

SIR GAWAYNE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Unknown



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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

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

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

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

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

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

R.M.

LONDON,

December 22, 1864.

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

I. The mode of completely arming a knight (ll. 568-589).

II. The hunting and breaking the deer (ll. 1126-1359).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The knight carried no helmet, shield, or spear, but in one hand a holly bough, and in the other an axe "huge and unmeet," the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor (ll. 203-220). Thus arrayed, the Green Knight enters the hall without saluting any one. The first word that he uttered was, "Where is the govenour of this gang? gladly would I see him and with himself speak reason." To the knights he cast his eye, looking for the most renowned. Much did the noble assembly marvel to see a man and a horse of such a hue, green as the grass. Even greener they seemed than green enamel on bright gold. Many marvels had they seen, but none such as this. They were afraid to answer, but sat stone-still in a dead silence, as if overpowered by sleep;

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

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

him a stroke, stiff on this floor, provided that I deal him another in return.

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

If he astounded them at first, much more so did he after this speech, and fear held them all silent. The knight, righting himself in his saddle, rolls fiercely his red eyes about, bends his bristly green brows, and strokes his beard awaiting a reply. But finding none that would carp with him, he exclaims, "What! is this Arthur's house, the fame of which has spread through so many realms? Forsooth, the renown of the Round Table is overturned by the word of one man's speech, for all tremble for dread without a blow being struck!" (ll. 283-313). With this he laughed so loud that Arthur blushed for very shame, and waxed as wroth as the wind. "I know no man," he says, "that is aghast at thy great words. Give me now thy axe and I will grant thee thy request!" Arthur seizes the axe, grasps the handle, and sternly brandishes it about, while the Green Knight, with a stern cheer and a dry countenance, stroking his beard and drawing down his coat, awaits the blow (ll. 314-335). Sir Gawayne, the nephew of the king, beseeches his uncle to let him undertake the encounter; and, at the earnest entreaty of his nobles, Arthur consents "to give Gawayne the game" (ll. 336-365).

Sir Gawayne then takes possession of the axe, but, before the blow is dealt, the Green Knight asks the name of his opponent. "In good faith," answers the good knight, "Gawayne I am called, that bids thee to this buffet, whatever may befall after, and at this time twelvemonth will take from thee another, with whatever weapon thou wilt, and with no wight else alive." "By Gog," quoth the Green Knight, "it pleases me well that I shall receive at thy fist that which I have sought here—moreover thou hast truly rehearsed the terms of the covenant,—but thou shalt first pledge

me thy word that thou wilt seek me thyself, wheresoever on earth thou believest I may be found, and fetch thee such wages as thou dealest me to-day before this company of doughty ones." "Where should I seek thee?" replies Gawayne, "where is thy place? I know not thee, thy court, or thy name. I wot not where thou dwellest, but teach me thereto, tell me how thou art called, and I shall endeavour to find thee,—and that I swear thee for truth and by my sure troth." "That is enough in New Year," says the groom in green, "if I tell thee when I have received the tap. When thou hast smitten me, then smartly I will teach thee of my house, my home, and my own name, so that thou mayest follow my track and fulfil the covenant between us. If I spend no speech, then speedest thou the better, for then mayest thou remain in thy own land and seek no further; but cease thy talking¹ (ll. 366-412). Take now thy grim tool to thee and let us see how thou knockest." "Gladly, sir, for sooth," quoth Gawayne, and his axe he brandishes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Though words were wanting when they first to seat went, now are their hands full of stern work, and the marvel affords them good subject for conversation. But a year passes full quickly and never returns,—the beginning is seldom like the end; wherefore this Christmas passed away and the year after, and each season in turn followed after another (ll. 476-520). Thus winter

winds round again, and then Gawayne thinks of his wearisome journey (ll. 521-535). On All-hallows day Arthur entertains right nobly the lords and ladies of his court in honour of his nephew, for whom all courteous knights and lovely ladies were in great grief. Nevertheless they spoke only of mirth, and, though joyless themselves, made many a joke to cheer the good Sir Gawayne (ll. 536-565). Early on the morrow Sir Gawayne, with great ceremony, is arrayed in his armour (ll. 566-589), and thus completely equipped for his adventure he first hears mass, and afterwards takes leave of Arthur, the knights of the Round Table, and the lords and ladies of the court, who kiss him and commend him to Christ. He bids them all good day, as he thought, for evermore (ll. 590-669);

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

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

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

Thus in peril and plight the knight travels on until Christmas-eve, and to Mary he makes his moan that she may direct him to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All this time Gawayne lies in his gay bed. His nap is disturbed by a little noise at the door, which is softly opened. He heaves up his head out of the clothes, and, peeping through the curtains, beholds a most lovely lady (the wife of his host). She came towards the bed, and the knight laid himself down quickly, pretending to be asleep. The lady stole to the bed, cast up the curtains, crept within, sat her softly on the bed-side, and waited some time till the knight should awake. After lurking awhile under the clothes considering what it all meant, Gawayne unlocked his eyelids, and put on a look of surprise, at the same time making the sign of the cross, as if afraid of some hidden danger (ll. 1178-1207). "Good morrow, sir," said that fair lady, "ye are a careless sleeper to let one enter thus. I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure." "Good morrow," quoth Gawayne, "I shall act according to your will with great pleasure, but permit me to rise that I may the more comfortably converse with you." "Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one, "ye shall not rise from your bed, for since I have caught my knight I shall hold talk with him. I ween well that ye are Sir Gawayne that all the world worships, whose honour and courtesy are so greatly praised. Now ye are here, and we are alone (my lord and his men being afar off, other men, too, are in bed, so are my maidens), and the door is safely closed, I shall use my time well while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my person to do with it as ye please, and I will be your servant" (ll. 1208-1240).

Gawayne behaves most discreetly, for the remembrance of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel prevents him from thinking of love (ll. 1205-1289). At last the lady takes leave of the knight by catching him in her arms and kissing him (ll. 1290-1307). The day passes away merrily, and at dusk the Lord of the castle returns from the chase. He presents the venison to Gawayne according to the previous covenant between them. Our knight gives his host a kiss as the only piece of good fortune that had fallen to him during the day. "It is good," says the other, "and would be much better if ye would tell me where ye won such bliss" (ll. 1308-1394). "That was not in our

covenant," replies Gawayne, "so try me no more." After much laughing on both sides they proceed to supper, and afterwards, while the choice wine is being carried round, Gawayne and his host renew their agreement. Late at night they take leave of each other and hasten to their beds. "By the time that the cock had crowed and cackled thrice" the lord was up, and after "meat and mass" were over the hunters make for the woods, where they give chase to a wild boar who had grown old and mischievous (ll. 1395-1467).

While the sportsmen are hunting this "wild swine" our lovely knight lies in his bed. He is not forgotten by the lady, who pays him an early visit, seeking to make further trial of his virtues. She sits softly by his side and tells him that he has forgotten what she taught him the day before (ll. 1468-1486). "I taught you of kissing," says she; "that becomes every courteous knight." Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden him. The lady replies that he is strong enough to enforce his own wishes. Our knight answers that every gift not given with a good will is worthless. His fair visitor then enquires how it is that he who is so skilled in the true sport of love and so renowned a knight, has never talked to her of love (ll. 1487-1524). "You ought," she says, "to show and teach a young thing like me some tokens of true-love's crafts; I come hither and sit here alone to learn of you some game; do teach me of your wit while my lord is from home." Gawayne replies that he cannot undertake the task of expounding true-love and tales of arms to one who has far more wisdom than he possesses. Thus did our knight avoid all appearance of evil, though sorely pressed to do what was wrong (ll. 1525-1552). The lady, having bestowed two kisses upon Sir Gawayne, takes her leave of him (ll. 1553-1557).

At the end of the day the lord of the castle returns home with the shields and head of the wild boar. He shows them to his guest, who declares that "such a brawn of a beast, nor such sides of a swine," he never before has seen. Gawayne takes possession of the spoil according to covenant, and in return he bestows two

kisses upon his host, who declares that his guest has indeed been rich with "such chaffer" (ll. 1558-1647).

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

Quoth that lovesome (one)—

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

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

replies that he will not accept gold or reward of any kind, though "ever in hot and in cold" he will be her true servant.

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

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

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

behoved him to suffer," and as a safeguard against sword or knife (ll. 2015-2046).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Now, indeed," quoth Gawayne, "a desert is here; this oratory is ugly with herbs overgrown. It is a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions after the devil's manner.' Now I feel it is the fiend (the devil) in my five wits that has covenanted with me that he may destroy me. This is a chapel of misfortune—evil betide it! It is the most cursed kirk that ever I came in." With his helmet on his head, and spear in his hand, he roams up

to the rock, and then he hears from that high hill beyond the brook a wondrous wild noise. Lo! it clattered in the cliff as if one upon a grindstone were grinding a scythe. It whirled like the water at a mill, and rushed and re-echoed, terrible to hear. "Though my life I forgo," says Gawayne, "no noise shall cause me to fear."

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

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

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

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

Then he stoops a little and shows his bare neck, unmoved by any fear. The Green Knight takes up his "grim tool," and with all his force raises it aloft, as if he meant utterly to destroy him. As the axe came gliding down Gawayne "shrank a little with the

shoulders from the sharp iron." The other withheld his weapon, and then reproved the prince with many proud words. "Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed, that never feared for no host by hill nor by vale, for now thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm (ll. 2247-2272). Such cowardice of that knight did I never hear. I never flinched nor fled when thou didst aim at me in King Arthur's house. My head flew to my feet and yet I never fled, wherefore I deserve to be called the better man."

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

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

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

thou sure. Our covenant stipulates one stroke, and therefore now cease."

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

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

"Nay, forsooth," quoth the knight, "but for your kindness may God requite you. Commend me to that courteous one your comely wife, who with her crafts has beguiled me. But it is no uncommon thing for a man to come to sorrow through women's wiles; for so was Adam beguiled with one, and Solomon with

many. Samson was destroyed by Delilah, and David suffered much through Bathsheba. *'It were indeed great bliss for a man to love them well and believe them not.'* Since the greatest upon earth were so beguiled, methinks I should be excused. But God reward you for your girdle, which I will ever wear in remembrance of my fault, and when pride shall exalt me, a look to this love-lace shall lessen it (ll. 2407-2438). But since ye are the lord of yonder land, from whom I have received so much honour, tell me truly your right name, and I shall ask no more questions."

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

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

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

ever after wear a bright green belt for Gawayne's sake. And he upon whom it was conferred honoured it evermore after.

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

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

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

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

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

SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNYȝT

[FYTTE THE FIRST]

I.

[Fol. 91a.]

After the siege of Troy

Sipen þe sege & þe assaut watȝ sesed at Troye,
þe borȝ brittened & brent to brondeȝ & askeȝ,
þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wroȝt,

4

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

Romulus built Rome, 8

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

12

Langaberde *in* Lumbardie lyftes vp homes;
and Felix Brutus founded Britain,
& fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
On many bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he setteȝ,

wyth wyne;
a land of war and wonder, 16
Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,
Bi syþe3 hat3 wont þer-inne,
and oft of bliss and blunder.
& oft boþe blysse & blunder
Ful skete hat3 skyfted synne.

II.

20

Ande quen þis Bretayn wat3 bigged bi þis burn rych,
Bold men increased in the Land,
Bolde bredden þer-inne, baret þat lofden,
In mony turned tyme tene þat wro3ten;
Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
and many marvels happened. 24

þen in any oper þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
Of all Britain's kings Arthur was the noblest.
Bot of alle þat here bult of Bretaygne kynges
Ay wat3 Arthur þe hendest; as I haf herde telle;
[Fol. 91b.]

For-þi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,
28

þat a selly in si3t summe men hit holden,
& an outrage awenture of Arthure3 wondere3;
Listen a while and ye shall hear the story of an "outrageous
adventure."

If 3e wyl lysten þis laye bot on littel quile,
I schal telle hit, as-tit, as I in toun herde,

32

with tonge;

As hit is stad & stoken,
In stori stif & stronge,
With lel letteres loken,

36

In londe so hat3 ben longe.

III.

Arthur held at Camelot his Christmas feast,
His kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse,
With mony luflych lorde, lede3 of þe best,
with all the knights of the Round Table,
Rekenly of þe rounde table alle þo rich breþer,

40

With ryche reuel ory3t, & rechles merþes;
Þer toumayed tulkes bi-tyme3 ful mony,
lusted ful lolil  þise gentyle kni3tes,
Syþen kayred to þe court, caroles to make.

full fifteen days. 44

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

All was joy in hall and chamber, 48

Al wat3 hap vpon he3e in halle3 & chambre3,
With lorde3 & ladies, as leuest him þo3t;

With all þe wele of þe worlde þay woned þer samen,
among brave knights and lovely ladies,

Þe most kyd kny3te3 vnder kryste seluen,

52

& þe louelokkest ladies þat euer lif haden,
& he þe comlokest kyng þat þe court halde3;

For al wat3 þis fayre folk *in* her first age,
on sille;
the happiest under heaven. 56
þe hapnest vnder heuen,
Kyng hy3est mon of wylle,
Hit were¹ now gret nye to neuen
So hardy a here *on* hille.

¹ MS. werere.

IV.

They celebrate the New Year with great joy. 60
Wyle nw 3er wat3 so 3ep þat hit wat3 nwe cummen,
þat day doubble on þe dece wat3 þe douth serued,
Fro þe kyng wat3 cummen *with* kny3tes *in* to þe halle,
þe chauntre of þe chapel cheued to an ende;

64

Loude crye wat3 þer kest of clerke3 & oþer,
[Fol. 92]

Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte;
& syþen riche forth runnen to reche honde-selle,
Gifts are demanded and bestowed.

3e3ed 3eres 3iftes on hi3, 3elde hem bi hond,
68

Debated busyly aboute þo giftes;
Ladies la3ed ful loude, þo3 þay lost haden,
& he þat wan wat3 not wrothe, þat may 3e wel trawe.
Lords and ladies take their seats at the table.

Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme;

72

When þay had waschen, worpyly þay wenten to sete,
þe best burne ay abof, as hit best semed;

Queen Guenever appears gaily dressed.

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

Dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute,

76

Smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer

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

Þat were enbrawd & beten wyth þe best gemmes,

Þat myȝt be preued of prys wyth penyes to bye,

80

in daye;

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

Þe comlokest to discrye,

Þer glent *with* yȝen gray,

A semloker þat euer he syȝe,

84

Soth moȝt no mon say.

V.

Arthur would not eat,

Bot Arthure wolde not ete til al were serued,

He watȝ so loly of his loyfnes, & *sum*-quat child gered,

His lif liked *hym* lyȝt, he louied þe lasse

nor would he long sit 88

Auþer to lenge lye, or to longe sitte,

So bi-sied him his ȝonge blod & his brayn wylde;

& also anoper maner meued *him* eke,

Þat he þurȝ nobelay had nomen, ho wolde neuer ete

92

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

Of *sum* auenturus þyng an vncoupe tale,

Of *sum* mayn meruayle, þat he myȝt trawe,
Of¹ alderes, of armes, of oper auenturus,

96

Oper sum segg hym bi-soȝt of *sum* siker knyȝt,
To loyne wyth hym in iustyng in lopardé to lay,
Lede lif for lyf, leue vchon oper,
As fortune wolde fulsun hom þe fayrer to haue.

100

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

[Fol. 92b.]

in halle;

He of face so bold makes much mirth with all.

Þer-fore of face so fere.

104

He stigtelȝ stif in stalle,
Ful ȝep in þat nw ȝere,
Much mirthe he mas *with* alle.

¹ Of of, in MS.

VI.

The king talks with his knights.

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

108

Talkkande bifore þe hyȝe table of trifles ful hende
Gawayne,

There gode Gawan watȝ grayped, Gwenore bisyde
Agravayn,

& Agrauayn a la dure mayn on þat oper syde sittes

Boþe þe kynges sister sunes, & ful siker kniȝtes;

Bishop Bawdewyn, 112

Bischop Bawdewyn abof bi-gine3 þe table,
and Ywain sit on the dais.

& Ywan, Vryn son, ette wit hym-seluen;
Þise were di3t on þe des, & derworply serued,
& sipen mony siker segge at þe sidborde3.

The first course is served with cracking of trumpets. 116

Þen þe first cors come with crakkyng of trumpes,
Wyth mony baner ful bry3t, þat þer-bi henced,
Nwe nakryn noyse *with* þe noble pipes,
Wylde werbles & wy3t wakned lote,

120

Þat mony hert ful hi3e hef at her towches;
It consisted of all dainties in season.

Dayntes dryuen þer-wyth of ful dere metes,
Foyssoun of þe fresche, & on so fele disches,
Þat pine to fynde þe place þe peple bi-forne

124

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

Iche lede as he loued hym-selue

Þer laght *with*-outen lope,

Each two had dishes twelve, 128

Ay two had disches twelue,
good beer and bright wine both.

Good ber, & bry3t wyn boþe.

¹ svlueren (?) (dishes).

VII.

There was no want of anything.

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

Scarcely had the first course commenced, 132
 An oper noyse ful newe ne3ed biliue,
 Þat þe lude my3t haf leue lif-lode to cach.
 For vneþe wat3 þe noyce not a whyle sesed,
 & þe fyrst cource *in* þe court kyndely serued,
 when there rushes in at the hall-door a knight; 136
 Þer hales *in* at þe halle dor an aghlich mayster,
 On þe most on þe molde on mesure hyghe;
 Fro þe swyre to þe swange so sware & so þik,
 the tallest on earth
 & his lyndes & his lymes so longe & so grete,
 [Fol. 93.] 140
 Half etayn *in* erde I hope þat he were.
 he must have been.
 Bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene,
 & þat þe myriest *in* his muckel þat my3t ride;
 His back and breast were great,
 For of bak & of brest al were his bodi sturne,
 but his belly and waist were small. 144
 Bot his wombe & his wast were worthily smale,
 & alle his fetures fol3ande, *in* forme þat he hade,
 ful clene;
 For wonder of his hwe men hade,
 148
 Set *in* his semblaunt sene;
 He ferde as freke were fade,
 & ouer-al enker grene.

VIII.

He was clothed entirely in green.
 Ande al grayped *in* grene þis gome & his wedes,

152

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

156

Þat watȝ laȝt fro his lokkeȝ, & layde on his schulderes
Heme wel haled, hose of þat same grene,
His spurs were of bright gold.

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

160

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

His saddle was embroidered with birds and flies. 164

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

168

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

172

Þat euer glemered¹ & glent al of grene stones.

The foal that he rode upon was green;

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

A grene hors gret & pikke,

it was a steed full stiff to guide. 176

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

[Fol. 93b.]

To þe gome he watȝ ful gayn.

¹ glemed (?).

IX.

Gaily was the knight attired.

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

& þe here of his hed of his hors swete;
Fayre fannand fax vmbe-foldes his schulderes;
His great beard, like a bush, hung on his breast.

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

Wat3 euesed al vmbe-torne, a-bof his elbowes,
Þat half his armes þer vnder were halched *in* þe wyse
Of a kynge3 capados, þat closes his swyre.
The horse's mane was decked with golden threads.

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

Wel cresped & cemmed wyth knottes ful mony,
Folden *in* wyth fildore aboute þe fayre grene,
Ay a herle of þe here, an oper of golde;
Its tail was bound with a green band.

Þe tayl & his toppyng twynnen of a sute,
192

& bounden bope wyth a bande of a bry3t grene,
Dubbed wyth ful dere stone3, as þe dok lasted,
Syþen þrawen wyth a þwong a þwarle knot alofte,
Þer mony belle3 ful bry3t of brende golde rungen.
Such a foal nor a knight were never before seen. 196

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

with y3e;
He loked as layt so ly3t,
200
So sayd al þat hym sy3e,
It seemed that no man might endure his dints.
Hit semed as no mon my3t,
Vnder his dyntte3 dry3e.
¹ as as, in MS.

X.

The knight carried neither spear nor shield,
Wheþer hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauper,
204
Ne no pysan, ne no plate þat pented to armes,
Ne no schafte, ne no schelde, to schwne ne to smyte,
In one hand was a holly bough,
Bot *in* his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe,
þat is grattest *in* grene, when greue3 ar bare,
in the other an axe, 208
& an ax *in* his oþer, a hoge & vn-mete,
A spetos sparþe to expoun *in* spelle quo-so my3t;
þe hede of an eln3erde þe large lenkþe hade,
þe grayn al of grene stele & of golde hewen,
the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor, 212
þe bit burnyst bry3t, *with* a brod egge,
As wel schapen to schere as scharp rasores;
þe stele of a stif staf þe sturne hit bi-grypte,
[Fol. 94.]
þat wat3 wounden wyth yrn to þe wande3 ende,
and the handle was encased in iron, curiously "graven with green, in
gracious works." 216

& al bigrauen *with* grene, *in* gracios¹ werkes;
A lace lapped aboute, þat louked at þe hede,
& so after þe halme halched ful ofte,
Wyth tryed tasseleȝ þerto tacched *in*-noghe,
Thus arrayed the Green Knight enters the hall, 220
On botounȝ of þe bryȝt grene brayden ful ryche.
Þis hapel heldeȝ hym *in*, & þe halle entres,
Driuande to þe heȝe dece, dut he no woþe,
without saluting any one.

Haylsed he neuer one, bot heȝe he ouer loket.

224

Þe fyrst word þat he warp, "wher is," he sayd,
He asks for the "governor" of the company,
"Þe gouemour of þis gyng? gladly I wolde
Se þat segg *in* syȝt, & *with* hym self speke
raysoun."

228

To knyȝteȝ he kest his yȝe,
& reled hym vp & doun,
and looks for the most renowned.

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

¹ *looks like* gracons *in* MS.

XI.

Much they marvel to see a man and a horse 232
Ther watȝ lokyng on lenþe, þe lude to be-holde,
For vch mon had meruayle quat hit mene myȝt,
Þat a hapel & a horse myȝt such a hwe lach,
as green as grass.

As growe grene as þe gres & grener hit semed,

236

Pen grene aumayl on golde lowande bry3ter;
Al studied þat þer stod, & stalked hym nerre,
Never before had they seen such a sight as this.
Wyth al þe wonder of þe worlde, what he worch schulde.
For fele sellye3 had þay sen, bot such neuer are,

240

For-þi for fantoum & fayry3e þe folk þere hit demed;
They were afraid to answer,
Per-fore to answere wat3 ar3e mony apel freke,
& al stouned at his steuen, & stonstil seten,
and were as silent as if sleep had taken possession of them;
In a swoghe sylence þur3 þe sale riche

244

As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor lote3
in hy3e;
I deme hit not al for doute,
some from fear and others from courtesy.
Bot sum for cortaysye,

248

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

XII.

Arthur salutes the Green Knight.

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

252

& sayde, "wy3e, welcum iwys to þis place,
[Fol. 94b.]
bids him welcome, and invites him to stay awhile.

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

The knight says that he will not tarry. 256

"Nay, as help me," *quod* þe hapel, "he þat on hyȝe syttes,
To wone any quyle *in* þis won, hit watȝ not myn ernde;
Bot for þe los of þe lede is lyft vp so hyȝe,
& þy burȝ & þy burnes best ar holden,

260

Stifest vnder stel-gere on stedes to ryde,
He seeks the most valiant that he may prove him.

þe wyȝtest & þe worpyest of þe worldes kynde,
Preue for to play wyth in oper pure laykeȝ;
& here is kydde cortaysye, as I haf herd carp,

264

& þat hatȝ wayned me hider, I-wyis, at þis tyme.
ȝe may be seker bi þis braunch þat I bere here,
He comes in peace.

þat I passe as *in* pes, & no plyȝt seche;

For had I founded *in* fere, *in* feȝtyng wyse,

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

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

272

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

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

Arthour con onsware,

276

& sayd, "*sir* cortays knyȝt,
If þou craue batayl bare,
Here fayleȝ þou not to fyȝt."

XIII.

"I seek no fight," says the knight.

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

"Here are only beardless children.' 280

Hit arn aboute on þis bench bot berdle3 chylder;

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

Here is no man to match me.

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

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

Here are brave ones many, 284

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

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

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

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

Þat dar stifly strike a strok for an oþer,

288

I schal gif hym of my gyft þys giserne ryche,
this axe shall be his;

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

[Fol. 95.]

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

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

292

Lepe ly3tly me to, & lach þis weppen,

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

but I shall give him a 'stroke' in return

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

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

296

barlay;

& 3et gif hym respite,

within a twelvemonth and a day."

A twelmonyth & a day;—

Now hyȝe, & let se tite
300 Dar any her-inne oȝt say."
1 MS. fo.

XIV.

Fear kept all silent.
If he hem stowned vpon fyrst, stiller were þanne
Alle þe hered-men *in* halle, þe hyȝ & þe loȝe;
The knight rolled his red eyes about,
Þe renk on his rounce hym ruced *in* his sadel,
304 & runisch-ly his rede yȝen he reled aboute,
and bent his bristly green brows.
Bende his bresed broȝeȝ, bly-cande grene,
Waving his beard awhile, he exclaimed:
Wayued his berde for to wayte quo-so wolde ryse.
When non wolde kepe hym *with* carp he coȝed ful hyȝe,
308 Ande rimed hym ful richley, & ryȝt hym to speke:
"What! is this Arthur's court?
"What, is þis Arþures hous," *quod* þe hapel þenne,
"Þat al þe rous rennes of, þurȝ ryalmes so mony?
Where is now *your* sourquydrye & *your* conquestes,
312 *Your* gry[n]del-layk, & *your* greme, & *your* grete wordes?
Forsooth the renown of the Round Table is overturned 'with a word
of one man's speech.'
Now is þe reuel & þe renoun of þe rounde table
Ouer-walt wyth a worde of on wyȝes speche;
For al dares for drede, *with*-oute dynt schewed!"

316

Wyth þis he laȝes so loude, þat þe lorde greued;
Arthur blushes for shame.

Þe blod schot for scham *in-to* his schyre face
& lere;

He waxes as wroth as the wind.

He wex as wroth as wynde,

320

So did alle þat þer were
Þe kyng as kene bi kynde,
Þen stod þat stif mon nere.

XV.

