikuntha, Supreme Abode of God Vishnu

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