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

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

324

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

[Fol. 95*b*.] 328

Lyȝtly lepeȝ he hym to, & laȝt at his honde;
Þen feersly þat oper freke vpon fote lyȝtis.

Arthur seizes his axe.

Now hatȝ Arthure his axe, & þe halme grypeȝ,
& sturnely stureȝ hit aboute, þat stryke wyth hit poȝt.

332

Þe stif mon hym biforn stod vpon hyȝt,
Herre þen ani in þe hous by þe hede & more;

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

Wyth sturne schere¹ þer he stod, he stroked his berde,
 & wyth a countenaunce dryȝe he droȝ doun his cote,
 336
 No more mate ne dismayd for hys mayn dinteȝ,
 Þen any burne vpon bench hade broȝt hym to drynk
 of wyne,
 Sir Gawayne beseeches the king to let him undertake the blow.
 Gawan, þat sate bi þe quene,
 340
 To þe kyng he can enclyne,
 "I be-seche now *with* saȝeȝ sene,
 Þis melly mot be myne."
¹ chere (?).

XVI.

"Wolde ȝe, worpilych lorde," *quod* Gawan to þe kyng,
 He asks permission to leave the table; he says, 344
 "Bid me boȝe fro þis benche, & stonde by yow þere,
 Þat I wyth-oute vylanye myȝt voyde þis table,
 & þat my legge lady lyked not ille,
 I wolde com to *your* counseyl, bifore *your* cort ryche.
 it is not meet that Arthur should be active in the matter, 348
 For me þink hit not semly, as hit is soþ knawen,
 Þer such an askyng is heuened so hyȝe *in your* sale,
 Þaȝȝe ȝour-self be talenttyf to take hit to *your*-seluen,
 while so many bold ones sit upon bench.
 Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten,
 352
 Þat vnder heuen, I hope, non hazer er of wylle,
 Ne better bodyes on bent, þer baret is rered;
 Although the weakest, he is quite ready to meet the Green Knight.

I am þe wakkest, I wot, and of wyt feblest,
 & lest lur of my lyf, quo laytes þe soþe,
 356
 Bot for as much as 3e ar myn em, I am only to prayse,
 No bounté bot *your* blod I in my bodé knowe;
 & syþen þis note is so nys, þat noȝt hit yow falles,
 & I haue frayned hit at yow fyrst, foldeȝ hit to me,
 360
 & if I carp not comlyly, let alle þis cort rych,
 bout blame."
 The nobles entreat Arthur to "give Gawayne the game."
 Ryche to-geder con roun,
 & syþen þay redden alle same,
 364
 To ryd þe kyng wyth croun,
 & gif Gawan þe game.

XVII.

[Fol. 96.]
 Þen comaunded þe kyng þe knyȝt for to ryse;
 & he ful radly vp ros, & ruchched hym fayre,
 The king gives his nephew his weapon, 368
 Kneled doun bifore þe kyng, & cacheȝ þat weppen;
 & he luflyly hit hym laft, & lyfte vp his honde,
 & gef hym goddeȝ blessyng, & gladly hym biddes
 and tells him to keep heart and hand steady.
 Þat his hert & his honde schulde hardi be boþe.
 372
 "Kepe þe cosyn," *quod* þe kyng, "þat þou on kyrf sette,
 & if þou redeȝ hym ryȝt, redly I trowe,
 Þat þou schal byden þe bur þat he schal bede after.

Gawan got3 to þe gome, *with* giserne *in* honde,
376

& he baldly hym byde3, he bayst neuer þe helder
The Green Knight enquires the name of his opponent.

Þen carppe3 to *sir* Gawan þe kny3t *in* þe grene,
"Refourme we oure for-wardes, er we fyrre passe.
Fyrst I epe þe, hapel, how þat þou hattes,

380
Þat þou me telle truly, as I tryst may?"

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

"In god fayth," *quod* þe goode kny3t, "Gawan I hatte,
Þat bede þe þis buffet, quat-so bi-falle3 after,
& at þis tyme twelmonyth take at þe anoper,

384
Wyth what weppen so¹ þou wylt, & wyth no wy3 elle3,
on lyue."

Þat oper on-sware3 agayn,

"Sir Gawan, so mot I þryue,

The other thereof is glad. 388

As I am ferly fayn.

Þis dint þat þou schal dryue."

¹ MS. fo.

XVIII.

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

"Bigog," *quod* þe grene kny3t, "*sir* Gawan, melykes,

Þat I schal fange at þy fust þat I haf frayst here;

392

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

396

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

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

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

"Where schulde I wale þe," *quod* Gauan, "where is þy place?

I wot neuer where þou wonyes, bi hym þat me wro3t,

400

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

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

Bot teche me truly þer-to, & telle me howe þou hattes,

& I schal ware alle my wyt to wyne me þeder,

[Fol. 96b.]

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

404

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

Quod þe gome in þe grene to Gawan þe hende,

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

"3if I þe telle trwly, quen I þe tape haue,

& þou me smopely hat3 smyten, smartly I þe teche

408

Of my hous, & my home, & myn owen nome,

þen may þou frayst my fare, & forwarde3 holde,

if I speak not at all, so much the better for thee.

& if I spende no speche, þenne spede3 þou þe better,

For þou may leng in þy londe, & layt no fyrre,

412

bot slokes;

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

Ta now þy grymme tole to þe,

& let se how þou cnoke3."

"Gladly *sir*, for soþe,"

416

Quod Gawan; his ax he strokes.

XIX.

The Green Knight

The grene knyȝt vpon grounde graypely hym dresses,
A littel lut *with* þe hede, þe lere he discouereȝ,
puts his long lovely locks aside and lays bare his neck.
His longe louelych lokkeȝ he layd ouer his croun.

420

Let þe naked nec to þe note schewe.
Gauan gripped to his ax, & gederes hit on hyȝt,
Þe kay fot on þe folde he be-fore sette,
Sir Gawayne lets fall his axe
Let hit doun lyȝtly lyȝt on þe naked,

424

Þat þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones,
and severs the head from the body.
& schrank þurȝ þe schyire grece, & scade hit *in* twynne,
Þat þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde.
The head falls to the earth.

Þe fayre hede fro þe halce hit [felle] to þe erpe,
Many kick it aside with their feet. 428

Þat fele hit foyned wyth her fete, þere hit forth roled;
Þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe grene;
The knight never falters;
& nawþer faltered ne fel þe freke neuer þe helder,
Bot styþly he start forth vpon styf schonkes,
he rushes forth, seizes his head, 432

& ru[n]yschly he raȝt out, þere as renkkeȝ stoden,
Laȝt to his lufly hed, & lyft hit vp sone;

& syþen bo3e3 to his blonk, þe brydel he cachche3,
 steps into the saddle,
 Steppe3 *in* to stel bawe & stryde3 alofte,
 holding the while the head in his hand by the hair, 436
 & his hede by þe here *in* his honde halde3;
 & as sadly þe segge hym *in* his sadel sette,
 As non vnhap had hym ayled, þa3 hedle3 he¹ we[re],
in stedde;
 and turns his horse about. 440
 He brayde his bluk² aboute,
 [Fol. 97.]
 Þat vgly bodi þat bledde,
 Moni on of hym had doute,
 Bi þat his resoun3 were redde.
¹ MS. ho. ² blunk (?).

XX.

444
 For þe hede in his honde he halde3 vp euen,
 The head lifts up its eyelids,
 To-ward þe derrest on þe dece he dresse3 þe face,
 & hit lyfte vp þe y3e-lydde3, & loked ful brode,
 and addresses Sir Gawayne; "Look thou, be ready to go as thou
 hast promised,
 & meled þus much *with* his muthe, as 3e may now here.
 448
 "Loke, Gawan, þou be graype to go as þou hette3,
 & layte as lelly til þou me, lude, fynde,
 and seek till thou findest me.
 As þou hat3 hette *in* þis halle, herande þise kny3tes;
 Get thee to the Green Chapel,

To þe grene chapel þou chose, I charge þe to fotte,
452

Such a dunt as þou hat3 dalt disserued þou habbe3,
there to receive a blow on New Year's morn.

To be 3ederly 3olden on nw 3eres morn;
þe kny3t of þe grene chapel men knowen me mony;
Fail thou never;

For-þi me forto fynde if þou frayste3, fayle3 þou neuer,
come, or recreant be called." 456

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

With a runisch rout þe rayne3 he torne3,
The Green Knight then rushes out of the hall, his head in his hand.
Halled out at þe hal-dor, his hed *in* his hande,
þat þe fyr of þe flynt fla3e fro fole houes.

460

To quat kyth he be-com, knwe non þere,
Neuermore þen þay wyste fram queþen he wat3 wonnen;
what þenne?

þe kyng & Gawen þare,
At that green one Arthur and Gawayne "laugh and grin." 464
At þat grene þay la3e & grenne,
3et breued wat3 hit ful bare,
A meruayl among þo menne.

XXI.

Arthur addresses the queen:

þa3 Arþer þe hende kyng at hert hade wonder,
468

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

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

"Dere dame, to day demay yow neuer;
Wel by-commes such craft vpon cristmasse,

472

Laykyng of enterlude3, to laze & to syng.
Among þise, kynde caroles of kny3te3 & ladye3;
I may now go to meat.

Neuer-þe-lece to my mete I may me wel dres,
For I haf sen a selly, I may not for-sake."

476

He glent vpon *sir* Gawen, & gaynly he sayde,
Sir Gawayne, hang up thine axe.

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

[Fol. 97b.]

& hit wat3 don abof þe dece, on doser to henge,
þer alle men for meruayl my3t on hit loke,

480

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

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

þenne þay bozed to a borde þise burnes to-geder,
þe kyng & þe gode kny3t, & kene men hem serued
Of alle dayntye3 double, as derrest my3t falle,

484

Wyth alle maner of mete & mynstralcie bope;
Wyth wele walt þay þat day, til worped an ende,
in londe.

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

Now þenk wel, *sir* Gawan,

488

For woþe þat þou ne wonde,
þis auenture forto frayn,
þat þou hat3 tan on honde.

[FYTTE THE SECOND.]

I.

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

This hanselle hat3 Arthur of auenturus on fyrst,

492

In 3onge 3er, for he 3erned 3elpyng to here,

Tha3 hym worde3 were wane, when pay to sete wenten;

Now ar pay stoken of sturne werk staf-ful her hond.

Gawan wat3 glad to be-gynne pose gomne3 in halle,

496

Bot þa3 þe ende be heuy, haf 3e no wonder;

For þa3 men ben mery in mynde, quen pay han mayn drynk,

The year passes full quickly and never returns.

A 3ere 3ernes ful 3erne, & 3elde3 neuer lyke,

þe forme to þe fynisment folde3 ful seldom.

500

For-þi þis 3ol ouer-3ede, & þe 3ere after,

& vche sesoun serlepes sued after oþer;

After Christmas comes the "crabbed Lenten."

After crysten-masse com þe crabbed lentoun,

þat frayste3 flesch wyth þe fysche & fode more symple

504

Bot þenne þe weder of þe worlde wyth wynter hit þrepe3,

Spring sets in and warm showers descend;

Colde clenge3 adoun, cloude3 vp-lyften,

Schyre schede3 þe rayn in schowre3 ful warme,

Falle3 vpon fayre flat, flowre3 þere schewen,

the groves become green, 508

Boþe grounde3 & þe greue3 grene ar her wede3,

birds build and sing,

Brydde3 busken to bylde, & bremlych syngen,
for joy of the summer that follows;
For solace of þe softe somer þat sues þer after,
bi bonk;
blossoms begin to bloom, 512
& blossom3 bolne to blowe,
Bi rawe3 rych & ronk,
and noble notes are heard in the woods
Þen note3 noble in-no3e,
[Fol. 98]
Ar herde in wod so wlonk.

II.

Then the soft winds of summer, 516
After þe sesoun of somer wyth þe soft wynde3,
Quen 3eferus syfle3 hym-self on sede3 & erbe3,
beautiful are the flowers wet with dew-drops.
Wela-wynne is þe wort þat woxes þer-oute.
When þe donkande dewe drope3 of þe leue3,
520
To bide a blyful blusch of þe bry3t sunne.
But harvest approaches soon,
Bot þen hy3es heruest, & hardenes hym sone.
Warne3 hym for þe wynter to wax ful rype;
and drives the dust about.
He dryues wyth dro3t þe dust for to ryse.
524
Fro þe face of þe folde to fly3e ful hy3e;
Wrope wynde of þe welkyn wrastele3 with þe sunne,
The leaves drop off the trees,
Þe leue3 lancen fro þe lynde, & ly3ten on þe grounde,

the grass becomes gray, and all ripens and rots.

& al grayes þe gres, þat grene wat3 ere;

528

Þenne al rype3 & rote3 þat ros vpon fyrst,

& þus 3irne3 þe 3ere *in* 3isterdaye3 mony,

Winter winds round again,

& wynter wynde3 a3ayn, as þe worlde aske3

no sage.

532

Til me3el-mas mone,

Wat3 cumen wyth wynter wage;

and then Sir Gawayne thinks of his dread journey.

Þen þenkke3 Gawan ful sone,

Of his anious uyage.

III.

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

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

540

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

After meat, Sir Gawayne thus speaks to his uncle:

For aftter mete, *with* mourmyng he mele3 to his eme,

544

& speke3 of his passage, & pertly he sayde,

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

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

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

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

[Fol. 98b.] 552

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

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

& mony oper menskful, *with* Mador de la Port.

556

Alle þis compayny of court com þe kyng nerre,
For to counseyl þe kny3t, with care at her hert;
Much sorrow prevails in the hall.

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

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

Þe kny3t mad ay god chere,
& sayde, "quat schuld I wonde,
Gawayne declares that he has nothing to fear. 564
Of destines derf & dere,
What may mon do bot fonde?"

¹ derne (?).

IV.

On the morn he asks for his arms.

He dowelle3 þer al þat day, and dresse3 on þe morn,
Aske3 erly hys arme3, & alle were þay bro3t
A carpet is spread on the floor, 568

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

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

572

& syþen a crafty capados, closed aloft,
Þat wyth a bry3t blaunner was bounden *with-inne*;
They set steel slices on his feet, and lap his legs in steel greaves.
Þenne set þay þe sabatoun3 vpon þe segge fote3,

His lege3 lapped *in* stel *with* luflych greue3,
 576
With polayne3 piched þer-to, policed ful clene,
 Aboute his kne3 knaged wyth knote3 of golde;
 Fair cuisses enclose his thighs,
 Queme quyssewes þen, þat coyntlych closed
 His thik þrawen þy3e3 *with* þwonges to-tachched;
 and afterwards they put on the steel habergeon, 580
 & syþen þe brawden bryne of bry3t stel rynges,
 Vmbe-weued þat wy3, vpon wlonk stuffe;
 well-burnished braces, elbow pieces, and gloves of plate.
 & wel bornyst brace vpon his bope armes,
With gode cowters & gay, & gloue3 of plate,
 584
 & alle þe godlych gere þat hym gayn schulde
 Þat tyde;
 Over all this is placed the coat armour.
 Wyth ryche cote armure,
 His spurs are then fixed,
 His gold spore3 spend *with* pryde,
 and his sword is attached to his side by a silken girdle. 588
 Gurde wyth a bront ful sure,
With silk sayn vmbe his syde.

V.

[Fol. 99a.]

Thus arrayed the knight hears mass,
 When he wat3 hasped *in* armes, his harnays wat3 ryche,
 Þe lest lachet ou[þ]er loupe lemed of golde;
 592
 So harnayst as he wat3 he herkne3 his masse,

Offred & honoured at þe heȝe auter;
and afterwards takes leave of Arthur and his court.

Syþen he comeȝ to þe kyng & to his cort fereȝ,
Lacheȝ lufly his leue at lordeȝ & ladyeȝ;

596

& þay hym kyst & conueyed, bikende hym to kryst.
By that time his horse Gringolet was ready,
Bi þat watȝ Gryngolet grayth, & gurde *with* a sadel,
þat glemed ful gayly *with* mony golde frenges,
Ay quere naylet ful nwe for þat note ryched;

600

þe brydel barred aboute, *with* bryȝt golde bounden;
the harness of which glittered like the "gleam of the sun."
þe apparayl of þe paytture, & of þe proude skyrteȝ,
þe cropore, & þe couertor, acorded wyth þe arsounȝ;
& al watȝ rayled on red ryche golde nayleȝ,

604

þat al glytered & glent as glem of þe sunne.
Then Sir Gawayne sets his helmet upon his head,
þenne hentes he þe holme, & hastily hit kysses,
þat watȝ stapled stifly, & stoffed wyth-inne:
Hit watȝ hyȝe on his hede, hasped bihynde,
fastened behind with a "urisoun," 608

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

Enbrawden & bounden wyth þe best gemmeȝ,
On brode sylkyn borde, & bryddeȝ on semeȝ,
As papiayeȝ paynted pernyng bitwene,

612

Tortors & trulofȝ entayled so þyk,
As mony burde þer aboute had ben *seuen* wynter
in tounȝ;
The circle around the helmet was decked with diamonds.

þe cercle watȝ more o prys,

616

þat vmbe-clypped hys croun,
Of diamaunteȝ a deuys,

Þat boþe were bryȝt & broun.

VI.

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

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

Wyth þe pentangel de-paynt of pure golde hweȝ;
He braydeȝ hit by þe baude-ryk, aboute þe hals keȝtes,
Þat biȝemed þe segge ſemlyly fayre.

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

& quy þe pentangel apendeȝ to þat prynce noble,
624

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

[Fol. 99b]

For hit is a figure þat haldeȝ fyue poynteȝ,
628

& vche lyne vmbe-lappeȝ & loukeȝ *in* oþer,
It is called the endless knot

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

For-þy hit acordeȝ to þis knyȝt, & to his cler armeȝ,
632

For ay faythful *in* fyue & ſere fyue ſypeȝ,
It well becomes the good Sir Gawayne,
Gawan watȝ for gode knawen, & as golde pured,
Voyded of vche vylany, wyth vertueȝ² *ennoumed*
in mote;

636
For-þy þe pen-tangel nwe

He ber *in* schelde & cote,
a knight the truest of speech and the fairest of form.
As tulk of tale most trwe,
& gentylest kny3t of lote.
¹ MS emdele3. ² MS verertue3

VII.

He was found faultless in his five wits. 640
Fyrst he wat3 funden fautle3 *in* his fyue wytte3,
& efte fayled neuer þe freke *in* his fyue fyngres,
His trust was in the five wounds.
& alle his afyaunce vpon folde wat3 *in* þe fyue wounde3
Þat Cryst ka3t on þe croys, as þe crede telle3;
644
& quere-so-euer þys mon *in* melly wat3 stad,
His þro þo3t wat3 *in* þat, þur3 alle oper þynge3,
Þat alle his forsnes he fong at þe fyue ioye3,
Þat þe hende heuen quene had of hir chylde;
648
At þis cause þe kny3t comlyche hade
The image of the Virgin was depicted upon his shield.
In þe more half of his schelde hir ymage depaynted,
Þat quen he blusched þerto, his belde neuer payred.
Þe fyrst¹ fyue þat I finde þat þe frek vsed,
652
Wat3 fraunchyse, & fela3schyp for-be² al þyng;
In cleanness and courtesy he was never found wanting,
His clannes & his cortaysye croked were neuer,
& pite, þat passe3 alle poynte3, þyse pure fyue
Were harder happed on þat hapel þen on any oper.
656

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

660

With-outen ende at any noke [a]i quere fynde,
Where-euer þe gomen bygan, or glod to an ende.
therefore was the endless knot fastened on his shield.
Per-fore on his schene schelde schapen wat³ þe knot,
þus alle wyth red golde vpon rede gowle³,

[Fol. 100] 664

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

Now grayped is Gawan gay,
Sir Gawayne seizes his lance and bids all "good day."
& laȝt his launce ryȝt þore,

668

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

¹ MS fyft. ² for-bi (?).

VIII.

He spurs his horse and goes on his way.

He sperred þe sted *with* þe spure³, & sprong on his way,
So stif þat þe ston fyr stroke out þer-after;
All that saw that seemly one mourned in their hearts. 672
Al þat seȝ þat semly syked *in* hert,
& sayde soply al same segges til oþer,
Carande for þat comly, "bi Kryst, hit is scape,
þat þou, leude, schal be lost, þat art of lyf noble!
They declared that his equal was not to be found upon earth. 676

To fynde hys fere vpon folde, *in* fayth is not epe;
Warloker to haf wro3t had more wyt bene,
& haf dy3t 3onder dere a duk to haue worped;
It would have been better for him to have been a leader of men,
A lowande leder of lede3 *in* londe *hym* wel seme3,
680

& so had better haf ben *pen* britned to no3t,
than to die by the hands of "an elvish man."
Hadet wyth an aluisch mon, for angarde3 pryde.
Who knew euer any kyng such counsel to take,
As kny3te3 *in* caueloun3 on cryst-masse gomne3!"
Much was the warm water that poured from eyes that day. 684
Wel much wat3 *pe* warme water *pat* waltered of y3en,
When *pat* semly syre so3t fro *po* wone3
*pat*¹ daye;
He made non abode,
688

Bot wy3tly went hys way,
Meanwhile many a weary way goes Sir Gawayne.
Mony wylsum way he rode,
Pe bok as I herde say.
¹ MS. *pad*.

IX.

Now rides the knight through the realms of England.
Now ride3 *pis* renk *pur3* *pe* ryalme of Logres,
692
Sir Gauan on Gode3 halue, *pa3* *hym* no gomen *po3t*;
Oft, leudle3 alone, he lenge3 on ny3te3,
Per he fonde no3t *hym* byfore *pe* fare *pat* he lyked;
He has no companion but his horse.

Hade he no fere bot his fole, bi frytheȝ & douneȝ,
696

Ne no gome bot God, bi gate wyth to karp,
No men does he see till he approaches North Wales.

Til þat he neȝed ful noghe¹ in to þe Norþe Waleȝ;
Alle þe iles of Anglesay on lyft half he haldeȝ,
& fareȝ ouer þe fordeȝ by þe for-londeȝ,
From Holyhead he passes into Wirral. 700

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

There he finds but few that loved God or man.

Þat auþer God oþer gome wyth goud hert louied.
& ay he frayned, as he ferde, at frekeȝ þat he met,
He enquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel, 704
If þay hade herde any karp of a knyȝt grene,
In any grounde þer-about, of þe grene chapel;²
& al nykked hym wyth nay, þat neuer in her lyue
but can gain no tidings of him.

Þay seȝe neuer no segge þat watȝ of suche hweȝ
708
of grene.

Þe knyȝt tok gates straunge,
In mony a bonk vnbene,
His cheer oft changed before he found the Chapel.
His cher ful oft con chaunge,

712
Þat chapel er he myȝt sene.

¹ nyghe (?). ² MS. clapel.

Many a cliff he climbed over;

Mony klyf he ouer-clambe *in* contraye3 straunge,

Fer floten fro his frende3 fremedly he ryde3;

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

At vche warpe oper water þer þe wy3e passed,

716

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

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

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

So mony meruayl hi mount þer þe mon fynde3,

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

with serpents, wolves, and wild men; 720

Sumwhyle wyth worme3 he werre3, & *with* wolues als,

Sumwhyle wyth wodwos, þat woned *in* þe knarre3,

with bulls, bears, and boars.

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

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

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

724

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

Douteles he hade ben ded, & dreped ful ofte.

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

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

When þe colde cler water fro þe cloude3 schadden,

728

& fres er hit falle my3t to þe fale erþe;

Ner slayn wyth þe slete he sleped *in* his yrnes,

Mo ny3te3 þen *in*-noghe *in* naked rokke3,

Þer as claterande fro þe crest þe colde borne renne3,

732

& henged he3e ouer his hede *in* hard ysse-ikkles.

Thus in peril he travels till Christmas-eve.

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

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

al one;

736

Þe kny3t wel þat tyde,

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

To Mary made his mone.

þat ho *hym* red to ryde,

[Fol. 101.]

& wysse *hym* to *sum* wone.

XI.

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

Bi a moun^{te} on þe morne meryly he rydes,

Into a forest ful dep, þat ferly wat³ wylde,

Hi³e hille³ on vche a halue, & holt wode³ vnder,

where were old oaks many a hundred.

Of hore oke³ fill hoge a hundreth to-geder;

744

þe hasel & þe ha³-borne were harled al samen,

With ro³e raged mosse rayled ay-where,

Many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold.

With mony brydde³ vnblyþe vpon bare twyges,

þat pitosly þer piped for pyne of þe colde.

748

þe gome vpon Gryngolet glyde³ hem vnder,

Through many a mire he goes, that he may celebrate the birth of Christ.

þur³ mony misy & myre, mon al *hym* one,

Carande for his costes, lest he ne keuer schulde,

To se þe seruy¹ of þat syre, þat on þat self ny³t

752

Of a burde wat³ borne, oure baret to quelle;

He beseeches the Virgin Mary to direct him to some lodging where he may hear mass.

& þerfore sykyng he sayde, "I be-seche þe, lorde,

& Mary, þat is myldest moder so dere.
Of *sum* herber, þer he3ly I my3t here masse.

756

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

He rode *in* his prayere,

760

& cryed for his mysdede,
Blessing himself, he says, "Cross of Christ, speed me!"
He sayned *hym in* sypes sere,
& sayde "cros Kryst me spede!"
1 seruyce (?).

XII.

Scarcely had he blessed himself thrice

Nade he sayned *hym-self*, segge, bot þrye,

764

Er he wat3 war *in* þe wod of a won *in* a mote.
when he saw a dwelling in the wood, set on a hill,
Abof a launde, on a lawe, loken vnder bo3e3,
Of mony borelych bole, aboute bi þe diches;
the comeliest castle that knight ever owned.

A castel þe comlokest þat euer kny3t a3te,

768

Pyched on a prayere, a park al aboute,
With a pyked palays, pyned ful þik,
þat vmbe-te3e mony tre mo þen two myle.
þat holde on þat on syde þe hapel auysed,
It shone as the sun through the bright oaks. 772
As hit schemered & schon þur3 þe schyre oke3;

Þenne hat3 he hendly of his helme, & he3ly he þonke3
Iesus & say[nt] Gilyan, þat gentyle ar bope,
[Fol. 101*b*.]

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

"Now bone hostel," cope þe burne, "I be-seche yow 3ette!"
Þenne gedere3 he to Gryngolet *with* þe gilt hele3,
Sir Gawayne goes to the chief gate,
& he ful chauncely hat3 chosen to þe chef gate,
Þat bro3t bremly þe burne to þe bryge ende,

780
in haste;
and finds the draw-bridge raised, and the gates shut fast.
Þe bryge wat3 breme vp-brayde,
Þe 3ate3 wer stoken faste,
Þe walle3 were wel arayed,

784
Hit dut no wynde3 blaste.

XIII.

The knight abides on the bank,
Þe burne bode on bonk, þat on blonk houed,
Of þe depe double dich þat drof to þe place,
Þe walle wod *in* þe water wonderly depe,
and observes the "huge height," 788
Ande eft a ful huge he3t hit haled vpon lofte,
Of harde hewen ston vp to þe table3,
with its battlements and watch towers.
Enbaned vnder þe abataylment, *in* þe best lawe;
& syþen garyte3 ful gaye gered bi-twene,
792

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

Bright and long were its round towers,
Towre telded bytwene trochet ful þik,

796

Fayre fylyoleȝ þat fyȝed, & ferlyly long,
with their well-made capitals.

With coruon coprounes, craftyly sleȝe;
Chalk whyt chymnees þer ches he *in-noȝe*,
Vpon bastel roueȝ, þat blenked ful quyte;

800

So mony pynakle payntet watȝ poudred ay quere,
Among þe castel carneleȝ, clambred so þik,
Þat pared out of papure purely hit semed.

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

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

804

If he myȝt keuer to com þe cloyster wyth-inne,
To herber *in* þat hostel, whyl halyday lested
auinant;

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

He calde, & sone þer com

808

A porter pure plesaunt,
On þe wal his ernd he nome,
& haylsed þe knyȝt erraunt.

XIV.

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

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

To þe he3 lorde of þis hous, herber to craue?"
[Fol. 102.]

"3e, Peter," *quod* þe porter, "& purely I trowe,¹
"You are welcome to dwell here as long as you like," replied the
porter.

Þat 3e be, wy3e, welcum to won quyle yow lyke3."
Þen 3ede þat wy3e a3ayn awyþe,
816

& folke frely hym wyth, to fonge þe kny3t;
The draw-bridge is let down,
Þay let doun þe grete dra3t, & derely out 3eden,
& kneled doun on her knes vpon þe colde erþe,
To welcum þis ilk wy3, as worpy hom þo3t;
and the gate is opened wide to receive him. 820

Þay 3olden hym þe brode 3ate, 3arked vp wyde,
& he hem raysed rekenly, & rod ouer þe brygge;
Sere segge3 hym sesed by sadel, quel² he ly3t,
His horse is well stabled.

& syþen stabeled his stede stif men *in-no3e*.
Knights and squires bring Gawayne into the hall. 824

Kny3te3 & swyere3 comen doun þenne,
For to bryng þis burne³ wyth blys *in-to* halle;
Many a one hastens to take his helmet and sword.
Quen he hef vp his helme, þer hized *in-noghe*
For to hent hit at his honde, þe hende to seruen,

828
His bronde & his blasoun bope þay token.
Þen haylsed he ful hendly þo hapele3 vch one,
& mony proud mon þer presed, þat prynce to honour;
Alle hasped *in* his he3 wede to halle þay hym wonnen,

832
Þer fayre fyre vpon flet fersly brenned.
The lord of the country bids him welcome,
Þenne þe lorde of þe lede loute3 fro his chambre,
For to mete wyth menske þe mon on þe flor;

He sayde, "3e ar welcum to welde as yow lyke3,
 836
 Þat here is, al is yowre awen, to haue at yowre wyll
 & welde."
 "Graunt mercy," *quod* Gawayn,
 "Þer Kryst hit yow for-3elde,"
 and they embrace each other. 840
 As freke3 þat semed fayn,
 Ayþer oþer *in* arme3 con felde.
¹ trowoe, MS. ² quyle (?) or quen (?). ³ buurne, MS.

XV.

Gawayne looks on his host;
 Gawayn gly3t on þe gome þat godly hym gret,
 a big bold one he seemed.
 & þu3t hit a bolde burne þat þe bur3 a3te,
 844
 A hoge hapel for þe none3, & of hyghe elde;¹
 Beaver-hued was his broad beard,
 Brode bry3t wat3 his berde, & al beuer hwed,
 Sturne stif on þe stryþpe on stal-worth schonke3,
 and his face as "fell as the fire."
 Felle face as þe fyre, & fre of hys speche;
 848
 & wel hym semed for soþe, as þe segge þu3t,
 To lede a lortschyp *in* lee of leude3 ful gode.
 [Fol. 102*b*.]
 The lord leads Gawayne to a chamber, and assigns him a page to
 wait upon him.
 Þe lorde hym charred to a chambre, & chefly cumaunde3²
 To delyuer hym a leude, hym lo3ly to serue;

852

& pere were boun at his bode burne3 *in-no3e*,
In this bright bower was noble bedding;
Pat bro3t hym to a bry3t boure, per beddyng wat3 noble,
Of cortynes of clene sylk, wyth cler golde hemme3,
the curtains were of pure silk with golden hems;
& couertore3 ful curious, *with* comlych pane3,

856

Of bry3t blaunnier a-boue enbrawdred bisyde3,
Rudele3 rennande on rope3, red golde rynges3,
Tarsic tapestries covered the walls and the floor.
Tapyte3 ty3t to pe wo3e, of tuly & tars,
& vnder fete, on pe flet, of fol3ande sute.
Here the knight doffed his armour, 860
Per he wat3 dispoyled, wyth speche3 of myerpe,
Pe burn of his bruny, & of his bry3t wede3;
and put on rich robes,
Ryche robes ful rad renkke3 hem³ bro3ten,
For to charge, & to chaunge, & chose of pe best.

864

Sone as he on hent, & happed per-inne,
Pat sete on hym⁴ semly, wyth saylande skyrte3,
which well became him.
Pe ver by his uisage verayly hit semed
Wel ne3 to vche hapel alle on hwes,

868

Lowande & lufly, alle his lymme3 vnder,
A more comely knight Christ never made.
Pat a comloker kny3t neuer Kryst made,
hem po3t;
Whepen *in* worlde he were,

872

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

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

XVI.

A chair is placed for Sir Gawayne before the fireplace.

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

Wat3 grayped for *sir* Gawan, grayþely *with* cloþe3,
Whyssynes vpon queldepoyntes, þa[t] koynt wer boþe;
A mantle of fine linen, richly embroidered, is thrown over him.
& þenne a mere mantyle wat3 on þat mon cast,
Of a broun bleeaunt, enbrauded ful ryche,

880
& fayre furred wyth-inne *with* felle3 of þe best,
Alle of ermyn *in* erde, his hode of þe same;
& he sete *in* þat settel semlych ryche,
& achaufed hym chefly,¹ & þenne his cher mended.

A table is soon raised, 884

Sone wat3 telded vp a tapit, on treste3 ful fayre,
and the knight, having washed, proceeded to meat.
Clad wyth a clene cloþe, þat cler quyt schewed,
Sanap, & salure, & syluer-*in* spone3;

[Fol. 103.]

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

Segge3 hym serued semly *in*-no3e,
He is served with numerous dishes;

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

Summe baken *in* bred, summe brad on þe glede3,
or boiled and seasoned with spices. 892

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

Þe freke calde hit a fest ful frely & ofte,
He calls it a full noble feast,

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

as hende;

"Þis penaunce now 3e take,

& eft hit schal amende;"

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

Þat mon much merþe con make.

900

For wyn in his hed þat wende.

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

XVII.

Sir Gawayne, in answer to questions put to him,

Þenne wat³ spyed & spured vpon spare wyse.

Bi preue poynte³ of þat prynce, put to hym-seluen,

Þat he be-knew cortaysly of þe court þat he were,

tells the prince that he is of Arthur's court. 904

Þat apel Arthure þe hende halde³ hym one,

Þat is þe ryche ryal kyng of þe rounde table;

& hit wat³ Wawen hym-self þat in þat won sytte³,

Comen to þat krystmasse, as case hym þen lymped.

When this was made known, 908

When þe lorde hade lerned þat he þe leude hade,

Loude lazed he þerat, so lef hit hym þo³t,

great was the joy in the hall.

& alle þe men in þat mote maden much joye,

To apere in his presense prestly þat tyme,

912

Þat alle prys, & prowes, & pured þewes

Apendes to hys persoun, & praysed is euer,

By-fore alle men vpon molde, his mensk is þe most.

Each one said softly to his mate,
 Vch segge ful softly sayde to his fere,
 "Now we shall see courteous manners and hear noble speech, 916
 "Now schal we semlych se sle3te3 of þewe3,
 & þe teccheles termes of talkyng noble,
 Wich spede is *in* speche, vnspurd may we lerne,
 for we have amongst us the 'father of nurture.'
 Syn we haf fonged þat fyne fader of nurture;
 920
 God hat3 geuen *vus* his *grace* godly for soþe,
 Þat such a gest as Gawan graunte3 *vus* to haue,
 When burne3 blyþe of his burþe schal sitte
 & synge.
 924
In menyng of manere3 mere,
 [Fol. 103*b*.]
 Þis burne now schal *vus* bryng,
 He that may him hear shall learn of love-talking."
 I hope þat may hym here,
 Schal lerne of luf-talkyng."

XVIII.

After dinner the company go to the chapel, 928
 Bi þat þe diner wat3 done, & þe dere vp,
 Hit wat3 ne3 at þe niy3t ne3ed þe tyme;
 Chaplayne3¹ to þe chapeles chosen þe gate,
 Rungen ful rychely, ry3t as þay schulden,
 to hear the evensong of the great season. 932
 To þe hersum euensong of þe hy3e tyde.
 Þe lorde loutes þerto, & þe lady als,
 In-to a comly closet coyntly ho entre3;

Gawan glyde3 ful gay, & gos þeder sone;

936

Þe lorde laches hym by þe lappe, & lede3 hym to sytte,

& couply hym knowe3, & calle3 hym his nome,

& sayde he wat3 þe welcomest wy3e of þe worlde;

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

& he hym þonkked þroly, & ayþer halched oper.

940

& seten soberly samen þe seruisse-quyle;

Þenne lyst þe lady to loke on þe kny3t.

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

Þenne com ho of hir closet, *with* mony cler burde3,

Ho wat3 þe fayrest *in* felle, of flesche & of lyre,

944

& of compas, & colour, & costes of alle oper,

She appeared even fairer than Guenever.

& wener þen Wenore, as þe wy3e þo3t.

He ches þur3 þe chaunsel, to cheryche þat hende;

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

An oper lady hir lad bi þe lyft honde,

948

Þat wat3 alder þen ho, an auncian hit semed,

& he3ly honowred *with* hapele3 aboute.

Very unlike were these two.

Bot yn-lyke on to loke þo ladyes were,

if the young one was fair the other was yellow,

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

952

Riche red on þat on rayled ay quere,

and had rough and wrinkled cheeks.

Rugh ronkled cheke3 þat oper on rolled;

Kerhofes of þat on wyth mony cler perle3

The younger had breast and throat "bare displayed."

Hir brest & hir bry3t þrote bare displayed,

956

Schon schyrer þen snawe, þat scheduler² on hille3;

Þat oper wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre,

Chymbled ouer hir blake chyn *with* mylk-quyte vayles,
The ancient one exposed only her "black brows," her two eyes,
Hir frount folden *in* sylk, enfoubled ay quere,

960

Toret & treieted *with* tryfle3 aboute,
[Fol. 104.]

nose, and naked lips, all sour and bleared.

Pat no3t wat3 bare of pat burde bot þe blake bro3es.

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

& þose were soure to se, & sellyly blered;

964

A mensk lady on molde mon may hir calle,
for gode;

Her body was short and thick;

Hir body wat3 schort & þik.

her buttocks broad and round.

Hir buttoke3 bay & brode,

968

More lykker-wys on to lyk,

Wat3 pat scho hade on lode.

¹ MS. [claplayne3.] ² schedes (?).

XIX.

With permission of the lord,

When Gawayn gly3t on þat gay, þat *graciously* loked,

Wyth leue la3t of þe lorde he went hem a3aynes;

Sir Gawayne salutes the elder, 972

Þe alder he haylses, heldande ful lowe,

Þe loueloker he lappe3 a lyttel *in* arme3,

but the younger he kisses,

He kysses hir comlyly, & kny3tly he mele3;

þay kallen hym of a quoyntaunce, & he hit quyk aske3
and begs to be her servant. 976

To be her seruau^{nt} sothly, if hem-self lyked.

þay tan hym bytwene hem, wyth talkyng hym leden
To chamber all go,

To chambre, to chemné, & chefly þay asken
where spices and wine are served.

Spyce3, þat vn-sparely men speded hom to bryng,
980

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

þe lorde luflych aloft lepe3 ful ofte,

Mynned merthe to be made vpon mony sy^pe3.

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

Hent he3ly of his hode, & on a spere hinged,
984

& wayned hom to wyⁿne þe worchip þer-of,

He who makes most mirth is to win it.

þat most myrþe my3t mene¹ þat crystenmas whyle;

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

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

988

þus wyth la3ande lote3 þe lorde hit tayt² make3,
Night approaches, and then

For to glade *sir* Gawayn with gomne3 in halle

þat ny3t;

Til þat hit wat3 tyme,

992

þe kyng comaundet ly3t,

Sir Gawayne takes his leave and retires to rest.

Sir Gawen his leue con nyme,

& to his bed hym di3t.

¹ meue (?). ² layt (?).

On Christmas morn,

On þe morne, as vch mon myne3 þat tyme,
joy reigns in every dwelling in the world. 996

[Þ]at dry3tyn for oure destyné to de3e wat3 borne,
Wele waxe3 *in* vche a won *in* worlde, for his sake;
So did it in the castle where our knight abode.

So did hit þere on þat day, þur3 dayntes mony;
[Fol. 104*b*.]

Boþe at mes & at mele, messes ful quaynt
1000

Derf men vpon dece drest of þe best.
The lord and "the old ancient wife" sit together.
þe olde auncian wyf he3est ho sytte3;
þe lorde lufly her by lent, as I trowe;
Gawayne sits by the wife of his host.

Gawan & þe gay burde to-geder þay seten,
1004

Euen *in*-mydde3, as þe messe metely come;
& syþen þur3 al þe sale, as hem best semed,
It were too tedious to tell of the meat, the mirth, and the joy that
abounded everywhere.

Bi vche grome at his degre grayþely wat3 serued.
þer wat3 mete, þer wat3 myrþe, þer wat3 much ioye,
1008

þat for to telle þerof hit me tene were,
& to poynte hit 3et I pynded me *parauenture*;
Gawayne and his beautiful companion derive much comfort from
each other's conversation.

Bot 3et I wot þat Wawen & þe wale burde
Such comfort of her compaynye ca3ten to-geder,
1012

þur3 her dere dalyaunce of her derne worde3,
Wyth clene cortays carp, closed fro fylþe;
& hor play wat3 passande vche prynce gomen,
in vayres;

Trumpets and nakers give forth their sounds. 1016
Trumpe3 & nakerys,

Much pypyng þer repayres,
Vche mon tented hys,
& þay two tented þayres.

XXI.

Great was the joy for three days. 1020

Much dut wat3 þer dryuen þat day & þat oper,
& þe pryð as þro þronge in þerafter;
St. John's-day was the last of the Christmas festival.
Þe ioie of sayn lone3 day wat3 gentyle to here,
& wat3 þe last of þe layk, leude3 þer þo3ten.

1024

Þer wer gestes to go vpon þe gray morne,
For-þy wonderly þay woke, & þe wyn dronken,
Daunsed ful dre3ly wyth dere carole3;
On the morrow many of the guests took their departure from the
castle.

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

Vchon to wende on his way, þat wat3 wy3e stronge.
Gawan gef hym god-day, þe god mon hym lachche3,
Ledes hym to his awen chambre, þ[e] chymné bysyde,
Sir Gawayne is thanked by his host for the honour and pleasure of
his visit.

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

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

"I-wysse *sir*, quyl I leue, me worþe3 þe better,
[Fol. 105.] 1036

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

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

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

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

1040

As I am halden þer-to, in hy3e & in lo3e,

bi ri3t."

He endeavours to keep the knight at his court.

Þe lorde fast can hym payne,

To holde lenger þe kny3t,

1044

To hym answe3 Gawayn,

Bi non way þat he my3t.

¹ þat (?). ² nerci, in MS.

XXII.

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

Then frayned þe freke ful fayre at him-seluen,

Quat derne¹ dede had hym dryuen, at þat dere tyme,
1048

So kenly fro þe kyngeʒ kourt to kayre al his one,

Er þe halidayeʒ holly were halet out of toun?

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

"For soþe *sir*," *quod* þe segge, "ʒe sayn bot þe trawþe

A heʒe ernde & a hasty me hade fro þo woneʒ,
1052

For I am sumned my selfe to sech to a place,

I wot² *in* worlde wheder warde to wende, hit to fynde;

I nolde, bot if I hit negh myʒt on nwʒeres morne,

For alle þe londe *in*-wyth Logres, so me oure lorde help!
1056

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

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

Þat ʒe me telle *with* trawþe, if euer ʒe tale herde

Of þe grene chapel, quere hit on grounde stondeʒ,

& of þe knyʒt þat hit kepes, of colour of grene?
1060

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

To mete þat mon at þat mere, ʒif I myʒt last;

& of þat ilk nwʒere hot naked now wonteʒ,

& I wolde loke on þat lede, if God me let wolde,
1064

Gladloker, bi Godde3 *sun*, þen any god welde!
 For-þi, I-wysse, bi 3owre wyllle, wende me bi-houes,
 He would as lief die as fail in his errand.
 Naf I now to busy bot bare pre daye3,
 & me als fayn to falle feye as fayly of myyn ernde."
 The prince tells Sir Gawayne that he will teach him the way. 1068
 Þenne la3ande *quod* þe lorde, "now leng þe by-houes,
 For I schal teche yow to þa[t] terme bi þe tyme3 ende,
 Þe grene chapayle vpon grounde, greue yow no more;
 Bot 3e schal be *in* yowre bed, burne, at þyn ese,
 1072
 Quyle forth dayej, & ferk on pe fyrst of pe 3ere,
 [Fol. 105*b*]
 & cum to þat merk at mydmorn, to make quat yow like3
 in spenne;
 Dowelle3 whyle new 3eres daye,
 1076
 & rys, & rayke3 þenne,
 The Green chapel is not more than two miles from the castle.
 Mon schal yow sette *in* waye,
 Hit is not two myle henne."
¹ derue (?). ² not (?).

XXIII.

Then was Gawayne glad,
 Þenne wat3 Gawan ful glad, & gomenly he la3ed,—
 1080
 "Now I þonk yow þryuandely þur3 alle oper þynge,
 and consents to tarry awhile at the castle.
 Now acheued is my chaunce, I schal at *your* wyllle
 Dowelle, & elle3 do quat 3e demen."

Penne sesed hym þe syre, & set hym bysyde,
The ladies are brought in to solace him. 1084
Let þe ladie3 be fette, to lyke hem þe better;
Per wat3 seme solace by hem-self stille;
Þe lorde let for luf lote3 so myry,
As wy3 þat wolde of his wyte, ne wyst quat he my3t.

1088

Penne he carped to þe kny3t, criande loude,
The lord of the castle asks the knight to grant him one request;
"3e han demed to do þe dede þat I bidde;
Wyl 3e halde þis hes here at þys one3?"
"3e *sir*, for-soþe," sayd þe segge trwe,

1092

"Whyl I byde *in* yowre bor3e, be bayn to 3ow[r]e hest."
"For 3e haf trauayled," *quod* þe tulk, "toven fro ferre,
& syþen waked me wyth, 3e arn not wel waryst,
That he will stay in his chamber during mass time,
Nauper of sostnaunce ne of slepe, soply I knowe;

1096

3e schal lenge *in your* lofte, & ly3e *in your* ese,
and then go to meat with his hostess.
To morn quyle þe messe-quyle, & to mete wende,
When 3e wyl, wyth my wyf, þat wyth yow schal sitte,
& comfort yow *with* compayny, til I to cort torne,

1100

3e lende;
& I schal erly ryse,
On *huntyng* wyl I wende."
Gawayne accedes to his request.
Gauayn grante3 alle þyse,

1104

Hym heldande, as þe hende.

XXIV.

"Whatsoever," says the host, "I win in the wood shall be yours,
"3et firre," *quod* þe freke, "a forwarde we make;
Quat-so-euer I wyne in þe wod, hit worþe3 to youre3,
and what check you achieve shall be mine."

& quat chek so 3e acheue, chaunge me þer-forne;
1108

Swete, swap we so, sware *with* trawþe,
Queþer, leude, so lymþ lere oþer better."

"Bi God," *quod* Gawayn þe gode, "I *grant* þer-tylle,
[Fol. 106.]

& þat yow lyst forto layke, lef hit me þynkes.
A bargain is made between them. 1112

"Who bringe3 *vus* þis beuerage, þis bargayn is maked:"
So sayde þe lorde of þat lede; þay la3ed vchone,
þay dronken, & daylyeden, & dalten vnty3tel,¹
þise lorde3 & ladye3, quyle þat hem lyked;

1116
& syþen *with* frenkysch fare & fele fayre lote3
þay stoden, & stemed, & styilly speken,
Kysten ful comlyly, & ka3ten her leue.

Night approaches and each "to his bed was brought at the last."
With mony leude ful ly3t, & lemande torches,

1120
Vche burne to his bed wat3 bro3t at þe laste,
ful softe;
To bed 3et er þay 3ede,
Recorded couenaunte3 ofte;

1124
þe olde lorde of þat leude,²
Cowþe wel halde layk a-lofte.

¹ vntyl ny3te (?). ² lede (?).

[FYTTE THE THIRD.]

I.

Before day-break folks uprise,
Ful erly bifore þe day þe folk vp-rysen,
Gestes þat go wolde, hor grome3 þay calden,
saddle their horses, and truss their mails. 1128
& þay busken vp bilyue, blonkke3 to sadel,
Tyffen he[r] takles, trussen her males,
Richen hem þe rychest, to ryde alle arayde,
Lepen vp ly3tly, lachen her brydeles,
Each goes where it pleases him best. 1132
Vche wy3e on his way, þer hym wel lyked.
The noble lord of the land arrays himself for riding.
þe leue lorde of þe londe wat3 not þe last,
A-rayed for þe rydyng, *with* renkke3 ful mony;
He eats a sop hastily and goes to mass.
Ete a sop hastyly, when he hade herde masse,
1136
With bugle to bent felde he buske3 by-lyue;
Before day-light he and his men are on their horses.
By þat þat any day-ly3t lemed vpon erþe,
He *with* his hapeles on hy3e horsses weren.
Then the hounds are called out and coupled.
þenne þise cacheres þat coupe, cowpled hor hounde3,
1140
Vnclosed þe kenel dore, & calde hem þer-oute,
Three short notes are blown by the bugles.
Blwe bygly *in* bugle3 þre bare mote;
Braches bayed þerfore, & breme noyse maked,
A hundred hunters join in the chase.
& þay chastysed, & charred, on chasyng þat went;
1144
A hundreth of hunteres, as I haf herde telle,
of þe best;

To the stations the "fewters" go,
To trystors vewters 3od,
Couples huntres of kest,
[Fol. 106*b*.] 1148
Der ros for blaste3 gode,
and the dogs are cast off.
Gret rurd *in* þat forest.

II.

Roused by the clamour the deer rush to the heights,
At þe fyrst quethe of þe quest quaked þe wylde;
Der drof *in* þe dale, doted for drede,
1152
Hized to þe hy3e, bot heterly þay were
but are soon driven back.
Restayed *with* þe stablye, þat stoutly ascryed;
The harts and bucks are allowed to pass,
Þay let þe hertte3 haf þe gate, *with* þe hy3e hedes,
Þe breme bukke3 also, *with* hor brode paume3;
1156

For þe fre lorde hade de-fende *in* fermysoun tyme,
Þat þer schulde no mon mene¹ to þe male dere.
but the hinds and does are driven back to the shades.
Þe hinde3 were halden *in*, *with* hay & war,
Þe does dryuen *with* gret dyn to þe depe slade3;
1160
Der my3t mon se, as þay slypte, slentyng of arwes,
As they fly they are shot by the bowmen.
At vche [þat] wende vnder wande wapped a flone,
Þat bigly bote on þe broun, *with* ful brode hede3,
The hounds and the hunters, with a loud cry, follow in pursuit.

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

1164

& ay rachches *in* a res radly hem fol3es,

Huntere3 wyth hy3e horne hasted hem after,

Those that escaped the arrows are killed by the hounds.

Wyth such a crakkande kry, as klyffes haden brusten;

What wylde so at-waped wy3es þat schotten,

1168

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

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

Þe lede3 were so lerned at þe lo3e trysteres,

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

1172

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

þer ry3t.

The lord waxes joyful in the chase,

Þe lorde for blys abloy

Ful oft con launce & ly3t,

which lasted till the approach of night. 1176

& drof þat day wyth loy

Thus to þe derk ny3t.

¹ meue (?).

III.

All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Þus layke3 þis lorde by lynde wode3 eue3,

& G. þe god mon, *in* gay bed lyge3,

under "coverture full clear". 1180

Lurkke3 quyl þe day-ly3t lemed on þe woves,

Vnder couertour ful clere, cortyned aboute;

& as *in* slomeryng he slode, sle3ly he herde

He hears a noise at his door.

A littel dyn at his dor, & derfly vpon;

1184

& he heue3 vp his hed out of þe clopes,

[Fol. 107.]

A corner of þe cortyn he ca3t vp a lyttel,

& wayte3 warly þider-warde, quat hit be my3t.

A lady, the loveliest to behold, enters softly.

Hit wat3 þe ladi, loflyest to be-holde,

1188

Þat dro3 þe dor after hir ful dernly¹ & styлле,

She approaches the bed.

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

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

Gawayne pretends to be asleep.

& ho stepped stilly. & stel to his bedde,

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

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

& set hir ful softly on þe bed-syde,

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

Þe lede lay lurked a ful longe quyle,

Gawayne has much wonder thereat. 1196

Compast *in* his concience to quat þat cace my3t

Mene oper amount, to meruayle hym þo3t;

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

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

He rouses himself up, 1200

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

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

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

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

with hande;

1204

Wyth chynne & cheke ful swete,

Boþe quit & red *in-blande*,

Ful lufly con ho lete,

Wyth lyppe3 smal la3ande.

¹ deruly (?).

IV.

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

"God moroun, *sir* Gawayn," sayde þat fayr lady,
"3e ar a sleper vn-sly3e, þat mon may slyde hider;
Now ar 3e tan astyt, bot true *vus* may schape,
I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure."
I schal bynde yow *in your* bedde, þat be 3e trayst:"

1212

Al la3ande þe lady lanced þo bourde3.
"Good morrow," says the knight, "I am well pleased to be at your service;

"Goud moroun g[aye],"¹ *quod* Gawayn þe blype,
"Me schal worpe at *your* wille, & þat me wel lyke3,
For I 3elde me 3ederly, & 3e3e after grace,
1216
& þat is þe best, be my dome, for me by-houe3 nede;"
& þus he bourded a-3ayn *with* mony a blype la3ter.
but permit me to rise and dress myself."

"Bot wolde 3e, lady louely, þen leue me grante,
& de-prece *your* prysoun, & pray hym to ryse,
1220

I wolde bo3e of þis bed, & busk me better,
I schulde keuer þe more comfort to karp yow wyth."
[Fol. 107b]

"Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one,
"Nay, for soþe, beau *sir*," sayd þat swete,
"3e schal not rise of *your* bedde, I rych yow better,
"I shall hold talk with you here. 1224

I schal happe yow here þat oper half als,
& syþen karp wyth my knyȝt þat I kaȝt haue;
I know well that you are Gawayne that all the woild worships.

For I wene wel, Iwysse, *sir Wawen* ȝe are,
þat alle þe worlde worchipeȝ, quere-so ȝe ride;

1228

Your honour, your hendelayk is hendely praysed
We are by ourselves;

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

& now ȝe ar here, iwysse, & we bot oure one;
My lord and his men are far off.

"My lorde & his ledeȝ ar on lenþe faren,
Other men are in their beds, so are my maidens. 1232

Oper burneȝ *in* her bedde, & my burdeȝ als,
The door is safely closed.

þe dor drawen, & dit *with* a derf haspe;
Since I have him in house that every one likes, I shall use my time
well while it lasts.

& syþen I haue *in* þis hous hym þat al lykeȝ,
I schal ware my whyle wel, quyl hit lasteȝ,

1236

with tale;

Ye are welcome to my body.

ȝe ar welcum to my cors,

Yowre awen won to wale,

Me be-houeȝ of fyne force,

I shall be your servant." 1240

Your seruaunt be & schale."

¹ This word is illegible in the MS.

V.

"In god fayth," *quod* Gawayn, "gayn hit me þynkke3,
"I am unworthy," says Sir Gawayne, "to reach to such reverence as
ye rehearse.

þa3 I be not now he þat 3e of speken;
To reche to such reuerence as 3e reherce here

1244

I am wy3e vn-worpy, I wot wel my-seluen;
Bi God, I were glad, & yow god þo3t,
I shall be glad, however, to please you by word, or service."
At sa3e oþer at seruyce þat I sette my3t
To þe plesaunce of *your* prys, hit were a pure ioye."

1248

"In god fayth, *sir* Gawayn," *quod* þe gay lady,
"þe prys & þe prowes þat plese3 al oþer,
If I hit lakked, oþer set at ly3t, hit were littel daynté;
"There are ladies," says his visitor, "who would prefer thy company
Bot hit ar ladyes *in-no3e*, þat leuer wer nowþe

1252

Haf þe hende *in* hor holde, as I þe habbe here,
To daly witt derely *your* daynté worde3,
Keuer hem comfort, & colen her care3,
to much of the gold that they possess."

þen much of þe garysourn oþer golde þat¹ þay hauen;

1256

Bot I louue² þat ilk lorde þat þe lyfte halde3,
I haf hit holly *in* my honde þat al desyres,
þur3e grace."

Scho made hym so gret chere,

[Fol. 108.] 1260

þat wat3 so fayr of face,
The knight answers the lady's questions.

þe kny3t *with* speches skere,
A[n]swared to vche a cace.

¹ MS. þat þat. ² louie or loune (?).

VI.

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

"Madame," *quod* þe myry mon, "Mary yow 3elde,
1264
For I haf founden, *in* god fayth, yowre fraunchis nobele,
& oper ful much of oper folk fongen hor dede3;
Bot þe daynté þat þay delen for my disert nysen,
Hit is þe worchyp of *your*-self, þat no3t hot wel conne3."

The lady declares by Mary, 1268

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

1272
For þe costes þat I haf knowen vpun þe kny3t here,
Of bewté, & debonerté, & blyþe semblaunt,
she would select Gawayne before any man on earth.
& þat I haf er herkkened, & halde hit here trwee,
þer schulde no freke vpon folde bifore yow be chosen."

1276
"I-wysse, worpy," *quod* þe wy3e, "3e haf waled wel better,
Gawayne tells her that he will become her own knight and faithful servant.

Bot I am proude of þe prys þat 3e put on me,
& soberly *your* seruaunt my souerayn I holde yow,
& yowre kny3t I be-com, & Kryst yow for-3elde."

1280
þus þay meled of much-quat, til myd-morn paste,
& ay þe lady let lyk, a¹ hym loued mych;
The remembrance of his adventure prevents him from thinking of love.

Þe freke ferde *with* defence, & feted ful fayre.
 Þa3 I were burde bry3test, þe burde *in* mynde hade,
 1284
 Þe lasse luf *in* his lode, for lur þat he so3t,
 boute hone;
 Þe dunte þat schulde² hym deue,
 & nede3 hit most be done;
 The lady takes leave of Sir Gawayne. 1288
 Þe lady þenn spek of leue.
 He *granted* hir ful sone.
¹ and (?) ² sclulde, in MS.

VII.

With a laughing glance, she says,
 Þenne ho gef hym god-day, & wyth a glent la3ed.
 & as ho stod, ho stonyed hym wyth ful stor worde3:
 "I am doubtful whether ye be Gawayne. 1292
 "Now he þat spede3 vche spech, þis disport 3elde yow!
 Bot þat 3e be Gawan, hit got3 *in* mynde."
 "Quer-fore?" *quod* þe freke, & freschly he aske3,
 Ferde lest he hade fayled *in foume* of his castes;
 1296
 Bot þe burde hym blessed, & bi þis skyl sayde,
 [Fol. 108*b*.]
 "So god as Gawayn gaynly is halden,
 & cortaysye is closed so clene *in* hym-seluen,
 Were it he, surely, ere this, he would have craved a kiss."
 Couth not ly3tly haf lenged so long wyth a lady,
 1300
 Bot he had craued a cosse, bi his *courtaysye*,
 Bi *sum* towch of *summe* tryfle, at *sum* tale3 ende."

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

Þen quod Wowen, "I-wysse, worþe as yow lykeþ,
I schal kysse at *your* comaundement, as a knyȝt falleþ,

1304

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

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

Ho comes nerre *with* þat, & cacheþ hym in armeþ,

Louteþ luflych adoun, & þe leude kysseþ;

Þay comly bykennen to Kryst ayþer oþer;

1308

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

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

Gawayne then rises and goes to mass.

Clepes to his chamberlayn, choses his wede,

Boþeþ forth, quen he watþ boun, blyþely to masse,

1312

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

He makes mirth all day till the moon rises,

& made myry al day til þe mone rysed,

with game;

*With*³ neuer freke fayrer fonge,

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

Bitwene two so dyngne dame,

Þe alder & þe ȝonge,

Much solace set þay same.

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

VIII.

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

And ay þe lorde of þe londe is lent on his gamneþ,

1320

To hunt *in* holte3 & hepe, at hynde3 barayne,
Such a sowme he þer slowe bi þat þe sunne heldet,
Of dos & of oper dere, to deme were wonder.
Þenne fersly þay flokked *in* folk at þe laste,
Quickly of the killed a "*quarry*" they make. 1324
& quykly of þe quelled dere a querré þay maked;
Þe best bo3ed þerto, *with* burne3 *in*-noghe,
Then they set about *breaking* the deer.

Gedered þe grattest of gres þat þer were,
& didden hem derely vndo, as þe dede aske3;
They take away the *assay* or fat, 1328
Serched hem at þe asay, summe þat þer were,
Two fyngeres þay fonde of þe fowlest of alle;
then they slit the *slot* and remove the *erber*.
Syþen þay slyt þe slot, sesed þe erber,
They afterwards rip the four limbs and rend off the hide.
Schaued wyth a scharp knyf, & þe schyre knitten;

1332

Syþen rytte þay þe foure lymmes, & rent of þe hyde,
They next open the belly
Þen brek þay þe bale, þe bale3 out token,
[Fol. 109.]
and take out the bowels.
Lystily forlancyng, & bere of þe knot;
Þay gryped to þe gargulun, & graybely departed
They then separate the *weasand* from the windhole and throw out
the guts. 1336

Þe wesaunt fro þe wynt-hole, & walt out þe gutte3;
Þen scher þay out þe schuldere3 *with* her scharp knyue3,
The shoulders are cut out, and the breast divided into halves.
Haled hem by a lyttel hole, to haue hole sydes;
Sipen britned þay þe brest, & brayden hit *in* twynne,

1340

& eft at þe gargulun bigyne3 on þenne,
The *numbles* are next removed.
Ryue3 hit vp radly, ry3t to þe by3t,

Voyde3 out þe a-vantern, & verayly þerafter
Alle þe ryme3 by þe rybbe3 radly þay lance;

1344

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

1348

bi kynde;

By the fork of the thighs,

Bi þe by3t al of þe py3es,

þe lappe3 þay lance bi-hynde,

the flaps are hewn in two by the backbone.

To hewe hit in two þay hy3es,

1352

Bi þe bak-bon to vnbynde.

IX.

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

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

1356

þenn þurled þay ayþer þik side þur3, bi þe rybbe,
& hinged þenne a[y]þer bi ho3es of þe fourche3,
Vche freke for his fee, as falle3 forto haue.

Vpon a felle of þe fayre best, fede þay þayr houndes,
With the liver, lights and paunches, they feed the hounds. 1360

Wyth þe lyuer & þe ly3te3, þe leþer of þe paunche3,
& bred baped in blod, blende þer amonge3;

Baldely þay blw prys, bayed þayr rachche3,
Then they make for home.

Syþen fonge þay her flesche folden to home,
1364

Strakande ful stoutly mony stif mote3.

Bi þat þe dayly3t wat3 done, þe douthe wat3 al wonen
In-to þe comly castel, þer þe kny3t bide3
ful stille;

1368

Wyth blys & bry3t fyr bette,

Þe lord is comen þer-tylle,

Gawayne goes out to meet his host.

When Gawayn wyth hym mette,

Þer wat3 bot wele at wylle.

¹ grene (?).

X.

[Fol. 109b.]

The lord commands all his household to assemble, 1372

Thenne comaunded þe lorde *in* þat sale to samen alle þe meny,
Boþe þe ladyes on loghe to ly3t *with* her burdes,
and the venison to be brought before him.

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

Verayly his venysoun to fech hym byforne;

He calls Gawayne, 1376

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

Teche3 hym to þe tayles of ful tayt bestes,

Schewe3 hym þe schyree grece schorne vpon rybbes.

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

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

1380

Haue I pryuandely þonk þurȝ my craft serued?"

"ȝe I-wysse," *quod* þat oper wyȝe, "here is wayth fayrest

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

Þat I seȝ þis seuen ȝere *in* sesoun of wynter."

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

1384

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

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

&¹ I haf worthyly þis woneȝ wyth-inne,

Gawayne gives the knight a comely kiss in return.

I-wysse *with* as god wylle hit worpeȝ to ȝoureȝ."

1388

He hasppeȝ his fayre hals his armeȝ wyth-inne,

& kysses hym as comlyly as he² coupe awyse:

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

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

1392

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

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

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

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

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

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

1396

For ȝe haftan þat yow tydeȝ, traweȝe non oper
ȝe mowe."

Þay laȝed, & made hem blyþe,

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

Wyth loteȝ þat were to lowe,

1400

To soper þay ȝede asswype,

Wyth dayntes nwe *in*-nowe.

¹ And = an. ² ho, in MS. ³ your (?).

XI.

By the hearth they sit.

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

Wine is carried round.

Wy3e3 þe walle wyn we3ed to hem oft,

1404

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

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

Again Sir Gawayne and his host renew their agreement.

Þat chaunce so bytyde3 hor cheuysaunce to chaunge,

What nwe3 so þay nome, at na3t quen þay metten

1408

Þay acorded of þe couenaunte3 byfore þe court alle;

[Fol. 110.]

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

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

Þenne þay louelych le3ten leue at þe last,

Vche burne to his bedde busked bylyue.

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

Bi þat þe coke hade crowe3¹ & cakled bot pryse,

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

So þat þe mete & þe masse wat3 metely delyuered;

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

1416

to chace;

With his hunters and horns they pursue the chase.

He3 *with* hunte & horne3,

Þur3 playne3 þay passe *in* space,

Vn-coupled among þo þorne3,

1420

Rache3 þat ran on race.

¹ crowed (?).

XII.

The hunters cheer on the hounds,
Sone þay calle of a quest *in* aker syde,
Þe hunt re-hayted þe hounde3, þat hit fyrst mynged,
which fall to the scent forty at once.

Wylde worde3 *hym* warp wyth a wrast noyce;

1424

Þe hownde3 þat hit herde, hastid þider swyþe,
& fellen as fast to þe fuyt, fourty at ones;
Þenne such a glauerande glam of gedered rachche3
Ros, þat þe rochere3 rungen aboute;

1428

Huntere3 hem hardened *with* horne & wyth muthe.
All come together by the side of a cliff.

Þen al *in* a semblé sweyed to-geder,
Bitwene a flosche *in* þat fryth, & a foo cragge;
In a knot, bi a clyffe, at þe kerre syde,

1432

Þer as þe rogh rocher vn-rydely wat3 fallen,
[Þay] ferden to þe fyndyng, & freke3 hem after;
They look about on all sides,
Þay vmbe-kesten þe knarre & þe knot bope.
Wy3e3, whyl þay wysten wel wyt *inne* hem hit were,

1436

Þe best þat þer breued wat3 wyth þe blod hounde3.
and beat on the bushes.

Þenne þay beten on þe buske3, & bede *hym* vp ryse,
& he vnsoundly out so3t segge3 ouer-þwert,
Out there rushes a fierce wild boar,

On þe sellokest swyn swenged out þere,

1440

Long sythen for¹ þe sounder þat wi3t for-olde,
For he wat3 b[este &] bor alþer grattest,

[And eue]re quen he gronyed, þenne greued mony,
At the first thrust he fells three to the ground.

For [þre a]t þe fyrst þrast he þryȝt to þe erþe,

1444

& [sped hym] forth good sped, bouthe spyt more,

[Ande þay] halowed hyghe ful hyȝe & hay! hay! cryed

[Fol. 110b.]

Haden horneȝ to mouþe heterly rechated;

Full quickly the hunters pursue him.

Mony watȝ þe myry mouthe of men & of houndeȝ,

1448

Þat buskkeȝ after þis bor, *with* bost & wyth noyse,

To quelle;

Ful oft he bydeȝ þe baye,

& maymeȝ þe mute *l*nn-melle,

However, he attacks the hounds, causing them to yowl and yell. 1452

He hurteȝ of þe houndeȝ, & þay

Ful ȝomerly ȝaule & ȝelle.

¹ fro (?).

XIII.

The bowmen send their arrows after this wild swine,

Schalkeȝ to schote at *hym* schowen to þenne,

Haled to hym of her areweȝ, hitten hym oft;

1456

Bot þe poynteȝ payred at þe pyth þat pyȝt *in* his scheldeȝ,

& þe barbeȝ of his browe bite non wolde,

but they glide off shivered in pieces.

Þaȝ þe schauen schaft schyndered *in* peceȝ,

Þe hede hypped aȝayn, were-so-euer hit hitte;

Enraged with the blows, 1460

Bot quon þe dynte3 hym dered of her dry3e stroke3,
þen, brayn-wod for bate, on burne3 he rase3,
he attacks the hunters.

Hurte3 hem ful heterly þer he forth hy3e3,
& mony ar3ed þerat, & on-lyte dro3en.

1464

Bot þe lorde on a ly3t horce launces hym after,
The lord of the land blows his bugle,

As burne bolde vpon bent his bugle he blowe3,

He rechated, & r[ode]¹ þur3 rone3 ful þyk,

Suande þis wy[ld]e swyn til þe sunne schafted.

and pursues the boar. 1468

þis day wyth þis ilk dede þay dryuen on þis wyse,

Whyle oure luflych lede lys in his bedde,

All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Gawayn graypely at home, in gere3 ful ryche
of hewe;

1472

þe lady no3t for3ate,

Com to hym to salue,

Ful erly ho wat3 hym ate,

His mode forto remwe.

¹ The MS. is here almost illegible.

XIV.

The lady of the castle again visits Sir Gawayne. 1476

Ho commes to þe cortyn, & at þe kny3t totes,

Sir Wawen her welcumed worpy on fyrst,

& ho hym 3elde3 a3ayn, ful 3erne of hir worde3,

Softly she sits by his side,

Sette3 hir soff[t]ly by his syde, & swypely ho la3e3,

1480

& wyth a luflych loke ho layde¹ hym þyse worde3:
"Sir, 3if 3e be Wawen, wonder me þynkke3,
Wy3e þat is so wel wrast alway to god,
& conne3 not of compaynye þe coste3 vnder-take,

[Fol. 111] 1484

& if mon kennes yow hom to knowe, 3e kest hom of *your* mynde;
and tells the knight that he has forgotten what she taught him the
day before.

Þou hat3 for-3eten 3ederly þat 3isterday I tagtte
alder-truest token of talk þat I cowþe."

"What is þat?" *quod* þe wyghe, "I-wysse I wot neuer,

1488

If hit be sothe þat 3e breue, þe blame is myn awen."

"I taught you of kissing," she says, "that becomes every knight."

"3et I kende yow of kyssyng," *quod* þe clere þenne,

"Quere-so countenaunce is coupe, quikly to clayme,

þat bicumes vche a kny3t, þat cortaysy vses."

1492

"Do way," *quod* þat derf mon, "my dere, þat speche,

Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden.

For þat durst I not do, lest I denayed were,

If I were werned, I were wrang I-wysse, 3if I profered."

"Ma fay," *quod* þe mere wyf, "3e may not be werned,

He is told that he is strong enough to enforce it. 1496

3e ar stif *in-noghe* to constrayne wyth strenkþe, 3if yow lyke3,

3if any were so vilanous þat yow denaye² wolde."

"3e, be God," *quod* Gawayn, "good is *your* speche,

Bot þrete is vn-þryuande *in* þede þer I lende,

The knight replies that every gift is worthless that is not given
willingly. 1500

& vche gift þat is geuen not *with* goud wylle;

I am at *your* comaundement, to kysse quen yow lyke3,

3e may lach quen yow lyst, & leue quen yow þynkke3,

in space."

The lady stoops down and kisses him. 1504

Þe lady loute3 a-doun,

& comlyly kysses his face,
Much speche þay þer expoun,
Of druryes greme & grace.

¹ sayde (?). ² de vaye, in MS.

XV.

"I would learn," she says, "why you, who are so young and active,
1508

"I woled¹ wyt at yow, wy3e," þat worþy þer sayde,
"& yow wrathed not þer-wyth, what were þe skylle,
Þat so 3ong & so 3epe, as 3e [ar] at þis tyme,
So cortayse, so kny3tyly, as 3e ar knowen oute,
so skilled in the true sport of love, 1512
& of alle cheualry to chose, þe chef þyng a-losed,
Is² þe lel layk of luf, þe lettrure of armes;
F[or] to telle of þis tenelyng of þis trwe kny3te3,
Hit is þe tytelet, token, & tyxt of her werkke3,

1516

How le[des] for her lele luf hor lyue3 han auntered,
Endured for her drury dulful stounde3,
& after wenged *with* her walour & voyded her care,
and so renowned a knight,
& bro3t blysse *in-to* boure, *with* bountees hor awen.

1520

& 3e ar kny3t com-lokest kyd of *your* elde,
[Fol. 111b.]

Your worde & *your* worchip walke3 ay quere,
& I haf seten by *your*-self here sere twyes,
have never talked to me of love.

3et herde I neuer of *your* hed helde no worde3
1524

Pat euer longed to luf, lasse ne more;
You ought to show a young thing like me some token of 'true-love's
crafts.'

& 3e, pat ar so cortays & coynt of *your* hetes,
Oghe to a 3onke þynk 3ern to schewe,
& teche sum tokene3 of trweluf craftes.

1528

Why ar 3e lewed, pat alle þe los welde3,
Oþer elles 3e demen me to dille, *your* dalyaunce to herken?
for schame!

I com hider sengel, & sitte,

1532

To lerne at yow sum game,
So teach me of your 'wit' while my lord is from home."
Dos, teche3 me of *your* wytte,
Whil my lorde is fro hame."

¹ wolde (?). ² In (?).

XVI.

"It is a great pleasure to me," says Sir Gawayne, "to hear you talk,
"In goud fayþe," *quod* Gawayn, "God yow for3elde,

1536

Gret is þe gode gle, & gomen to me huge,
Pat so worpy as 3e wolde wynne hidere,
& pyne yow *with* so pouer a mon, as play wyth *your* kny3t,
With any skynne3 countenaunce, hit keuere3 me ese;
but I cannot undertake the task to expound true-love and tales of
arms. 1540

Bot to take þe toruayle¹ to my-self, to trwluf expoun,
& towche þe teme3 of tyxt, & tale3 of arme3,
To yow pat, I wot wel, welde3 more sly3t

Of þat art, bi þe half, or a hundreth of seche
1544

As I am, oper euer schal, in erde þer I leue,
Hit were a fole fele-folde, my fre, by my trawpe.
I will, however, act according to your will,
I wolde yowre wylnyng worche at my myȝt,
As I am hyȝly bihalden, & euer-more wylle
and ever be your servant." 1548

Be seruauȝt to *your*-seluen, so saue me dryȝtyn!"
Þus hym frayned þat fre, & fondet hym ofte,
Forto haf wonnen hym to woȝe, what-so scho þoȝt elleȝ,
Thus Gawayne defends himself.

Bot he de fended hym so fayr, þat no faut semed,
1552
Ne non euel on nawþer halue, nawþer þay wysten,
bot blysse;

Þay laȝed & layked longe,
At þe last scho con hym kysse,
The lady having kissed the knight, takes leave of him. 1556
Hir leue fayre con scho fonge,
& went hir waye lwyse.

¹ tornayle (?).

XVII.

Gawayne rises, hears mass, and then dines.

Then ruþes hym þe renk, & ryses to þe masse,
[Fol. 112.]

& sipen hor diner wat3 dy3t & derely serued.
Meanwhile the lord pursues the wild boar, 1560
þe lede *with* þe ladye3 layked alle day,
Bot þe lorde ouer þe londe3 launced ful ofte,
Swe3 his vncely swyn, þat swynge3 bi þe bonkke3,
that bit the backs of his hounds asunder,
& bote þe best of his brache3 þe bakke3 *in* sunder;
1564

þer he bode *in* his bay, tel¹ bawe-men hit breken,
& made² hym, maw-gref his bed, forto mwe vtter;
and caused the stiffest of the hunters to start.
So felle flone3 þer flete, when þe folk gedered;
Bot 3et þe styffest to start bi stounde3 he made,
1568

Til at þe last he wat3 so mat, he my3t no more renne,
The boar runs into a hole in a rock by the side of a brook.
Bot *in* þe hast þat he my3t, he to a hole wyne3,
Of a rasse, bi a rokk, þer renne3 þe boerne,
He gete þe bonk at his bak, bigyne3 to scrape,
The froth foams at his mouth. 1572

þe frope femed³ at his mouth vnfayre bi þe wyke3,
Whette3 his whyte tusche3; *with* hym þen irked
Alle þe burne3 so bolde, þat hym by stoden,
None durst approach him,
To nye hym on-ferum, bot ne3e hym non durst
1576

for woþe;
He hade hurt so mony byforne,
þat al þuȝt⁴ þenne ful loþe,
so many had he torn with his tusks.
Be more wyth his tuscheȝ torne,
1580
þat breme watȝ [&] brayn-wod bothe.
¹ til (?). ² madee, in MS. ³ fomed (?). ⁴ þoȝt (?).

XVIII.

The knight, seeing the boar at bay,
Til þe knyȝt com hym-self, kachande his blonk,
Syȝ hym byde at þe bay, his burneȝ bysyde,
alights from his horse,
He lyȝtes luflych¹ adoun, leueȝ his corsour,
1584
Braydeȝ out a bryȝt bront, & bigly forth strydeȝ,
Foundeȝ fast þurȝ þe forth, þer þe felle bydeȝ,
and seeks to attack him with his sword.
þe wylde watȝ war of þe wyȝe *with* weppen *in* honde,
Hef hyȝly þe here, so hetterly he fnast,
1588
þat fele ferde for þe frekeȝ,² lest felle hym þe worre;
The "swine sets out" upon the man,
þe swyn setteȝ hym out on þe segge euen,
þat þe burne & þe bor were boþe vpon hepeȝ,
In þe wyȝt-est of þe water, þe worre hade þat oþer,
who, aiming well, 1592
For þe mon merkkeȝ hym wel, as þay mette fyrst,
Set sadly þe scharp *in* þe slot euen,
wounds him in the pit of the stomach.

Hit hym vp to þe hult, þat þe hert schyndered,
& he 3arrande hym 3elde, & 3edoun³ þe water,
1596
ful tyt;

[Fol. 112*b*.]

A hundreth hounde3 hym hent,
The boar is soon bitten to death by a hundred hounds.
Þat bremely con hym bite,
Burne3 him bro3t to bent,
1600
& dogge3 to dethe endite.

¹ MS. luslych. ² freke (?). ³ 3ede doun (?).

XIX.

Then was there blowing of horns
There wat3 blawyng of prys *in* mony breme home,
He3e halowing on hize, *with* hapele3 þat my3t;
and baying of hounds.
Brachetes bayed þat best, as bidden þe maystere3,
1604
Of þat chargeaunt chace þat were chef huntres.
One wise in woodcraft begins to unlace the boar.
Þenne a wy3e þat wat3 wys vpon wod crafte3,
To vnlace þis bor lufly bigynne3;
First he hews off the head, then rends him by the back.
Fyrst he hewes of his hed, & on hize sette3,
1608
& syþen rende3 him al roghe bi þe rygge after,
He next removes the bowels, broils them on the ashes, and
therewith rewards his hounds.

Brayde3 out þe boweles, brenne3 hom on glede,

With bred blent þer-*with* his braches rewarde3;
 Syþen he britne3 out þe brawen *in* bry3t brode [s]chelde3,
 Then the hastlets are removed. 1612
 & hat3 out þe hastlette3, as hi3tly biseme3;
 The two halves are next bound together and hung upon a pole.
 & 3et hem halche3 al hole þe halue3 to-geder,
 & syþen on a stif stange stoutly hem henges.
 Now with þis ilk swyn þay swengen to home;
 The boar's head is borne before the knight, who hastens home. 1616
 Þe bores hed wat3 borne bifore þe burnes seluen,
 Þat him for-ferde *in* þe forþe, þur3 forse of his honde,
 so stronge;
 Til he se3 *sir* Gawayne,
 1620
In halle hym þo3t ful longe,
 Gawayne is called to receive the spoil.
 He calde, & he com gayn,
 His fee3 þer for to fonge.

XX.

The lord of the land is well pleased when he sees Sir Gawayne,
 Þe lorde ful lowde *with* lote, & la3ed myry,
 1624
 When he se3e *sir* G: *with* solace he speke3;
 Þe goude ladye3 were geten, & gedered þe meyny,
 He shows him the shields of the wild boar, and tells him of its length
 and breadth.
 He schewe3 hem þe schelde3, & schapes hem þe tale,
 Of þe largesse, & þe lenþe, þe liþerne3 also,
 1628
 Of þe were of þe wylde swyn, *in* wod þer he fled.

þat oper knyȝt ful comly comended his dedeȝ,
& praysed hit as gret prys, þat he proued hade;
Such a "brawn of a beast," Sir Gawayne says, he never has seen.

For suche a brawne of a best, þe bolde burne sayde,
1632

Ne such sydes of a swyn, segh he neuer are.
þenne hondeled þay þe hoge hed, þe hende mon hit praysed,
[Fol. 113.]

& let lodly þerat þe lorde forte here:
Gawayne takes possession of it according to covenant,
"Now Gawayn," *quod* þe god mon, "þis gomen is *your* awen,
1636

Bi fyn for-warde & faste, faythely ȝe knowe."
"Hit is sothe," *quod* þe segge, "& as siker trwe;
Alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe."
and in return kisses his host,

He [hent] þe hapel aboute þe halse, & hendely hym kysses,
1640

& efter-sones of þe same he serued hym pere.
"Now ar we euen," *quod* þe hapel, "in þis euen-tide,
Of alle þe couenauntes þat we knyȝt, syþen I com hider,
bi lawe;"

who declares his guest to be the best he knows. 1644

þe lorde sayde, "bi saynt Gile,
ȝe ar þe best þat I knowe,
ȝe ben ryche *in* a whyle,
Such chaffer & ȝe drowe."

XXI.

Tables are raised aloft, 1648

þenne þay teldet tableȝ [on] trestes alofte,

cloths cast upon them,

Kesten cloþe3 vpon, clere ly3t þenne
and torches are lighted.

Wakned bi wo3e3, waxen torches

Segge3 sette, & serued *in* sale al aboute;

With much mirth and glee, 1652

Much glam & gle glent vp þer-inne,

Aboute þe fyre vpon flet, & on fele wyse,
supper is served in the hall,

At þe soper & after, mony apþel songe3,

As coundutes of kryst-masse, & carole3 newe,
1656

With alle þe manerly merþe þat mon may of telle.

and ever our lovely knight by the lady sits,

& euer oure luflych kny3t þe lady bi-syde;

Such semblaunt to þat segge semly ho made,
who does all she can to please her companion.

Wyth stille stollen countenance, þat stalworth to plese,
1660

Þat al for-wondered wat3 þe wy3e, & wroth *with* hym-seluen,

Bot he nolde not for his nurture nurne hir a-3ayne3,

Bot dalt *with* hir al *in* daynte, how-se-euer þe dede turned
to wrast;

When they had long played in the hall, 1664

Quen þay hade played *in* halle,

As longe as hor wylle hom last,

they proceeded "to chamber."

To chambre he¹ con hym calle,

& to þe chem-ne þay past.

¹ ho (?).

There they drank and discoursed. 1668

Ande þer þay dronken, & dalten, & demed eft nwe,
To norne on þe same note, on nwe3ere3 euen;

Gawayne begs leave to depart on the morrow.

Bot þe kny3t craued leue, to kayre on þe morn,
For hit wat3 ne3 at þe terme, þat he to¹ schulde.

[Fol. 113*b*.] 1672

Þe lorde hym letted of þat, to lenge hym resteyed,
His host swears to him,

& sayde, "as I am trwe segge, I siker my trawþe,
that he shall come to the Green Chapel on New Year's morn long
before prime.

Þou schal cheue to þe grene chapel, þy charres to make,
Leude, on nw3ere3 ly3t, longe bifore pryme:

1676

For-þy þow lye *in* þy loft, & lach þyn ese,
& I schal hunt in þis holt, & halde þe towche3,
Chaunge wyth þe cheuisaunce, bi þat I charre hider;
For I haf fraysted þe twys, & faythful I fynde þe,

1680

Now prid tyme þrowe best þenk on þe morne,
Make we mery quyl we may, & mynne vpon loye,
For þe lur may mon lach, when so mon lyke3."

Þis wat3 graybely graunted, & Gawayn is langed,
Our knight consents to remain for another night. 1684

Bliþe bro3t wat3 hym drynk, & þay to bedde 3eden,
with li3t;

Full still and softly he sleeps all night.

Sir G: lis & slepes,
Ful stille & softe al ni3t;

Early in the morning the lord is up. 1688

Þe lorde þat his crafte3 kepes,
Ful erly he wat3 di3t.

¹ te (?).

XXIII.

After mass, a morsel he take with his men.

After messe a morsel¹ he & his men token,
Miry wat3 þe mornyn^g, his mounture he askes;
Then were all on their horses before the hall-gates. 1692
Alle þe hapeles þat on horse schulde helden hym after,
Were boun busked on hor blonkke3, bi-fore² þe halle 3ate3;
It was a clear frosty morning.

Ferly fayre wat3 þe folde, for þe forst clenged,
In rede rudede vpon rak rises þe sunne,
The hunters, dispersed by a wood's side, 1696
& ful clere coste3³ þe clowdes of þe welkyn.
Huntes vnhardeled bi a holt syde,
Rocheres rounge bi rys, for rurde of her hornes;
come upon the track of a fox,
Summe fel in þe fute, þer þe fox bade,

1700

Trayle3 ofte a trayteres⁴, bi traunt of her wyles;
A kenet kryes þerof, þe hunt on hym calles,
His felazes fallen hym to, þat fnasted ful pike,
which is followed up by the hounds.

Runnen forth in a rabel, in his ry3t fare;

1704

& he fyske3 hem by-fore, þay founden hym sone,
They soon get sight of the game,
& quen þay seghe hym with sy3t, þay sued hym fast,
Wre3ande h[ym] ful [w]eterly with a wroth noyse;
and pursue him through many a rough grove.

& he trantes & tornayee3 þur3 mony tene greue;

1708

Hamloune3, & herkene3, bi hegge3 ful ofte;
[Fol. 114.]

The fox at last leaps over a spinny,

At þe last bi a littel dich he lepe3 ouer a spenné,
Stele3 out ful stilly bi a strothe rande,
and by a rugged path seeks to get clear from the hounds.

Went haf wylt of þe wode, *with* wyle3 fro þe houndes,
1712

Þenne wat3 he went, er he wyst, to⁵ a wale tryster,
He comes upon one of the hunting stations, where he is attacked by
the dogs.

Þer þre þro at a þrich þrat hym at ones,
al graye;

However, he slips them,
He blenched a3ayn bilyue,

1716
& stifly start onstray,
With alle þe wo on lyue,
and makes again for the wood.

To þe wod he went away.

¹ MS. nnorsel. ² bi-forere, in MS. ³ caste3 (?). ⁴ trayveres (?). ⁵ to
to, in MS.

XXIV.

Then was it fine sport to listen to the hounds,
Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list to lyþen þe hounde3,

1720
When alle þe mute hade hym met, menged to-geder,
Suche a sor3e at þat sy3t þay sette on his hede,
As alle þe clamberande clyffes hade clatered on hepes;
and the hallooing of the hunters.

Here he wat3 halawed, when hapele3 hym metten,
1724

Loude he wat3 3ayned, *with* 3arande speche;

There the fox was threatened and called a thief.

þer he wat3 þreted, & ofte þef called,

& ay þe titleres at his tayl, þat tary he ne my3t;

Ofte he wat3 runnen at, when he out rayked,

But Reynard was wily, 1728

& ofte reled *in* a3ayn, so reniarde wat3 wylé.

and led them astray over mounts.

& 3e he lad hem bi lag, mon, þe lorde & his meyny;

On þis maner bi þe mountes, quyle myd, ouer, vnder,

Meanwhile the knight at home soundly sleeps within his comely curtains.

Whyle þe hende kny3t at home holsumly slepe3,

1732

With-inne þe comly cortynes, on þe colde morne.

Bot þe lady for luf let not to slepe,

Ne þe purpose to payre, þat py3t *in* hir hert,

Bot ros hir vp radly, rayked hir þeder,

The lady of the castle, clothed in a rich mantle, 1736

In a mery mantyle, mete to þe erþe,

þat wat3 furred ful fyne *with* felle3, wel pured,

No hwe3 goud on hir hede, bot þe hazer stones

Trased aboute hir tressour, be twenty *in* clusteres;

her throat and bosom all bare, 1740

Hir pryuen face & hir prote þrowen al naked,

Hir brest bare bifore, & bihinde eke.

comes to Gawayne's chamber,

Ho come3 *with-inne* þe chambre dore, & closes hit hir after,
opens a window, and says,

Wayne3¹ vp a wyndow, & on þe wy3e calle3,

1744

& radly þus re-hayted hym, *with* hir riche worde3,

*with*² chere;

"Ah! man, how canst thou sleep,

"A! mon, how may þou slepe,

[Fol. 114b.]

this morning is so clear?"

þis morning is so clere?"

1748

He wat3 *in* drowping depe,
Bot þenne he con hir here.

¹ wayue3(?). ² bi, à sec. manu.

XXV.

The knight was then dreaming of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel.

In dre3 droupyng of dreme draueled þat noble,
As mon þat wat3 in mornyng of mony pro þo3tes,

1752

How þat destiné schulde þat day [dy3t] his wyrde,
At þe grene chapel, when he þe gome metes,
& bi-houes his buffet abide, with-oute debate more;
He awakes and speaks to his fair visitor,
Bot quen þat comly he keuered his wyttes,

1756

Swenges out of þe sweuenes, & sware3 *with* hast.
Þe lady luflych com la3ande swete,
who sweetly kisses him.

Felle ouer his fayre face, & fetly *him* kyssed;
He welcume3 hir worpily, with a wale chere;

1760

He se3 hir so glorious, & gayly atyred,
So fautles of hir fetures, & of so fyne hewes,
Great joy warms the heart of Sir Gawayne,
Wi3t wallande loye warmed his hert;
With smope smylyng & smolt þay smeten *in-to* merþe,

1764

Þat al wat3 blis & bonchef, þat breke hem bi-twene,
& wyne,

þay lanced wordes gode,
Much wele þen wat3 þer-inne,
and "great peril between them stood." 1768
Gret perile bi-twene hem stod,
Nif mare of hir kny3t mynne.

XXVI.

The knight is sorely pressed.
For þat prynce of pris de-presed hym so þikke.
Nurned hym so ne3e þe þred, þat nede hym bi-houed,
1772
Oþer lach þer hir luf, oþer lodly re-fuse;
He cared for his cortaysye, lest crapayn he were,
He fears lest he should become a traitor to his host.
& more for his meschef, 3if he schulde make synne,
& be traytor to þat tolke, þat þat telde a3t.
1776
"God schylde," quod þe schalk, "þat schal not be-falle!"
With luf-lazyng a lyt, he layd hym by-syde
Alle þe speche3 of specialté þat sprange of her mouthe.
Quod þat burde to þe burne, "blame 3e disserue,
1780
3if 3e luf not þat lyf þat 3e lye nexte,
Bifore alle þe wy3e3 in þe worlde, wounded in hert,
The lady inquire whether he has a mistress that he loves better than
her.
Bot if 3e haf a lemman, a leuer, þat yow lyke3 better,
& folden fayth to þat fre, festned so harde,
[Fol. 115.] 1784
þat yow lausen ne lyst, & þat I leue noupe;
And þat 3e telle me þat, now trwly I pray yow,

For alle þe lufe3 vpon lyue, layne not þe soþe,
for gile."

Sir Gawayne swears by St. John that he neither has nor desires one.

1788

Þe kny3t sayde, "be sayn lon,"
& smepely con he smyle,
"In fayth I welde ri3t non,
Ne non wil welde þe quile."

XXVII.

1792

"Þat is a worde," *quod* þat wy3t, "þat worst is of alle,
Bot I am swared for soþe, þat sore me þinkke3;
She then kisses him, sighing for sorrow.
Kysse me now coraly, & I schal cach hepen,
I may bot moume vpon molde, as may þat much louyes."

1796

Sykande ho swe3e doun, & semly hym kyssed,
& sipen ho seueres hym fro, & says as ho stondes,
"Now, dere, at þis de-partyng, do me þis ese,
She desires some gift,
Gif me sumquat of þy gifte, þi gloue if' hit were,
by which to remember him. 1800
Þat I may mynne on þe mon, my mounyng to lassen."
"Now lwysse," *quod* þat wy3e, "I wolde I hade here
Þe leuest þing for þy luf, þat I in londe welde,
Gawayne tells her that she is worthy of a better gift than he can
bestow.

For 3e haf deserued, forsoþe, sellyly ofte

1804

More rewarde bi resoun, þen I reche my3t,

Bot to dele yow for drurye, þat dawed bot naked;
 Hit is not *your* honour to haf at þis tyme
 A gloue for a garysoun, of Gawayne³ gifte³,
 1808
 & I am here [on] an erande *in* erde³ vncoupe,
 He has no men with mails containing precious things.
 & haue no men wyth no male³, *with* menskful þinge³;
 Þat mislyke³ me, ladé, for luf at þis tyme,²
 Iche tolke mon do as he is tan, tas to non ille,
 1812
 ne pine."
 Then says that lovesome,
 "Nay, hende of hyge honours,"
Quod þat lufsum vnder lyne,
 "Though I had nought of yours, yet should ye have of mine."
 "Þa³ I hade o³t³ of *youre*³,
 1816
 3et schulde 3e haue of myne."
¹ of, in MS. ² tyne, in MS. ³ no³t (?).

XXVIII.

She offers him a gold ring,
 Ho ra³t hym a riche rynk¹ of red golde werke³,
 Wyth a starande ston, stondande alofte,
 Þat bere blusschande beme³ as þe bry³t sunne;
 1820
 Wyt 3e wel, hit wat³ worth wele ful hoge.
 but he refuses to accept it,
 Bot þe renk hit renayed, & redyly he sayde,
 [Fol. 115*b*.]
 "I wil no gifte³ for gode, my gay, at þis tyme;

as he has none to give in return.

I haf none yow to norne, ne noȝt wyl I take."

1824

Ho bede hit hym ful bysily, & he hir bode wernes,
& swere swyftel[y] his sothe, þat he hit sese nolde;

Very sorrowful was that fair one on account of his refusal.

& ho sore þat he forsoke, & sayde þer-after,
"If ȝe renay my rynk, to ryche for hit semeȝ,

1828

ȝe wolde not so hyȝly halden be to me,
I schal gif yow my girdel, þat gaynes yow lasse."

Ho laȝt a lace lyȝtly, þat² leke vmbe hir sydeȝ,
She takes off her "girdle,"

Knit vpon hir kyrtel, vnder þe clere mantyle,

1832

Gered hit watȝ *with* grene sylke, & *with* golde schaped,
Noȝt bot arounde brayden, beten *with* fyngreȝ;
& þat ho bede to þe burne, & blypely bi-soȝt

and beseeches him to take it.

Þaȝ hit vn-worpi were, þat he hit take wolde.

1836

& he nay þat he nolde neghe *in* no wyse,
Gawayne again refuses to accept anything,
Nauper golde ne garysoun, er God hym *grace* sende,
To acheue to þe chaunce þat he hade chosen þere.
"& þerfore, I pray yow, displese yow noȝt,

1840

& letteȝ be *your* bisnesse, for I bayþe hit yow neuer
to graunte;

I am derely to yow biholde,

Bi-cause of *your* sembelaunt,

but promises, "ever in hot and in cold, to be her true servant." 1844

& euer *in* hot & colde

To be *your* trwe seruaunt.

¹ ryng (?). ² þat þat, in MS.

XXIX.

"Do you refuse it," says the lady, because it is simple?

"Now forsake 3e þis silke." sayde þe burde þenne,

"For hit is symple *in* hit-self. & so hit wel seme3?

1848

Lo! so hit is littel, & lasse hit is worpy;

Whoso knew the virtues that it possesses, would highly prize it.

Bot who-so knew þe costes þat knit ar þer-inne,

He wolde hit prayse at more prys, parauenture;

For he who is girded with this green lace,

For quat gome so is gorde *with* þis grene lace,

1852

While he hit hade hemely halched aboute,

Þer is no hapel vnder heuen to-hewe hym þat my3t;

cannot be wounded or slain."

For he my3t not he slayn, for sly3t vpon erþe."

Þen kest þe kny3t, & hit come to his hert,

The knight thinks of his adventure at the Green Chapel. 1856

Hit were a luel for þe lopardé, þat hym iugged were,

When he acheued to þe chapel, his chek forto fech;

The lady presses him to accept the lace.

My3¹ he haf slypped to þe vn-slayn, þe sle3t were noble.

[Fol. 116.]

Þenne ho þulged with hir þrepe, & þoled hir to speke,

1860

& ho bere on hym þe belt, & bede hit hym swyþe,

He consents not only to take the girdle, but to keep the possession of it a secret.

& he *granted*, & [ho] hym gafe with a goud wylle,

& biso3t hym, for hir sake, disceuer hit neuer,

Bot to lelly layne for² hir lorde; þe leude hym acorde3.

1864

Þat neuer wy3e schulde hit wyt, lwysse, bot þay twayne,

for noȝte;
He þonkked hir oft ful swype,
Ful þro *with* hert & þoȝt.
By that time the lady has kissed him thrice. 1868
Bi þat on þrynne syþe,
He hatȝ kyst þe knyȝt so toȝt.
¹ myȝt (?). ² fro (?).

XXX.

Then she takes her leave.
Thenne lachcheȝ ho hir leue, & leueȝ hym þere,
For more myrþe of þat mon moȝt ho not gete;
Gawayne then dresses himself, 1872
When ho¹ watȝ gon, *sir* G. gereȝ hym sone,
Rises, & riches hym *in* araye noble,
and conceals the love-lace about his person.
Lays vp þe luf-lace, þe lady hym raȝt,
Hid hit ful holdely, þer he hit eft fonde;
1876
Syþen cheuely to þe chapel choses he þe waye,
He then hies to mass,
Preuely aproched to a prest, & prayed hym þere
Þat he wolde lyfte² his lyf, & lern hym better,
How his sawle schulde be saued, when he schuld seye heþen.
and shrives him of his misdeeds. 1880
Þere he schrof hym schyrly, & schewed his mysdedeȝ,
Of þe more & þe mynne, & merci besecheȝ,
and prays for absolution.
& of absolucioun he on þe segge calles;
& he asoyled hym surely, & sette hym so clene,

He returns to the hall, and makes himself so merry among the ladies,
1884

As domeȝ-day schulde haf ben digt on þe morn.
& syþen he mace hym as mery among þe fre ladyes,
with comely carols,
With comlych caroles, & alle kynnes ioie,
As neuer he did bot þat daye, to þe derk nyȝt,
1888

with blys;
Vche mon hade daynte þare,
that they said,
Of hym, & sayde lwysse,
"Thus merry was he never before since hither he came."
þus myry he watȝ neuer are,
1892
Syn he com hider, er þis.
¹ he, in MS. ² lyste (?).

XXXI.

Gawayne's host is still in the field.

Now hym lenge in þat lee, þer luf hym bi-tyde;
ȝet is þe lorde on þe launde, ledande his gomnes,
He has destroyed the fox.

He hatȝ forfaren þis fox, þat he folȝed longe;
1896

As he sprent ouer a spenné, to spye þe schrewe,
[Fol. 116b.]

þer as he herd þe howndes, þat hasted hym swyþe,
He spied Reynard coming through a "rough grove,"
Renaud com richchande þurȝ a roȝe greue,
& alle þe rabel in a res, ryȝt at his heleȝ.

and tried to hit him with his sword. 1900

þe wy3e wat3 war of þe wylde, & warly abides,
& brayde3 out þe bry3t bronde, & at þe best caste3;
& he schunt for þe scharp, & schulde haf arered,
The fox "shunts," and is seized by one of the dogs.
A rach rapes hym to, ry3t er he my3t,

1904

& ry3t bifore þe hors fete þay fel on hym alle,
& wored me þis wyly wyth a wroth noyse.
The lord takes him out of the hound's mouth.

þe lorde ly3te3 bilyue, & cache3 by¹ sone,
Rased hym ful radly out of þe rach moupes,

1908

Halde3 he3e ouer his hede, halowe3 faste,
& þer bayen hym mony bray² hounde3;
Hunters hasten thither with horns full many.
Huntes hy3ed hem þeder, *with* horne3 ful mony,
Ay re-chatande ary3t til þay þe renk se3en;

1912

Bi þat wat3 comen his compeyny noble,
Alle þat euer ber bugle blowed at ones,
It was the merriest meet that ever was heard.
& alle þise oper halowed, þat hade no hornes,
Hit wat3 þe myriest mute þat euer men herde,

1916

þe rich rurd þat þer wat3 raysed for renaude saule,
with lote;
The hounds are rewarded,
Hor hounde3 þay þer rewarde,
Her³ hede3 þay fawne & frote,
and then they take Reynard and "turn off his coat." 1920
& syþen þay tan reynarde,
& tyrnen of his cote.

¹ hym (?). ² brap (?). ³ Her her, in MS.

XXXII.

The hunters then hasten home.

& þenne þay helden to home, for hit wat3 nie3 ny3t,
Strakande ful stoutly *in* hor store horne3;

The lord at last alights at his dear home, 1924

Þe lorde is ly3t at þe laste at hys lef home,

Fynde3 fire vpon flet, þe freke þer by-side,

Sir Gawayn þe gode, þat glad wat3 *with* alle,
where he finds Gawayne amusing the ladies.

Among þe ladies for luf he ladde much ioie,

1928

He were a bleaunt of blwe, þat bradde to þe erþe,

His surkot semed hym wel, þat softe wat3 forred,

& his hode of þat ilke hinged on his schulder,

The knight comes forward and welcomes his host,

Blande al of blaunner were bope al aboute.

1932

He mete3 me þis god mon *in* mydde3 þe flore,

& al with gomen he hym gret, & goudly he sayde,

"I schal fyller vpon fyrst oure forwarde3 nouþe,

[Fol. 117.]

Þat we spedly han spoken, þer spared wat3 no drynk;"
and according to covenant kisses him thrice. 1936

Þen acoles he [þe] kny3t, & kysses hym þryes,

(See l. 1868.)

As sauerly & sadly as he hem sette coupe.

"By Christ," says the other, "ye have had much bliss!"

"Bi Kryst," *quod* þat oper kny3t, "3e cach much sele,

In cheuisaunce of þis chaffer, 3if 3e hade goud chepe3."

1940

"3e of þe chepe no charg," *quod* chefly þat oper,

"As is pertly payed þe chepe3 þat I a3te."

"Mary," *quod* þat oper mon, "myn is bi-hynde,

I have hunted all day and have gotten nothing,
For I haf hunted al þis day, & noȝt haf I geten,
but the skin of this foul fox, 1944

Bot þis foule fox felle, þe fende haf þe godeȝ,
a poor reward for three such kisses."

& þat is ful pore, for to pay for suche prys þinges,
As ȝe haf þryȝt me here, þro suche þre cosses,
so gode."

1948

"I-noȝ," *quod sir* Gawayn,

"I þonk yow, bi þe rode;"

He then tells him how the fox was slain.

& how þe fox watȝ slayn,
He tolde hym, as þay stode.

XXXIII.

With much mirth and minstrelsy they made merry, 1952

With merþe & mynstralsye, wyth meteȝ at hor wylle,

Þay maden as mery as any men moȝten,

With laȝyng of ladies, *with* loteȝ of bordes;

Gawayn & þe gode mon so glad were þay boþe,

1956

Bot if þe douthe had doted, oþer dronken ben oþer,

Boþe þe mon & þe meyny maden mony iapeȝ,

until the time came for them to part.

Til þe sesoun watȝ seȝen, þat þay seuer moste;

Burneȝ to hor bedde be-houed at þe laste.

Gawayne takes leave of his host. 1960

Þenne loȝly his leue at þe lorde fyrst

Fochcheȝ þis fre mon, & fayre he hym þonkkeȝ;

and thanks him for his happy "sojourn."

"Of such a sellyly¹ soiorne, as I haf hade here,
Your honour, at þis hy3e fest, þe hy3e kyng yow 3elde!

1964

I 3ef yow me for on of *youre*3, if yowre-self lyke3,
For I mot nedes, as 3e wot, meue to morne;

He asks for a man to teach him the way to the Green Chapel.

& 3e me take *sum* tolke, to teche, as 3e hy3t,
þe gate to þe grene chapel, as god wyl me suffer

1968

To dele, on *nw3ere*3 day, þe dome of my wyrdes."
"In god fayþe," *quod* þe god mon. "wyth a goud wylle;
Al þat euer I yow hy3t, halde schal I rede."

A servant is assigned to him,

þer asyngnes he a seruaunt, to sett hym in þe waye,

[Fol. 117*b*.] 1972

& coundue hym by þe downe3, þat he no drechch had,
For to f[e]rk þur3 þe fryth, & fare at þe gaynest,
bi greue.

þe lorde Gawayn con þonk,

1976

Such worchip he wolde hym weue;
and then he takes leave of the ladies,

þen at þo ladye3 wlonk.

þe kny3t hat3 tan his leue.

¹ selly (?).

XXXIV.

kissing them sorrowfully.

With care & wyth kyssyng he carppe3 hem tille,

1980

& fele pryuande þonkke3 he þrat hom to haue,

& þay 3elden hym a3ay[n] 3eþly þat ilk;
They commend him to Christ.

Þay bikende hym to Kryst, *with* ful colde sykyng³.
He then departs, thanking each one he meets "for his service and
solace."

Syþen fro þe meyny he menskly de-partes;
1984

Vche mon þat he mette, he made hem a þonke,
For his seruyse, & his solace, & his sere pyne,
Þat þay wyth busynes had ben, aboute hym to serue;
& vche segge as sore, to seuer *with* hym pere,

1988
As þay hade wonde worpyly *with* þat wlonk euer.

He retires to rest but sleeps but little,
Þen *with* ledes & ly3t he wat3 ladde to his chambre,
& blybely bro3t to his bedde, to be at his rest;
3if he ne slepe soundyly, say ne dar I,

for much has he to think of on the morrow. 1992

For he hade mucche on þe morn to mynne, 3if he wolde,
in þo3t;

Let him there lie still.

Let hym ly3e pere stille,

He hat3¹ nere þat he so3t,

Be still awhile, and I shall tell how they wrought. 1996

& 3e wyl a whyle be styлле,
I schal telle yow how þay wro3t.

¹ wat3 (?).

[FYTTE THE FOURTH.]

I.

New Year's Day approaches.

Now ne3e3 þe nw3ere, & þe ny3t passe3,
þe day dryue3 to þe derk, as dry3tyn bidde3;

The weather is stormy. 2000

Bot wylde wedere3 of þe worlde wakned þeroute,
Clowdes kesten kenly þe colde to þe erþe,
Wyth ny3e¹ in-noghe of þe norþe, þe naked to tene;

Snow falls.

þe snawe snitered ful snart, þat snayped þe wylde;

2004

þe werbelande wynde wapped fro þe hy3e,

The dales are full of drift.

& drof vche dale ful of dryftes ful grete.

þe leude lystened ful wel, þat le3 *in* his bedde,
Gawayne in his bed hears each cock that crows.

þa3 he lowke3 his lidde3, ful lyttel he slepes;

2008

Bi vch kok þat crue, he knwe wel þe steuen.

[Fol. 118.]

De-liuerly he dressed vp, er þe day sprenged,

For þere wat3 ly3t of a lau[m]pe, þat lemed *in* his chambre;

He calls for his chamberlain, and bids him bring him his armour.

He called to his chamberlayn, þat cofly hym swared,

2012

& bede hym bryng hym his bruny, & his blonk sadel;

þat oper ferke3 hym vp, & feche3 hym his wede3,

& graype3 me *sir* Gawayn vpon a grett wyse.

Fyrst he clad hym *in* his clope3, þe colde for to were;

2016

& syþen his oper harnays, þat holdely wat3 keped,

Boþe his paunce, & his plate3, piked ful clene,

Men knock off the rust from his rich habergeon.

þe rynges² rokked of þe roust, of his riche bruny;

& al wat3 fresch as vpon fyrst, & he wat3 fayn þenne

2020

to þonk;

He hade vpon vche pece,

Wypped ful wel & wlonk;
The knight then calls for his steed.

Be gayest *in* to Grece,
2024
Be burne bede bryng his blonk.
1 nywe (?). 2 rynke3 (?).

II.

While he clothed himself in his rich weeds,
Whyle be wlonkest wedes he warp on *hym*-seluen;
His cote, wyth be conysaunce of be clere werke3,
Ennurned vpon veluet *vertuuus*¹ stone3,

2028
Aboute beten, & bounden, enbrauded seme3,
& fayre furred *with-inne* wyth fayre pelures.
he forgot not the "lace," the lady's gift,
3et laft he not be lace, be ladie3 gifte,
Pat for-gat not Gawayn, for gode of *hym*-seluen;

2032
Bi he hade belted be bronde vpon his bal3e haunche3,
but with it doubly girded his loins.

Penn dressed he his drurye double *hym* aboute;
Swype swepled vmbe his swange swetely, pat kny3t,
Be gordel of be grene silke, pat gay wel bisemed,

2036
Vpon pat ryol red clope, pat ryche wat3 to schewe.
He wore it not for its rich ornaments,
Bot wered not pis ilk wy3e for wele pis gordel,
For pryde of be pendaunte3, pa3 polyst pay were,
& pa3 be glyterande golde glent vpon ende3,
"but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer." 2040

Bot forto sauen *hym*-self, when suffer *hym* by-houed,
To byde bale *with*-oute dabate, of bronde *hym* to were,
oper knyffe;

Bi þat þe bolde mon boun,

2044

Wynnez þeroute bilyue,

All the renowned assembly he thanks full oft.

Alle þe meyny of renoun,

He þonkke3 ofte ful ryue.

¹ *vertuous* (?).

III.

[Fol. 118*b*.]

Then was Gringolet arrayed,

Thenne wat3 Gryngolet graype, þat gret wat3 & huge,
2048

& hade ben soioumed sauerly, & *in* a siker wyse,
full ready to prick on.

Hym lyst prik for poynt, þat proude hors þenne;
þe wy3e wyne3 hym to, & wyte3 on his lyre,
& sayde soberly hym-self, & by his soth swere3,
2052

"Here is a meyny *in* þis mote, þat on menske þenkke3,
Gawayne returns thanks for the honour and kindness shown to him
by all.

þe mon hem maynteines, ioy mot þay haue;
þe leue lady, on lyue luf hir bityde;
3if þay for charyté cherysen a gest,
2056

& halden honour *in* her honde, þe hapel hem 3elde,
þat halde3 þe heuen vpon hy3e, & also yow alle!
& 3if I my3t lyf vpon londe lede any quyle,
I schuld rech yow sum rewarde redyly, if I my3t."

He then steps into his saddle, 2060

þenn steppe3 he *in*-to stirop, & stryde3 alofte;
His schalk schewed hym his schelde, on schulder he hit la3t,
Gorde3 to Gryngolet, *with* his gilt hele3,
and "starts on the stone" without more delay.

& he starte3 on þe ston, stod he no lenger,
2064
to prounce;

His hapel on hors wat3 þenne,
Þat bere his spere & launce.
"This castle to Christ I commend; may he give it ever good chance!"
"Þis kastel to Kryst I kenne,
2068
He gef hit ay god chaunce!"

IV.

The gates are soon opened.
The brygge wat3 brayde doun, & þe brode 3ate3
Vnbarred, & born open, vpon boþe halue;
The knight passes thereout,
Þe burne blessed hym bilyue, & þe brede3 passed;
2072
Prayses þe porter, bifore þe prynce kneled,
Gef hym God & goud day, þat Gawayn he saue;
and goes on his way accompanied by his guide.
& went on his way, *with* his wy3e one,
Þat schulde teche hym to *toume* to þat tene place,
2076
Per þe ruful race he schulde re-sayue.
Þay bo3en bi bonkke3, þer bo3e3 ar bare,
They climb by cliffs,
Þay clomben bi clyffe3, þer clenge3 þe colde;
Þe heuen wat3 vp halt, bot vgly þer vnder,
2080
Mist mugged on þe mor, malt on þe mounte3,
where each "hill had a hat and a mist-cloak,"
Vch hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge;
Broke3 byled, & breke, bi bonkke3 aboute,
Schyre schaterande on schore3, þer þay doun schowued.

[Fol. 119.] 2084

Welawylle wat3 þe way, þer þay bi wod schulden,
until daylight.

Til hit wat3 sone sesoun, þat þe sunne ryses,
þat tyde;

They were then on a "hill full high."

Þay were on a hille ful hy3e,
2088

Þe quyte snaw lay bisyde;
The servant bade his master abide, saying,
Þe burne þat rod hym by
Bede his mayster abide.

V.

"I have brought you hither,

"For I haf wonnen yow hider, wy3e, at þis tyme,
2092

& now nar 3e not fer fro þat note place,
ye are not now far from the noted place.

Þat 3e han spied & spuryed so specially after;
Bot I schal say yow for soþe, syþen I yow knowe,
& 3e ar a lede vpon lyue, þat I wel louy,
2096

Wolde 3e worch bi my wytte, 3e worped þe better.
Full perilous is it esteemed.

Þe place þat 3e prece to, ful perelous is halden;
The lord of that 'waste' is stiff and stern.

Þer wone3 a wy3e *in* þat waste, þe worst vpon erþe;
For he is stiffe, & sturne, & to strike louies,
2100

& more he is þen any mon vpon myddelerde,

His body is bigger 'than the best four in Arthur's house.'
 & his body bigger *þen* þe best fowre.
 Þat ar *in* Arpure3 hous, Hestor¹ *oper oper*.
 He cheue3 þat chaunce at þe chapel grene;
 None passes by the Green Chapel, 'that he does not ding to death
 with dint of his hand.' 2104
 Þer passes non bi þat place, so proude *in* his armes,
 Þat he ne dynne3 hym to depe, *with* dynt of his honde;
 For he is a mon methles, & mercy non vses,
 For be it churl or chaplain, monk, mass-priest, 'or any man else,' he
 kills them all.
 For be hit chorle, *oper* chaplayn, þat bi þe chapel rydes,
 2108
 Monk, *oper* masse-prest, *oper* any mon elles,
 Hym þynk as queme hym to quelle, as quyk go hym seluen.
 For-py I say þe as soþe as 3e *in* sadel sitte,
 Com 3e þere, 3e be kyllled, [I] may þe kny3t rede,
 2112
 Trawe 3e me þat trwely, þa3 3e had twenty lyues
 to spende;
 He has lived there full long.
 He hat3 wonyd here ful 3ore,
 On bent much baret bende,
 Against his dints sore ye may not defend you. 2116
 A3ayn his dynte3 sore,
 3e may not yow defende."
¹ Hector (?).

VI.

Wherefore, good Sir Gawayne, let this man alone.
 "For-py, goude *sir* Gawayn, let þe gome one,

& got3 a-way *sum* oper gate; vpon Godde3 halue;
Go by some other region, 2120

Cayre3 bi *sum* oper kyth, þer Kryst mot yow spede;

& I schal hy3 me hom a3ayn, & hete yow fyrre,

[Fol. 119b.]

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

Þat I schal swere bi God, & alle his gode hal3e3,

As help me God & þe halydam, & oþe3 *in-noghe*,

2124

Þat I schal lelly yow layne, & lance neuer tale,

Þat euer 3e fondet to fle, for freke þat I wyst."

"Grant merci;" *quod* Gawayn, & gruchyng he sayde,

"Wel worth þe wy3e, þat wolde3 my gode,

2128

& þat lelly me layne, I leue wel þou wolde3!

Gawayne replies that to shun this danger would mark him as a "coward knight."

Bot helde þou hit neuer so holde, & I here passed,

Founded for ferde for to fle, *in foume* þat þou telle3,

I were a kny3t kowarde, I my3t not¹ be excused.

To the Chapel, therefore, he will go, 2132

Bot I wy¹ to þe chape¹, for chaunce þat may falle,

& talk wyth þat ilk tulk þe tale þat me lyste,

Worpe hit wele, oper wo, as þe wyrde lyke3

hit hafe;

though the owner thereof were a stern knave. 2136

Þa3e he be a sturn knape,

To stiztel, &² stad *with* staue,

"Full well can God devise his servants for to save."

Ful wel con dry3tyn schape,

His seruaunte3 forto saue."

¹ mot, in MS. ² & &, in MS.

VII.

"Mary!" quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life, 2140

"Mary!" *quod* þat oper mon, "now þou so much spelle3,

þat þou wylt þyn awen nye nyme to þy-seluen,

& þe lyst lese þy lyf, þe lette I ne kepe;

take thy helmet on thy head, and thy spear in thy hand, and ride
down this path by yon rock-side,

Haf here þi helme on þy hede, þi spere *in* þi honde,

2144

& ryde me doun þis ilk rake, bi 3on rokke syde,

till thou come to the bottom of the valley;

Til þou be bro3t to þe boþem of þe brem valay;

look a little to the left,

Þenne loke a littel on þe launde, on þi lyfte honde,

and thou shalt see the Chapel itself and the man that guards it."

& þou schal se *in* þat slade þe self chapel,

2148

& þe borelych burne on bent, þat hit kepe3.

Now fare3 wel on Gode3 half, Gawayn þe noble,

For alle þe golde vpon grounde I nolde go with þe,

Ne bere þe fela3schip þur3 þis fryth on fote fyrre."

Having thus spoken the guide takes leave of the knight. 2152

Bi þat þe wy3e *in* þe wod wende3 his brydel,

Hit þe hors *with* þe hele3, as harde as he my3t,

Lepe3 *hym* ouer þe launde, & leue3 þe kny3t þere,

al one.

"By God's self," says Sir Gawayne, "I will neither weep nor groan.

2156

"Bi Godde3 self," *quod* Gawayn,

"I wyl nauper grete ne grone,

To God's will I am full ready."

To Godde3 wylle I am ful bayn,

& to *hym* I haf me tone."

VIII.

[Fol. 120.]

Then he pursues his journey, 2160

Thenne gyrde3 he to Gryngolet, & gedere3 þe rake,
Schowue3 *in* bi a schore, at a schaze syde,
rides through the dale, and looks about.

Ride3 þur3 þe ro3e bonk, ry3t to þe dale;
& þenne he wayted hym aboute, & wylde hit hym þo3t,
He sees no sign of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks.

2164

& se3e no syngne of resette, bisyde3 nowhere,
Bot hy3e bonkke3 & brent, vpon boþe halue,
& ru3e knokled knarre3, *with* knorned stone3;
þe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued¹ hym þo3t.

2168

þenne he houed, & wyth-hylde his hors at þat tyde,
& ofte chaunged his cher, þe chapel to seche;
No chapel could he discern.

He se3 non suche *in* no syde, & selly hym þo3t,
Sone a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit we[re];
At last he sees a hill by the side of a stream; 2172

A bal3 ber3, bi a bonke, þe brymme by-syde,
Bi a for3 of a flode, þat ferked þare;
þe borne blubred þer-*inne*, as hit boyled hade.

thither he goes,

þe kny3t kache3 his caple, & com to þe lawe,
alights and fastens his horse to a branch of a tree. 2176

Li3te3 doun luflyly, & at a lynde tache3
þe rayne, & his riche, with a ro3e braunche;
He walks around the hill, debating with himself what it might be,
þen[n]e he bo3e3 to þe ber3e, aboute hit he walke,
D[e]batande *with* hym-self, quat hit be my3t.

2180

Hit hade a hole on þe ende, & on ayþer syde,
 & ouer-grown *with* gresse *in* glodes ay where,
 & al wat3 hol3 *in-with*, nobot an olde caue,
 and at last finds an old cave in the crag.
 Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he coupe hit no3t deme
 2184
with spelle,
 "We,² lorde," *quod* þe gentyle kny3t,
 "Wheþer þis be þe grene chapelle;
 He prays that about midnight he may tell his matins.
 He my3t aboute myd-ny3t,
 2188
 [Þ]e dele his matynnes telle!"
¹ skayned (?). ² wel (?).

IX.

"Truly," says Sir Gawayne, "a desert is here,
 "Now i-wysse," *quod* Wowayn, "wysty is here;
 Þis oritore is vgly, *with* erbe3 ouer-grown;
 a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions in devil
 fashion.'
 Wel biseme3 þe wy3e wruxled *in* grene
 2192
 Dele here his deuocioun, on þe deuele3 wyse;
 Now I fele hit is þe fende, *in* my fyue wytte3,
 Þat hat3 stoken me þis steuen, to strye me here;
 It is most cursed kirk that ever I entered."
 Þis is a chapel of meschaunce, þat chekke hit by-tyde,
 2196
 Hit is þe corsesdest kyrk, þat euer i com *inne*!"
 [Fol. 120b.]

With heȝe helme on his hede, his launce *in* his honde,
Roaming about he hears a loud noise,

He romeȝ vp to þe rokke of þo roȝ woneȝ;

Þene herde he of þat hyȝe hil, *in* a harde roche,
from beyond the brook. 2200

Biȝonde þe broke, *in* a bonk, a wonder breme noyse,
It clattered like the grinding of a scythe on a grindstone.

Quat! hit clatered *in* þe clyff, as hit cleue schulde,

As one vpon a gryndelston hade grounden a syȝe;
It whirred like a mill-stream.

What! hit wharred, & whette, as water at a mulne,
2204

What! hit rusched, & ronge, rawȝe to here.

Þenne "bi Godde," *quod* Gawayn, "þat gere as¹ I trowe,
Is ryched at þe reuerence, me renk to mete,
bi rote;

2208

Let God worche we loo,

"Though my life I forgo," says the knight, "no noise shall terrify me."

Hit helppeȝ me not a mote,

My lif þaȝ I for-goo,

Drede dotȝ me no lote."

¹ at, in MS.

X.

Then cried he aloud, 2212

Thenne þe knyȝt con calle ful hyȝe,

"Who dwells here discourse with me to hold?"

"Who stigtelȝ *in* þis sted, me steuen to holde?

Now is the good Gawayne going aright

For now is gode Gawayn goande ryȝt here,

If any wyȝe oȝt wyl wyⁿne hider fast,
2216

O^per now, o^per neuer, his nedeȝ to spede."
He hears a voice commanding him to abide where he is.
"Abyde," *quod* on on þe bonke, abouen ouer his hede,
"& þou schal haf al *in* hast, þat I þe hyȝt ones."
ȝet he rusched on þat rurde, rapely a þrowe,

2220
& wyth quettyng a-wharf, er he wolde lyȝt;
Soon there comes out of a hole, with a fell weapon,
& syþen he keuereȝ bi a cragge, & comeȝ of a hole,
Whyrlande out of a wro, wyth a felle weppen,
a Danish axe, quite new,
A deneȝ ax nwe dyȝt, þe dynt *with* [t]o ȝelde

2224
With a borelych bytte, bende by þe halme,
Fyled *in* a fylor, fowre fote large,
Hit watȝ no lasse, bi þat lace þat lemed ful bryȝt.
the "knight in green," clothed as before.
& þe gome *in* þe erene gered as fyrst,

2228
Boþe þe lyre & þe leggeȝ, lokkeȝ, & berde,
Saue þat fayre on his fote he foundeȝ on þe erþe,
Sette þe stele to þe stone, & stalked bysyde.
When he reaches the stream, he hops over and strides about.
When he wan to þe watter, þer he wade nolde,

2232
He hypped ouer on hys ax, & orpedly strydeȝ,
Bremly broþe on a bent, þat brode watȝ a-boute,
on snawe.

[Fol. 121.]
He meets Sir Gawayne without obeisance.
Sir Gawayn þe knyȝt con mete.

2236
He ne lutte hym no pyng lowe,
The other tells him that he is now ready for conversation
þat o^per sayde, "now, *sir* swete,

Of steuen mon may þe trowe."

XI.

"God preserve thee!" says the Green Knight,
"Gawayn," *quod* þat grene gome, "God þe mot loke!
2240

I-wysse þou art welcom,¹ wyȝe, to my place,
"as a true knight 'thou hast timed thy travel'
& þou hatȝ tyled þi trauayl as *true*² mon schulde;
Thou knowest the covenant between us,
& þou knoweȝ þe couenaunteȝ kest *vus* by-twene,
At þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat þe falled,
that on New Year's day I should return thy blow 2244
& I schulde at þis nwe ȝere ȝeþly þe quyte.

Here we are alone,
& we ar *in* þis valay, verayly oure one,
Here ar no renkes vs to rydde, rele as *vus* likeȝ;
Have off thy helmet and take thy pay at once."

Haf þy³ helme of þy hede, & haf here þy pay;
2248

Busk no more debate þen I þe bede þenne,
"When þou wypped of my hede at a wap one."
"By God," quoth Sir Gawayne, "I shall not begrudge thee thy will."
"Nay, bi God," *quod* Gawayn, "þat me gost lante,
I schal gruch þe no grwe, for grem þat falleȝ;

2252
Botstyȝtel þe vpon on strok, & I schal stonde styлле,
& warp þe no wernyng, to worch as þe lykeȝ,
no whare."

Then he shows his bare neck,
He lened *with* þe nek, & lutte,

2256

& schewed þat schyre al bare,
& lette as he noȝt dutte,
and appears undaunted.

For drede he wolde not dare.

¹ welcon, in MS. ² truee in MS. ³ MS. þy þy.

XII.

Then the man in green seizes his grim tool.

Then þe gome *in* þe grene grayped hym swyþe,
2260

Gedereȝ yp hys grymme tole, Gawayn to smyte;
With all his force he raises it aloft.

With alle þe bur *in* his body he ber hit on lofte,
Munt as maȝtyly, as marre hym he wolde;
Hade hit dryuen adoun, as dreȝ as he atled,

2264

Þer hade ben ded of his dynt, þat doȝty watȝ euer.

Bot Gawayn on þat giserne glyfte hym bysyde,
As it came gliding down,

As hit com glydande adoun, on glode hym to schende,
Sir Gawayne shrank a little with his shoulders.

& schranke a lytel *with* þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrne.

2268

Þat oper schalk wyth a schunt þe schene wythhaldeȝ,
The other reproved him, saying,

& þenne repreued he þe prynce *with* mony prowde wordeȝ:

"Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed,

"Þou art not Gawayn," *quod* þe gome, "þat is so goud halden,
Þat neuer arȝed for no here, by hylle ne be vale,

[Fol. 121*b*.]

for thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm. 2272

& now þou fles for ferde, er þou fele harme3;

Such cowardise of þat kny3t cowpe I neuer here.

I never flinched when thou struckest.

Nawþer fyked I, ne fla3e, freke, quen þou myntest,

Ne kest no kaulacion, in kynge3 hous Arthor,

My head flew to my foot, yet I never fled, 2276

My hede fla3 to my fote, & 3et fla3 I neuer;

& þou, er any harme hent, ar3e3 *in* hert,

wherefore I ought to be called the better man."

Wherefore þe better burne me burde be called

þer-fore."

"I shunted once," says Gawayne, "but will no more. 2280

Quod G:, "I schunt one3,

& so wyl I no more,

Bot pa3 my hede falle on þe stone3,

I con not hit restore.

XIII.

Bring me to the point; deal me my destiny at once." 2284

Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, & bryng me to þe poynt,

Dele to me my destiné, & do hit out of honde,

For I schal stonde þe a strok, & start no more,

Til þyn ax haue me hitte, haf here my trawpe."

"Have at thee, then," says the other. 2288

"Haf at þe þenne," *quod* þat oþer, & heue3 hit alofte,

& wayte3 as wropely, as he wode were;

With that he aims at him a blow.

He mynte3 at hym ma3tyly, bot not þe mon ryue3,¹

With-helde heterly h[i]s honde, er hit hurt my3t.

Gawayne never flinches, but stands as still as a stone. 2292
 Gawayn graypely hit byde3, & glent *with* no membre,
 Bot stode styll as þe ston, oper a stubbe auþer,
 Þat rapeled is *in* roche grounde, *with* rote3 a hundreth.
 Þen muryly efte con he mele, þe mon *in* þe grene,
 "Now," says the Green Knight, "I must hit thee, since thy heart is
 whole." 2296
 "So now þou hat3 þi hert holle, hitte me bihou[e]s;
 Halde þe now þe hy3e hode, þat Arþur þe ra3t,
 & kepe þy kanel at þis kest, 3if hit keuer may."
 G: ful gryndelly *with* greme þenne sayde,
 "Thrash on," says the other. 2300
 "Wy þresch on, þou þro mon, þou þrete3 to longe,
 I hope þat þi hert ar3e wyth þyn awen seluen."
 "For soþe," *quod* þat oper freke, "so felly þou speke3,
 I wyl no lenger on lyte lette þin ernde,
 2304
 ri3t nowe."
 Then the Green Knight makes ready to strike.
 Þenne tas he² hym stryþe to stryke,
 & frounses boþe lyppe & browe,
 No meruayle þa3 hym myslyke,
 2308
 Þat hoped of no rescowe.
¹ ? *ryne3* = touches. ² he he, in MS.

XIV.

He let fall his loom on the bare
 He lyftes ly3tly his lome, & let hit doun fayre,
 [Fol. 122.]
 neck of Sir Gawayne.

With þe barbe of þe bitte bi þe bare nek
Þa3 he homered heterly, hurt hym no more,

2312

Bot snyrt hym on þat on syde, þat seuered þe hyde;
The sharp weapon pierced the flesh so that the blood flowed.
Þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þur3 þe schyre grece,
Þat þe schene blod over his schulderes schot to þe erþe.
When the knight saw the blood on the snow,
& quen þe burne se3 þe blode blenk on þe snawe,

2316

He sprit forth spenne fote more þen a spere lenþe,
Hent heterly his helme, & on his hed cast,
Schot with his schuldere3 his fayre schelde vnder,
he unsheathed his sword, and thus spake:
Brayde3 out a bry3t sworde, & bremely he speke3;

2320

Neuer syn þat he wat3 burne borne of his moder,
Wat3 he neuer in þis worlde, wy3e half so blyþe:—
"Cease, man, of thy blow.
"Blynne, burne, of þy bur, bede me no mo;
I haf a stroke in þis sted with-oute stryf hent,
If thou givest me any more, readily shall I requite thee. 2324
& if þow reche3 me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,
& 3elde 3ederly a3ayn, & þer to 3e tryst,
& foo;

Our agreement stipulates only one stroke."

Bot on stroke here me falle3,

2328

Þe couenaunt schop ry3t so,
[Sikered]¹ in Arpure3 halle3,
& þer-fore, hende, now hoo!"

¹ Illegible.

The Green Knight rested on his axe,
The hapel heldet hym fro, & on his ax rested,

2332

Sette þe schaft vpon schore, & to be scharp lened,
looked on Sir Gawayne, who appeared bold and fearless,
& loked to þe leude, þat on þe launde ȝede,
How þat doȝty dredles deruely þer stondeȝ,
Armed ful aȝleȝ; in hert hit hym lykeȝ.

2336

þenn he meleȝ muryly, wyth a much steuen,
and addressed him as follows: "Bold knight, be not so wroth,
& wyth a r[a]ykande rurde he to þe renk sayde,
"Bolde burne, on þis bent be not so gryndel;
No mon here vn-manerly þe mys-boden habbe,

2340

Ne kyd, bot as couenaunde, at kynȝeȝ kort schaped;
I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it, be satisfied.
I hyȝt þe a strok, & þou hit hatȝ, halde þe wel payed,
I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ryȝtes alle oper;
ȝif¹ I deliuer had bene, a boffet, paraunter,
I could have dealt worse with thee. 2344

I coupe wrope loker haf waret, [&] to þe haf wroȝt anger.²

Fyrst I mansed þe muryly, *with* a mynt one,
I menaced thee with one blow for the covenant
& roue þe wyth no rof, sore *with* ryȝt I þe profered,
[Fol. 122b.]

between us on the first night.

For þe forwarde that we fest in þe fyrst nyȝt,

2348

& þou trystyly þe trawpe & trwly me haldeȝ,
Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon shulde;
Another I aimed at thee because thou kissedst my wife.
Þat oper munt for þe morne, mon, I þe profered,
Þou kyssedes my clere wyf, þe cosseȝ me raȝteȝ,

2352

For bope two here I þe bede bot two bare myntes,
boute scape;

A true man should restore truly, and then he need fear no harm.

Trwe mon trwe restore,

Þenne þar mon drede no wape;

Thou failedst at the third time, and therefore take thee that tap. (See l. 1861.) 2356

At þe þrid þou fayled þore,

& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.

¹ uf, in MS. ² This word is doubtful.

XVI.

For my weed (woven by my wife) thou wearest.

For hit is my wede þat þou were3, þat ilke wouen girdel,

Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel forsoþe;

I know thy kisses and my wife's wooing. 2360

Now know I wel þy cosses, & þy costes als,

& þe wowyng of my wyf, I wro3t hit myseluen;

I sent her to try thee, and faultless I found thee.

I sende hir to asay þe, & sothly me þynkke3,

On þe fautlest freke, þat euer on fote 3ede;

2364

As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,

So is Gawayn, *in* god fayth, bi oper gay kny3te3.

But yet thou sinnedst a little,

Bot here you lakked a lyttel, *sir*, & lewte yow wanted,

Bot þat wat3 for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
for love of thy life." 2368

Bot for 3e lufed *your* lyf, þe lasse I yow blame."

Þat oper stif mon *in* study stod a gret whyle;

So agreued for greme he gryed *with-inne*,

Gawayne stands confounded.

Alle þe blode of his brest blende *in* his face,

2372

þat al he schrank for schome, þat þe schalk talked.
þe forme worde vpon folde, þat þe freke meled,—
"Cursed," he says, "be cowardice and covetousness both!"
"Corsed worth cowarddyse & couetyse bope!
In yow is vylany & vyse, þat vertue disstrye3."
Then he takes off the girdle and throws it to the knight. 2376
þenne he ka3t to þe knot, & þe kest lawse3,
Brayde broþely þe belt to þe burne seluen:
"Lo! þer þe falssyng, foule mot hit falle!
He curses his cowardice,
For care of þy knokke cowardyse me ta3t

2380

To a-corde me *with* couetyse, my kynde to for-sake,
þat is larges & lewte, þat longe3 to kny3te3.
and confesses himself to have been guilty of untruth.
Now am I fawty, & falce, & ferde haf ben euer;
Of trecherye & vn-trawþe bope bityde sor3e

2384

& care!

[Fol. 123.]

I bi-knowe yow, kny3t, here style,
Al fawty is my fare,
Lete3 me ouer-take *your* wylle,

2388

& efle I schal be ware."

XVII.

Then the other, laughing, thus spoke:

Thenne lo3e þat oper leude, & luflyly sayde,
"I halde hit hardily¹ hole, þe harme þat I hade;

"Thou art confessed so clean,

þou art confessed so clene, be-knowen of þy mysses,

2392

& hat3 þe penaunce apert, of þe poynt of myn egge,
that I hold thee as pure as if thou hadst never been guilty.

I halde þe polysed of þat ply3t, & pured as clene,

As þou hade3 neuer forfeited, syþen þou wat3 fyrst borne.

I give thee, sir, the gold-hemmed girdle,

& I gif þe, *sir*, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;

2396

For hit is grene as my goune, *sir* G:, 3e maye

þenk vpon þis ilke þrepe, þer þou forth þrynge3

Among prynces of prys, & þis a pure token

as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel.

Of þe chaunce of þe grene chapel, at cheualrous kny3te3;

Come again to my abode, and abide there for the remainder of the
festival." 2400

& 3e schal *in* þis nwe 3er a3ayn to my wone3,

& we schyn reuel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest,
ful bene."

þer laped hym fast þe lorde,

2404

& sayde, "*with* my wyf, I wene,

We schal yow wel acorde,

þat wat3 *your* enmy kene."

¹ hardilyly, in MS.

XVIII.

"Nay, forsooth," says Gawayne,

"Nay, for soþe," *quod* þe segge, & sesed hys helme,

2408

& hat3 hit of hendely, & þe hapel þonkke3,
"I have sojourned sadly, but bliss betide thee!
"I haf soioined sadly, sele yow bytyde,
& he 3elde hit yow 3are, þat 3arkke3 al *menskes*!
Commend me to your comely wife and that other lady who have
beguiled me.

& comaunde3 me to þat cortays, *your* comlych fere,
2412

Boþe þat on & þat oper, myn honoured ladye3.
Þat þus hor kny3t wyth hor kest han koyntly bigyled.
But it is no marvel for a man to be brought to grief through a
woman's wiles.

Bot hit is no ferly, þa3 a fole madde,
& þur3 wyles of *wymmen* be wonen to sor3e;
Adam, Solomon, Samson, and David were beguiled by women. 2416
For so wat3 Adam *in* erde *with* one bygyled,
& Salamon *with* fele sere, & Samson eft sone3,
Dalyda dalt hym hys wyrde, & Dauyth þer-after
Wat3 blended *with* Barsabe, þat much bale poled.
How could a man love them and believe them not? 2420

Now þese were wrathed wyth her wyles, hit were a *wynne* huge,
To luf hom wel, & leue hem not, a leude þat coupe,
[Fol. 123*b*.]

For þes wer forme¹ þe freest þat fol3ed alle þe sele,
Ex-ellently of alle þyse oper, vnder heuen-ryche,
2424
þat mused;
& alle þay were bi-wyled,
With² *wymmen* þat þay vsed,
Though I be now beguiled, methinks I should be excused.

Þa3 I be now bigyled,
2428
Me þink me burde be excused."

¹ forme (?) ² with wyth, in MS.

XIX.

But God reward you for your girdle.

"Bot *your* gordel," *quod* G: "God yow for-3elde!

Þat wyl I welde wyth good wylle, not for þe *wynne* golde,

Ne þe saynt, ne þe sylk, ne þe syde pendaundes,

2432

For wele, ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk werkke3,

I will wear it in remembrance of my fault.

Bot *in* syngne of my surfet I schal se hit ofte;

When I ride *in* renoun, remorde to myseluen

Þe faut & þe fayntyse of þe flesche crabbed,

2436

How tender hit is to entyse teches of fylþe;

And when pride shall prick me,

& þus, quen pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
a look to this lace shall abate it.

Þe loke to þis luf lace schal leþe my hert.

Bot on I wolde yow pray, displeases yow neuer;

2440

Syn 3e be lorde of þe 3onde[r] londe, þer I haf lent *inne*,

Wyth yow wyth worschyp,—þe wy3e hit yow 3elde

Þat vp-halde3 þe heuen, & on hy3 sitte3,—

But tell me your right name and I shall have done."

How norne 3e yowre ry3t nome, & þenne no more?"

2444

"Þat schal I telle þe trwly," *quod* þat oþer þenne,

The Green Knight replies, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert,
through might of Morgain la Fey, the pupil of Merlin.

"Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat *in* þis londe,

Þur3 my3t of Morgne la Faye, þat *in* my hous lenges,

&¹ koyntyse of clergie, bi craftes wel lerned,

2448

Þe maystres of Merlyn, mony ho² taken;

For ho hat3 dalt drwry ful dere *sum* tyme,
With þat conable klerk, þat knowes alle *your* kny3te3
at hame;

2452

Morgne þe goddes,
Þer-fore hit is hir name;

She can tame even the haughtiest.

Welde3 non so hy3e hawtesse,
Þat ho ne con make ful tame.

¹ in (?). ² ho hat3 (?).

XX.

It was she who caused me to test the renown of the Round Table,

2456

Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to *your* wyne halle,
For to assay þe surquidre, 3if hit soth were,
Þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table;
Ho wayned me þis wonder, *your* wytte3 to reue,

[Fol. 124.]

hoping to grieve Guenever and cause her death through fear. 2460

For to haf greued Gaynour, & gart hir to dy3e.

With gopnyng¹ of þat ilke gomen, þat gostlych speked,
With his hede *in* his honde, bfore þe hy3e table.

Þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian lady;

She is even thine aunt. 2464

Ho is euen þyn aunt, Arpure3 half suster,
Þe duches do3ter of Tyntagelle, þat dere *Vter* after

Therefore come to her and make merry in my house."

Hade Arpur vpon, þat apel is nowþe.

Þerfore I epe þe, hape, to com to þy naunt,

2468

Make myry *in* my hous, my meny þe louies,
& I wol þe as wel, wyȝe, bi my faythe,
As any gome vnder God, for þy grete troupe."
Gawayne refuses to return with the Green Knight.
& he nikked hym naye, he nolde bi no wayes;

2472

þay acolen & kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer
To þe prynce of paradise, & parten ryȝt þere,
on coolde;
On horse full fair he bends to Arthur's hall.
Gawayn on blonk ful bene,

2476

To þe kyngeȝ burȝ buskeȝ bolde,
& þe knyȝt *in* þe enker grene,
Whider-warde so euer he wolde.
¹ glopnyng (?).

XXI.

Wild ways now Gawayne rides.

Wylde wayeȝ *in* þe worlde Woven now rydeȝ,
2480

On Gryngolet, þat þe *grace* hade geten of his lyue;
Oft he harboured in house and oft thereout.

Ofte he herbered *in* house, & ofte al þeroute,
& mony a-venture *in* vale, & venquyst ofte,
þat I ne tyȝt, at þis tyme, *in* tale to remene.

The wound in his neck became whole. 2484

þe hurt watȝ hole, þat he hade hent *in* his nek,
He still carried about him the belt,
& þe blykkande belt he bere þeraboutte,
A belef as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde,

Loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace, *with* a knot,
in token of his fault. 2488

In tokenyng he wat3 tane *in* tech of a faute;
Thus he comes to the Court of King Arthur.

& þus he *commes* to þe court, kny3t al *in* sounde.
Great then was the joy of all.

Þer wakned wele *in* þat wone, when wyst þe grete,
Þat gode G: wat3 *commen*, gayn hit hym þo3t;
The king and his knights ask him concerning his journey. 2492

Þe kyng kysse3 þe kny3t, & þe whene alce,
& syþen mony syker kny3t, þat so3t hym to haylce,
Gawayne tells them of his adventures,

Of his fare þat hym frayned, & ferlyly he telles;
Biknowo3 alle þe costes of care þat he hade,—
2496

Þe chaunce of þe chapel, þe chere of þe kny3t,
[Fol. 124*b*.]

the love of the lady, and lastly of the lace.

Þe luf of þe ladi, þe lace at þe last.

Þe nirt *in* þe nek he naked hem schewed,
He showed them the cut in his neck.

Þat he la3t for his vnleute at þe leudes hondes,
2500

for blame;

He tened quen he schulde telle,
He groaned for grief and shame, and the blood rushed into his face.

He groned for gref & grame;

Þe blod *in* his face con melle,
2504

When he hit schulde schewe, for schame.

XXII.

"Lo!" says he, handling the lace, "this is the band of blame,

"Lo! lorde," *quod* þe leude, & þe lace hondeled,

"Þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere [in] my nek,

Þis is þe lape & þe losse, þat I laȝt haue,

a token of my cowardice and covetousness, 2508

Of couardise & couetyse, þat I haf caȝt þare,

Þis is þe token of vn-trawþe, þat I am tan inne,

I must needs wear it as long as I live."

& I mot nedeȝ hit were, wyle I may last;

For non may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit,

2512

For þer hit oneȝ is tachched, twynne wil hit neuer."

The king comforts the knight, and all the court too.

Þe kyng comforteȝ þe knyȝt, & alle þe court als,

Laȝen loude þer-at, & luflyly acorden,

Þat lordes & ladis, þat longed to þe Table,

Each knight of the brotherhood agrees to wear a bright green belt,

2516

Vche burne of þe broþer-hede a bauderyk schulde haue,

A bende, a belef hym aboute, of a bryȝt grene,

for Gawayne's sake,

& þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.

For þat watȝ acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table,

who ever more honoured it. 2520

& he honoured þat hit hade, euer-more after,

As hit is breued in þe best boke of romaunce.

Thus in Arthur's day this adventure befell.

Þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,

Þe Brutus bokees þer-of beres wyttenesse;

2524

Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, boȝed hider fyrst,

After þe segge & þe asaute watȝ sesed at Troye,

I-wysse;

Mony auntereȝ here bi-forne,

2528

Haf fallen suche er þis:

He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to His bliss!

Now þat bere þe croun of þorne,
He bryng *vus* to his blysse! AMEN.

NOTES.

- Ricchis turns, goes,
The king ...
Line 8 *Ricchis* his reynys and the Renke metys:
Girden to gedur with þere grete speires.—T.B. I. 1232.
þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse.
37 *Camalot*, in Malory's "Morte Arthure," is said to be the same
as Winchester. Ritson supposes it to be *Caer-went*, in
Monmouthshire, and afterwards confounded with *Caer-*
wynt, or *Winchester*. But popular tradition here seems the
best guide, which assigned the site of *Camalot* to the ruins
of a castle on a hill, near the church of South Cadbury, in
Somersetshire (Sir F. Madden).
Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte.
65 Christmas celebrated anew, mentioned full often.
Sir F. Madden leaves the word *nayted* unexplained in his
Glossary to "Syr Gawayne."
124 *syluener* = *sylueren*, i.e. silver dishes.
139 *lyndes* = *lendes*, loins.
142 *in his muckel*, in his greatness.
Wat3 euesed al umbe-torne—? was trimmed, all cut evenly
184 around; *umbe-torne* may be an error for *vmbe-corue* = cut
round.
216 *in gracios werkes*. Sir F. Madden reads *gracons* for *gracios*,
and suggests *Greek* as the meaning of it.
244-5 *As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor lote3*
in hy3e.
As all were fallen asleep so ceased their words
in haste (suddenly).
Sir F. Madden reads *slaked horlote3*, instead of *slaked hor*
lote3, which, according to his glossary, signifies drunken

vagabonds. He evidently takes *horlote*³ to be another (and a very uncommon) form of *harlote*³ = *harlots*. But *harlot*, or vagabond, would be a very inappropriate term to apply to the noble *Knights of the Round Table*. Moreover, *slaked* never, I think, means drunken. The general sense of the verb *slake* is to let loose, lessen, cease. Cf. lines 411-2, where *sloke*, another form of *slake*, occurs with a similar meaning:

— *layt no fyrre; bot slokes.*

— seek no further, but stop (cease).

Sir F. Madden suggests *blows* as the explanation of *slokes*. It is, however, a *verb* in the imperative mood.

286 *Brayn*. Mätzner suggests *brayn-wod*.

barlay = par loi. This word is exceedingly common in the T. Book (see l. 3391).

296 I bid you now, *barlay*, with besines at all

Pat ye set you most souverainly my suster to gete.—T.B.
l. 2780.

394 *siker*. Sir F. Madden reads *swer*.

bluk. Sir F. Madden suggests *blunk* (horse). I am inclined to keep to the reading of the MS., and explain *bluk* as = *bulk* = trunk. Cf. the use of the word *Blok* in "Early English Alliterative Poems," p. 100, l. 272.

558 *derue doel*, etc. = great grief. Sir F. Madden reads *derne*, i.e. secret, instead of *derue* (= *derf*). Cf. line 564.

knaged, fastened.

The braunches were borly, sum of bright gold,
With leuys full luffly, light of the same;
577 With burions aboue bright to beholde;
And fruit on yt fourmyt of fairest of shap,
Of mony kynd that was knyht, *knagged* aboue.—T.B.
l. 4973.

& *ay quere hit is endele*³, etc.

629 And everywhere it is *endless*, etc.

Sir F. Madden reads *emdele*³, i.e. with equal sides.

652 *for-be* = *for-bi* = surpassing, beyond.

- 681 for *Hadet* read *Halet* = *haled* = exiled (?). See line 1049.
- 806 *auinant* = *auenaunt*, pleasantly. Sir F. Madden reads *amnant*.
- 954 *of*. Should we not read *on* (?).
Pat oper wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre.
 The *gorger* or *wimple* is stated first to have appeared in Edward the First's reign, and an example is found on the monument of Aveline, Countess of Lancaster, who died in 1269. From the poem, however, it would seem that the *gorger* was confined to elderly ladies (Sir F. Madden)
- 957 *More lykker-wys on to lyk,*
Wat3 þat scho had on lode.
 A more pleasant one to like,
 Was that (one) she had under her control.
- 968
- 988 *tayt* = lively, and hence pleasant, agreeable.
- 1015 *in vayres*, in purity.
- 1020 *dut* = *dunt* (?) = *dint* (?), referring to *sword-sports*.
sayn[t] lone3 day. This is the 27th of December, and the last of the feast. Sometimes the Christmas festivities were prolonged to New Year's Day (Sir F. Madden).
- 1022
- 1047 *derne dede* = secret deed. I would prefer to read *derue dede* = great deed. Cf. lines 558, 564.
- 1053 *I wot in worlde*, etc. = *I not* (I know not) *in worlde*, etc.
I nolde, bot if I hit negh my3t on nw3eres morne,
For alle þe londe in-wyth Logres, etc.
- 1054 I would not [delay to set out], unless I might approach it on New Year's morn, for all the lands within England, etc.
- 1074 *in spenne* = *in space* = in the interval = meanwhile. See line 1503.
- 1160 *slentyng of arwes*. Sir F. Madden reads *sleutyng*.
 "Of drawyn swordis *scentyng* to and fra,
 The brycht mettale, and othir armouris seir,
 Quharon the sonnys blenkis betis cleir,
 Glitteris and schane, and vnder bemys brycht,

Castis ane new twynklyng or a lemand lyght."
(G. Douglas' *Æneid*, Vol. i, p. 421.)

1281 *let lyk* = appeared pleased.

þa3 I were burde bry3test, þe burde in mynde hade, etc.

The sense requires us to read:

1283 *þa3 ho were burde bry3test, þe burne in mynde hade*,
etc.

i.e., Though she were lady fairest, the knight in mind had,
etc.

Long sythen [seuered] for þe sounder þat wi3t for-olde
Long since separated from the *sounder* or herd that fierce
(one) for-aged (grew very old).

"Now to speke of the boore, the fyrste year he is
A pygge of the *sounder* callyd, as haue I blys;
1440 The secounde yere an hogge, and soo shall he be,
And an hoggestere, whan he is of yeres thre;
And when he is foure yere, a boor shall he be,
From the *sounder* of the swyne thenne departyth he;
A synguler is he soo, for alone he woll go."

(Book of St. Alban's, ed. 1496, sig. *d.*, i.)

totes = looks, toots.

1476 Sho went up wightly by a walle syde.
To the toppe of a toure and *tot* ouer the water.—T.B.
l. 862.

1623 A verb [*? laled* = cried] seems wanting after *lorde*.
fnasted, breathed.

1702 These balfull bestes were, as the boke tellus,
Full flaumond of fyre with *fnastyng* of logh.—T.B. l. 168.

1710 *a strothe rande* = a rugged path. Cf. the phrases *tene*
greue, l. 1707; *ro3e greue*, l. 1898.

1729 *bi lag* = *be-lagh*(?) = below (?).

Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list, etc.

1719 Should we not read:

Thenne wat3 hit list vpon lif, etc.

i.e., Then was there joy in life, etc.

- 1780 *lyf* = *lef*(?), beloved (one).
Ho hat3 kyst þe kny3t so to3t.
She has kissed the knight so courteous.
 Sir F. Madden explains *to3t*, promptly. *To3t* seems to be the same as the Northumbrian *taght* in the following extract from the "Morte Arthure":
- 1869 "There come in at the fyrste course, before the kyng seluene,
 Bare hevedys that ware bryghte, burnyste with sylver,
 Alle with *taghte* mene and *towne* in togers fulle ryche."—
 (p. 15.)
 The word *towne* (well-behaved) still exists in *wan-ton*, the original meaning of which was ill-mannered, ill-bred.
- 1909 *bray hounde3* = *brap hounde3*, i.e. fierce hounds.
- 1995 *He hat3 nere þat he so3t* = *He wat3 nere þat he so3t* = He was near to that which he sought.
- 2160 *gedere3 þe rake* = takes the path or way.
þe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued hym po3t.
 The shadows of the hills appeared wild (desolate) to him.
- 2167 Sir F. Madden reads *skayned*, of which he gives no explanation. *Skayued* = *skayfed*, seems to be the N. Prov. English *scafe*, wild. Scotch *schaivie*, wild, mad. O.N. *skeifr*. Sw. *skef*, awry, distorted.
- 2204 *ronge* = clattered.
- 2211 *Drede dot3 me no lote* =
 No noise shall cause me to dread (fear).
& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.
 And therefore take thee that tap.
- 2357 *ta þe* = take thee. Sir F. Madden reads *tape* = *taketh*. See l. 413, where *to þe* rhymes with *sothe*. We have no imperatives in *th* in this poem.
- 2401 *We schyn reuel*, etc. Sir F. Madden reads *wasch yn reuel*. But *schyn* = shall. See Glossary to "Alliterative Poems."
- 2474 *on-coolde* = *on-colde* = *coldly* = sorrowfully.
- 2489 *in-sounde* = *soundly*, well. Cf. *in-blande* = together; *in-lyche*,

alike; *inmydde3*, amidst.

SIR GAWAYNE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT:

AN ALLITERATIVE ROMANCE-POEM,

(AB. 1360 A.D.)

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"EARLY ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE POEMS."

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

BY

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

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

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

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

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

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

R.M.

LONDON,

December 22, 1864.

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

I. The mode of completely arming a knight (ll. 568-589).

II. The hunting and breaking the deer (ll. 1126-1359).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The knight carried no helmet, shield, or spear, but in one hand a holly bough, and in the other an axe "huge and unmeet," the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor (ll. 203-220). Thus arrayed, the Green Knight enters the hall without saluting any one. The first word that he uttered was, "Where is the govenour of this gang? gladly would I see him and with himself speak reason." To the knights he cast his eye, looking for the most renowned. Much did the noble assembly marvel to see a man and a horse of such a hue, green as the grass. Even greener they seemed than green enamel on bright gold. Many marvels had they seen, but none such as this. They were afraid to answer, but sat stone-still in a dead silence, as if overpowered by sleep;

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

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

him a stroke, stiff on this floor, provided that I deal him another in return.

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

If he astounded them at first, much more so did he after this speech, and fear held them all silent. The knight, righting himself in his saddle, rolls fiercely his red eyes about, bends his bristly green brows, and strokes his beard awaiting a reply. But finding none that would carp with him, he exclaims, "What! is this Arthur's house, the fame of which has spread through so many realms? Forsooth, the renown of the Round Table is overturned by the word of one man's speech, for all tremble for dread without a blow being struck!" (ll. 283-313). With this he laughed so loud that Arthur blushed for very shame, and waxed as wroth as the wind. "I know no man," he says, "that is aghast at thy great words. Give me now thy axe and I will grant thee thy request!" Arthur seizes the axe, grasps the handle, and sternly brandishes it about, while the Green Knight, with a stern cheer and a dry countenance, stroking his beard and drawing down his coat, awaits the blow (ll. 314-335). Sir Gawayne, the nephew of the king, beseeches his uncle to let him undertake the encounter; and, at the earnest entreaty of his nobles, Arthur consents "to give Gawayne the game" (ll. 336-365).

Sir Gawayne then takes possession of the axe, but, before the blow is dealt, the Green Knight asks the name of his opponent. "In good faith," answers the good knight, "Gawayne I am called, that bids thee to this buffet, whatever may befall after, and at this time twelvemonth will take from thee another, with whatever weapon thou wilt, and with no wight else alive." "By Gog," quoth the Green Knight, "it pleases me well that I shall receive at thy fist that which I have sought here—moreover thou hast truly rehearsed the terms of the covenant,—but thou shalt first pledge

me thy word that thou wilt seek me thyself, wheresoever on earth thou believest I may be found, and fetch thee such wages as thou dealest me to-day before this company of doughty ones." "Where should I seek thee?" replies Gawayne, "where is thy place? I know not thee, thy court, or thy name. I wot not where thou dwellest, but teach me thereto, tell me how thou art called, and I shall endeavour to find thee,—and that I swear thee for truth and by my sure troth." "That is enough in New Year," says the groom in green, "if I tell thee when I have received the tap. When thou hast smitten me, then smartly I will teach thee of my house, my home, and my own name, so that thou mayest follow my track and fulfil the covenant between us. If I spend no speech, then speedest thou the better, for then mayest thou remain in thy own land and seek no further; but cease thy talking¹ (ll. 366-412). Take now thy grim tool to thee and let us see how thou knockest." "Gladly, sir, for sooth," quoth Gawayne, and his axe he brandishes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Though words were wanting when they first to seat went, now are their hands full of stern work, and the marvel affords them good subject for conversation. But a year passes full quickly and never returns,—the beginning is seldom like the end; wherefore this Christmas passed away and the year after, and each season in turn followed after another (ll. 476-520). Thus winter

winds round again, and then Gawayne thinks of his wearisome journey (ll. 521-535). On All-hallows day Arthur entertains right nobly the lords and ladies of his court in honour of his nephew, for whom all courteous knights and lovely ladies were in great grief. Nevertheless they spoke only of mirth, and, though joyless themselves, made many a joke to cheer the good Sir Gawayne (ll. 536-565). Early on the morrow Sir Gawayne, with great ceremony, is arrayed in his armour (ll. 566-589), and thus completely equipped for his adventure he first hears mass, and afterwards takes leave of Arthur, the knights of the Round Table, and the lords and ladies of the court, who kiss him and commend him to Christ. He bids them all good day, as he thought, for evermore (ll. 590-669);

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

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

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

Thus in peril and plight the knight travels on until Christmas-eve, and to Mary he makes his moan that she may direct him to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All this time Gawayne lies in his gay bed. His nap is disturbed by a little noise at the door, which is softly opened. He heaves up his head out of the clothes, and, peeping through the curtains, beholds a most lovely lady (the wife of his host). She came towards the bed, and the knight laid himself down quickly, pretending to be asleep. The lady stole to the bed, cast up the curtains, crept within, sat her softly on the bed-side, and waited some time till the knight should awake. After lurking awhile under the clothes considering what it all meant, Gawayne unlocked his eyelids, and put on a look of surprise, at the same time making the sign of the cross, as if afraid of some hidden danger (ll. 1178-1207). "Good morrow, sir," said that fair lady, "ye are a careless sleeper to let one enter thus. I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure." "Good morrow," quoth Gawayne, "I shall act according to your will with great pleasure, but permit me to rise that I may the more comfortably converse with you." "Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one, "ye shall not rise from your bed, for since I have caught my knight I shall hold talk with him. I ween well that ye are Sir Gawayne that all the world worships, whose honour and courtesy are so greatly praised. Now ye are here, and we are alone (my lord and his men being afar off, other men, too, are in bed, so are my maidens), and the door is safely closed, I shall use my time well while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my person to do with it as ye please, and I will be your servant" (ll. 1208-1240).

Gawayne behaves most discreetly, for the remembrance of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel prevents him from thinking of love (ll. 1205-1289). At last the lady takes leave of the knight by catching him in her arms and kissing him (ll. 1290-1307). The day passes away merrily, and at dusk the Lord of the castle returns from the chase. He presents the venison to Gawayne according to the previous covenant between them. Our knight gives his host a kiss as the only piece of good fortune that had fallen to him during the day. "It is good," says the other, "and would be much better if ye would tell me where ye won such bliss" (ll. 1308-1394). "That was not in our

covenant," replies Gawayne, "so try me no more." After much laughing on both sides they proceed to supper, and afterwards, while the choice wine is being carried round, Gawayne and his host renew their agreement. Late at night they take leave of each other and hasten to their beds. "By the time that the cock had crowed and cackled thrice" the lord was up, and after "meat and mass" were over the hunters make for the woods, where they give chase to a wild boar who had grown old and mischievous (ll. 1395-1467).

While the sportsmen are hunting this "wild swine" our lovely knight lies in his bed. He is not forgotten by the lady, who pays him an early visit, seeking to make further trial of his virtues. She sits softly by his side and tells him that he has forgotten what she taught him the day before (ll. 1468-1486). "I taught you of kissing," says she; "that becomes every courteous knight." Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden him. The lady replies that he is strong enough to enforce his own wishes. Our knight answers that every gift not given with a good will is worthless. His fair visitor then enquires how it is that he who is so skilled in the true sport of love and so renowned a knight, has never talked to her of love (ll. 1487-1524). "You ought," she says, "to show and teach a young thing like me some tokens of true-love's crafts; I come hither and sit here alone to learn of you some game; do teach me of your wit while my lord is from home." Gawayne replies that he cannot undertake the task of expounding true-love and tales of arms to one who has far more wisdom than he possesses. Thus did our knight avoid all appearance of evil, though sorely pressed to do what was wrong (ll. 1525-1552). The lady, having bestowed two kisses upon Sir Gawayne, takes her leave of him (ll. 1553-1557).

At the end of the day the lord of the castle returns home with the shields and head of the wild boar. He shows them to his guest, who declares that "such a brawn of a beast, nor such sides of a swine," he never before has seen. Gawayne takes possession of the spoil according to covenant, and in return he bestows two

kisses upon his host, who declares that his guest has indeed been rich with "such chaffer" (ll. 1558-1647).

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

Quoth that lovesome (one)—

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

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

replies that he will not accept gold or reward of any kind, though "ever in hot and in cold" he will be her true servant.

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

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

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

behoved him to suffer," and as a safeguard against sword or knife (ll. 2015-2046).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Now, indeed," quoth Gawayne, "a desert is here; this oratory is ugly with herbs overgrown. It is a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions after the devil's manner.' Now I feel it is the fiend (the devil) in my five wits that has covenanted with me that he may destroy me. This is a chapel of misfortune—evil betide it! It is the most cursed kirk that ever I came in." With his helmet on his head, and spear in his hand, he roams up

to the rock, and then he hears from that high hill beyond the brook a wondrous wild noise. Lo! it clattered in the cliff as if one upon a grindstone were grinding a scythe. It whirled like the water at a mill, and rushed and re-echoed, terrible to hear. "Though my life I forgo," says Gawayne, "no noise shall cause me to fear."

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

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

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

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

Then he stoops a little and shows his bare neck, unmoved by any fear. The Green Knight takes up his "grim tool," and with all his force raises it aloft, as if he meant utterly to destroy him. As the axe came gliding down Gawayne "shrank a little with the

shoulders from the sharp iron." The other withheld his weapon, and then reproved the prince with many proud words. "Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed, that never feared for no host by hill nor by vale, for now thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm (ll. 2247-2272). Such cowardice of that knight did I never hear. I never flinched nor fled when thou didst aim at me in King Arthur's house. My head flew to my feet and yet I never fled, wherefore I deserve to be called the better man."

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

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

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

thou sure. Our covenant stipulates one stroke, and therefore now cease."

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

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

"Nay, forsooth," quoth the knight, "but for your kindness may God requite you. Commend me to that courteous one your comely wife, who with her crafts has beguiled me. But it is no uncommon thing for a man to come to sorrow through women's wiles; for so was Adam beguiled with one, and Solomon with

many. Samson was destroyed by Delilah, and David suffered much through Bathsheba. *'It were indeed great bliss for a man to love them well and believe them not.'* Since the greatest upon earth were so beguiled, methinks I should be excused. But God reward you for your girdle, which I will ever wear in remembrance of my fault, and when pride shall exalt me, a look to this love-lace shall lessen it (ll. 2407-2438). But since ye are the lord of yonder land, from whom I have received so much honour, tell me truly your right name, and I shall ask no more questions."

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

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

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

ever after wear a bright green belt for Gawayne's sake. And he upon whom it was conferred honoured it evermore after.

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

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

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

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

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

SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNYȝT

[FYTTE THE FIRST]

I.

[Fol. 91a.]

After the siege of Troy

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

4

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

Romulus built Rome, 8

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

12

Langaberde *in* Lumbardie lyftes vp homes;
and Felix Brutus founded Britain,
& fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he sette3,
wyth *wynne*;

a land of war and wonder, 16

Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,
Bi syþe3 hat3 wont *þer-inne*,
and oft of bliss and blunder.
& oft boþe blysse & blunder
Ful skete hat3 skyfted synne.

II.

20

Ande quen þis Bretayn watȝ bigged bi þis burn rych,
Bold men increased in the Land,
Bolde bredden þer-inne, baret þat lofden,
In mony turned tyme tene þat wroȝten;
Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
and many marvels happened. 24

Þen in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
Of all Britain's kings Arthur was the noblest.

Bot of alle þat here bult of Bretaygne kynges
Ay watȝ Arthur þe hendest; as I haf herde telle;
[Fol. 91b.]

For-þi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,
28

Þat a selly in siȝt summe men hit holden,
& an outrage awenture of Arthureȝ wondereȝ;
Listen a while and ye shall hear the story of an "outrageous
adventure."

If ȝe wyl lysten þis laye bot on littel quile,
I schal telle hit, as-tit, as I in toun herde,

32

with tonge;
As hit is stad & stoken,
In stori stif & stronge,
With lel letteres loken,

36

In londe so hatȝ ben longe.

III.

Arthur held at Camelot his Christmas feast,
 Þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse,
 With mony luflych lorde, ledeȝ of þe best,
with all the knights of the Round Table,
 Rekenly of þe rounde table alle þo rich breþer,

40

With ryche reuel oryȝt, & rechles merþes;
 Þer toumayed tulkes bi-tymeȝ ful mony,
 lusted ful lolil  þise gentyle knyȝtes,
 Syþen kayred to þe court, caroles to make.

full fifteen days. 44

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

All was joy in hall and chamber, 48

 Al watȝ hap vpon heȝe *in* halleȝ & chambereȝ,
 With lordeȝ & ladies, as leuest him þoȝt;

 With all þe wele of þe worlde þay woned þer samen,
among brave knights and lovely ladies,

 Þe most kyd knyȝteȝ vnder kryste seluen,

52

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

the happiest under heaven. 56

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

¹ MS. werere.

IV.

They celebrate the New Year with great joy. 60

Wyle nw ȝer watȝ so ȝep þat hit watȝ nwe cummen,
þat day doubble on þe dece watȝ þe douth serued,
Fro þe kyng watȝ cummen *with* knyȝtes in to þe halle,
þe chauntre of þe chapel cheued to an ende;

64

Loude crye watȝ þer kest of clerkez & oper,

[Fol. 92]

Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte;
& syþen riche forth runnen to reche honde-selle,
Gifts are demanded and bestowed.

Ȝeȝed ȝeres ȝiftes on hiȝ, ȝelde hem bi hond,

68

Debated busyly aboute þo giftes;
Ladies laȝed ful loude, þoȝ þay lost haden,
& he þat wan watȝ not wrothe, þat may ȝe wel trawe.

Lords and ladies take their seats at the table.

Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme;

72

When þay had waschen, worpyly þay wenten to sete,
þe best burne ay abof, as hit best semed;

Queen Guenever appears gaily dressed.

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

Dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute,

76

Smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer
Of tryed Tolouse, of Tars tapites *in*-noghe,
þat were enbrawdred & beten wyth þe best gemmes,
þat myȝt be preued of prys wyth penyes to bye,

80

in daye;

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

þe comlokest to discrye,
þer glent *with* yȝen gray,
A semloker þat euer he syȝe,
84 Soth moȝt no mon say.

V.

Arthur would not eat,
Bot Arthure wolde not ete til al were serued,
He watȝ so loly of his loyfnes, & *sum*-quat child gered,
His lif liked hym lyȝt, he louied þe lasse
nor would he long sit 88
Auper to lenge lye, or to longe sitte,
So bi-sied him his ȝonge blod & his brayn wylde;
& also anoper maner meued him eke,
þat he þurȝ nobelay had nomen, ho wolde neuer ete
92 Vpon such a dere day, er hym deuised were
until he had witnessed a "wondrous adventure" of some kind.
Of *sum* auenturus þyng an vncoupe tale,
Of *sum* mayn meruayle, þat he myȝt trawe,
Of¹ alderes, of armes, of oper auenturus,
96 Oper sum segg hym bi-soȝt of *sum* siker knyȝt,
To loyne wyth hym in iustying in lopardé to lay,
Lede lif for lyf, leue vchon oper,
As fortune wolde fulsun hom þe fayrer to haue.
100 þis watȝ [þe] kynges countenaunce where he in court were,
At vch farand fest among his fre meny,
[Fol. 92b.]

in halle;
He of face so bold makes much mirth with all.
Per-fore of face so fere.

104

He stiztleȝ stif in stalle,
Ful ȝep *in* þat nw ȝere,
Much mirthe he mas *with* alle.

¹ Of of, in MS.

VI.

The king talks with his knights.

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

Talkkande bifore þe hyȝe table of trifles ful hende
Gawayne,

There gode Gawan watȝ grayped, Gwenore bisyde
Agravayn,

& Agrauayn a la dure mayn on þat oþer syde sittes
Boþe þe kynges sister sunes, & ful siker kniztes;
Bishop Bawdewyn, 112

Bischop Bawdewyn abof bi-gineȝ þe table,
and Ywain sit on the dais.

& Ywan, Vryn son, ette wit hym-seluen;
Þise were diȝt on þe des, & derworply serued,
& sipen mony siker segge at þe sidbordeȝ.
The first course is served with cracking of trumpets. 116
Þen þe first cors come with crakkyng of trumpes,
Wyth mony baner ful bryȝt, þat þer-bi hanged,
Nwe nakryn noyse *with* þe noble pipes,
Wylde werbles & wyȝt wakned lote,

120

Þat mony hert ful hiȝe hef at her towches;
It consisted of all dainties in season.

Dayntes dryuen þer-wyth of ful dere metes,
Foyssoun of þe fresche, & on so fele disches,
Þat pine to fynde þe place þe peple bi-forne

124

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

Iche lede as he loued hym-selue

Þer laght *with*-outen loþe,

Each two had dishes twelve, 128

Ay two had disches twelue,
good beer and bright wine both.

Good ber, & bryȝt wyn boþe.

¹ svlueren (?) (dishes).

VII.

There was no want of anything.

Now wyl I of hor seruise say yow no more,

For veh wyȝe may wel wit no wont þat þer were;

Scarcely had the first course commenced, 132

An oþer noyse ful newe neȝed biliue,

Þat þe lude myȝt haf leue lif-lode to cach.

For vneþe watȝ þe noyce not a whyle sesed,

& þe fyrst *cource in þe court* kyndely serued,

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

Þer hales *in* at þe halle dor an aghlich mayster,

On þe most on þe molde on mesure hyghe;

Fro þe swyre to þe swange so sware & so þik,
the tallest on earth

& his lyndes & his lymes so longe & so grete,

[Fol. 93.] 140

Half etayn *in* erde I hope þat he were.
he must have been.

Bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene,
& þat þe myriest *in* his muckel þat myȝt ride;
His back and breast were great,

For of bak & of brest al were his bodi sturne,
but his belly and waist were small. 144

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

For wonder of his hwe men hade,
148

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

VIII.

He was clothed entirely in green.

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

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

156
Þat watȝ laȝt fro his lokkeȝ, & layde on his schulderes
Heme wel haled, hose of þat same grene,
His spurs were of bright gold.

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

160

& scholes vnder schankes, þere þe schalk rides;
& alle his vesture uerayly watȝ clene verdure,
Boþe þe barres of his belt & oper blyþe stones,
Þat were richely rayled *in* his aray clene,
His saddle was embroïdered with birds and flies. 164
Aboutte hym-self & his sadel, vpon silk werkeȝ,
Þat were to tor for to telle of tryfles þe halue,
Þat were enbrauded abof, wyth bryddes & flyȝes,
With gay gaudi of grene, þe golde ay *in* myddes;

168

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

172

Þat euer glemered¹ & glent al of grene stones.
The foal that he rode upon was green;
Þe fole þat he ferkkes on, fyn of þat ilke,
sertayn;
A grene hors gret & pikke,
it was a steed full stiff to guide. 176
A stede ful stif to strayne,
In brawdren brydel quik,

[Fol. 93b.]

To þe gome he watȝ ful gayn.

¹ glemed (?).

IX.

Gaily was the knight attired.

Wel gay watȝ þis gome gered *in* grene,

180

& þe here of his hed of his hors swete;
Fayre fannand fax vmbe-foldes his schulderes;
His great beard, like a bush, hung on his breast.
A much berd as¹ a busk ouer his brest henges,
Þat wyth his higlich here, þat of his hed reches,

184

Wat3 euesed al vmbe-torne, a-bof his elbowes,
Þat half his armes þer vnder were halched *in* þe wyse
Of a kynge3 capados, þat closes his swyre.
The horse's mane was decked with golden threads.
Þe mane of þat mayn hors much to hit lyke,

188

Wel cresped & cemmed wyth knottes ful mony,
Folden *in* wyth fildore aboute þe fayre grene,
Ay a herle of þe here, an oper of golde;
Its tail was bound with a green band.
Þe tayl & his toppyng twynnen of a sute,

192

& bounden bope wyth a bande of a bry3t grene,
Dubbed wyth ful dere stone3, as þe dok lasted,
Syþen þrawen wyth a þwong a þwarle knot alofte,
Þer mony belle3 ful bry3t of brende golde rungen.
Such a foal nor a knight were never before seen. 196
Such a fole vpon folde, ne freke þat hym rydes,
Wat3 neuer sene *in* þat sale wyth sy3t er þat tyme,
with y3e;
He loked as layt so ly3t,

200

So sayd al þat hym sy3e,
It seemed that no man might endure his dints.
Hit semed as no mon my3t,
Vnder his dyntte3 dry3e.
¹ as as, in MS.

X.

The knight carried neither spear nor shield,
Wheper hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauper,

204

Ne no pysan, ne no plate þat pented to armes,
Ne no schafte, ne no schelde, to schwne ne to smyte,
In one hand was a holly bough,
Bot *in* his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe,
þat is grattest *in* grene, when greueþ ar bare,
in the other an axe, 208

& an ax *in* his oþer, a hoge & vn-mete,
A spetos sparpe to expoun *in* spelle quo-so myȝt;
þe hede of an elnȝerde þe large lenkþe hade,
þe grayn al of grene stele & of golde hewen,
the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor, 212
þe bit burnyst bryȝt, *with* a brod egge,
As wel schapen to schere as scharp rasores;
þe stele of a stif staf þe sturne hit bi-grypte,

[Fol. 94.]

þat watȝ wounden wyth yrn to þe wandez ende,
and the handle was encased in iron, curiously "graven with green, in
gracious works." 216

& al bigrauen *with* grene, *in* gracios¹ werkes;
A lace lapped aboute, þat louked at þe hede,
& so after þe halme halched ful ofte,
Wyth tryed tasselez þerto tacched *in*-noghe,
Thus arrayed the Green Knight enters the hall, 220
On botounȝ of þe bryȝt grene brayden ful ryche.
þis hapel heldez hym *in*, & þe halle entres,
Driuande to þe heȝe dece, dut he no woþe,
without saluting any one.

Haylsed he neuer one, bot heȝe he ouer loked.

224

þe fyrst word þat he warp, "wher is," he sayd,
He asks for the "governor" of the company,
"þe gouemour of þis gyng? gladly I wolde
Se þat segg *in* syȝt, & *with* hym self speke
raysoun."

228

To knyȝtez he kest his yȝe,
& reled hym vp & doun,
and looks for the most renowned.

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

¹ *looks like* gracons *in* MS.

XI.

Much they marvel to see a man and a horse 232
Ther watȝ lokyng on lenþe, þe lude to be-holde,
For vch mon had meruayle quat hit mene myȝt,
þat a hapel & a horse myȝt such a hwe lach,
as green as grass.

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

þen grene aumayl on golde lowande bryȝter;
Al studied þat þer stod, & stalked hym nerre,
Never before had they seen such a sight as this.
Wyth al þe wonder of þe worlde, what he worch schulde.
For fele sellyeȝ had þay sen, bot such neuer are,

240

For-þi for fantoum & fayryȝe þe folk þere hit demed;
They were afraid to answer,
þer-fore to answere watȝ arȝe mony apel freke,
& al stouned at his steuen, & stonstil seten,

and were as silent as if sleep had taken possession of them;
In a swoghe sylence þurȝ þe sale riche

244

As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor loteȝ
in hyȝe;

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

Bot sum for cortaysye,

248

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

XII.

Arthur salutes the Green Knight.

Þenn Arþour bifore þe hiȝ dece þat auenture byholdeȝ,
& rekenly hym reuerenced, for rad was he neuer,

252

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

[Fol. 94b.]

bids him welcome, and invites him to stay awhile.

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

The knight says that he will not tarry. 256

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

260

Stifest vnder stel-gere on stedes to ryde,
He seeks the most valiant that he may prove him.

þe wyȝtest & þe worpyest of þe worldes kynde,
 Preue for to play wyth in oper pure laykeȝ;
 & here is kydde cortaysye, as I haf herd carp,
 264
 & þat hatȝ wayned me hider, I-wyis, at þis tyme.
 Ȝe may be seker bi þis braunch þat I bere here,
 He comes in peace.
 Þat I passe as *in* pes, & no plyȝt seche;
 For had I founded *in* fere, *in* feȝtyng wyse,
 At home, however, he has both shield and spear. 268
 I haue a hauberghe at home & a helme bope,
 A schelde, & a scharp spere, schinande bryȝt,
 Ande oper weppenes to welde, I wene wel als,
 Bot for I wolde no were, my wedeȝ ar softer.
 272
 Bot if þou be so bold as alle burneȝ tellen,
 Þou wyl *grant* me godly þe gomen þat I ask,
 bi ryȝt."
 Arthur assures him that he shall not fail to find an opponent worthy of
 him.
 Arthour con onsware,
 276
 & sayd, "*sir* cortays knyȝt,
 If þou craue batayl bare,
 Here fayleȝ þou not to fyȝt."

XIII.

"I seek no fight," says the knight.
 "Nay, frayst I no fyȝt, *in* fayth I þe telle,
 "'Here are only beardless children.'" 280
 Hit arn aboute on þis bench bot berdleȝ chyldeȝ;

If I were hasped *in* armes on a heȝe stede,
Here is no man to match me.

Here is no mon me to mach, for myȝteȝ so¹ wayke.
For-þy I craue *in* þis court a crystmas gomen,
Here are brave ones many, 284

For hit is ȝol & nwe ȝer, & here ar ȝep mony;
If any so hardy *in* þis hous holdeȝ hym-seluen,
if any be bold enough to 'strike a stroke for another,'
Be so bolde *in* his blod, brayn *in* hys hede,
þat dar stifly strike a strok for an oper,
288

I schal gif hym of my gyft þys giserne ryche,
this axe shall be his;
þis ax, þat is heué *in*-nogh, to hondele as hym lykes,
[Fol. 95.]

& I schal bide þe fyrst bur, as bare as I sitte.
If any freke be so felle to fonde þat I telle,
292

Lepe lyȝtly me to, & lach þis weppen,
I quit clayme hit for euer, kepe hit as his auen,
but I shall give him a 'stroke' in return
& I schal stonde hym a strok, stif on þis flet,
Elleȝ þou wyl diȝt me þe dom to dele hym an oper,
296

barlay;
& ȝet gif hym respite,
within a twelvemonth and a day."

A twelmonyth & a day;—
Now hyȝe, & let se tite
300

Dar any her-inne oȝt say."

¹ MS. fo.

XIV.

Fear kept all silent.

If he hem stowned vpon fyrst, stiller were þanne
Alle þe hered-men *in* halle, þe hyȝ & þe loȝe;
The knight rolled his red eyes about,
Þe renk on his rounce hym ruced *in* his sadel,

304

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

Bende his bresed broȝeȝ, bly-cande grene,
Waving his beard awhile, he exclaimed:

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

When non wolde kepe hym *with* carp he coȝed ful hyȝe,
308

Ande rimed hym ful richley, & ryȝt hym to speke:
"What! is this Arthur's court?

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

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

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

Your gry[n]del-layk, & *your* greme, & *your* grete wordes?
Forsooth the renown of the Round Table is overturned 'with a word
of one man's speech.'"

Now is þe reuel & þe renoun of þe rounde table

Ouer-walt wyth a worde of on wyȝes speche;

For al dares for drede, *with*-oute dynt schewed!"
316

Wyth þis he laȝes so loude, þat þe lorde greued;
Arthur blushes for shame.

Þe blod schot for scham *in*-to his schyre face
& lere;

He waxes as wroth as the wind.

He wex as wroth as wynde,

320

So did alle þat þer were

Þe kyng as kene bi kynde,

Þen stod þat stif mon nere.

XV.

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

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

324

& as þou foly hatȝ frayst, fynde þe be-houes;

I know no gome þat is gast of þy grete wordes.

Gif me now þy geserne, vpon godeȝ halue,

& I schal bayþen þy bone, þat þou boden habbes."

[Fol. 95*b*.] 328

Lyȝtly lepeȝ he hym to, & laȝt at his honde;

Þen feersly þat oþer freke vpon fote lyȝtis.

Arthur seizes his axe.

Now hatȝ Arthure his axe, & þe halme grypeȝ,

& sturnely stureȝ hit aboute, þat stryke wyth hit poȝt.

332

Þe stif mon hym bifore stod vpon hyȝt,

Herre þen ani in þe hous by þe hede & more;

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

Wyth sturne schere¹ þer he stod, he stroked his berde,

& wyth a countenaunce dryȝe he droȝ doun his cote,

336

No more mate ne dismayd for hys mayn dinteȝ,

Þen any burne vpon bench hade broȝt hym to drynk

of wyne,

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

Gawan, þat sate bi þe quene,

340

To þe kyng he can enclyne,

"I be-seche now *with* saȝeȝ sene,

Þis melly mot be myne."

¹ chere (?).

XVI.

"Wolde ȝe, worpilych lorde," *quod* Gawan to þe kyng,
He asks permission to leave the table; he says, 344

"Bid me boȝe fro þis benche, & stonde by yow þere,
þat I wyth-oute vylanye myȝt voyde þis table,
& þat my legge lady lyked not ille,

I wolde com to *your* counseyl, bifore *your* cort ryche.
it is not meet that Arthur should be active in the matter, 348

For me þink hit not semly, as hit is soþ knawen,
þer such an askyng is heuened so hyȝe in *your* sale,
þaȝȝe ȝour-self be talenttyf to take hit to *your*-seluen,
while so many bold ones sit upon bench.

Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten,
352

þat vnder heuen, I hope, non hazer er of wylle,
Ne better bodyes on bent, þer baret is rered;
Although the weakest, he is quite ready to meet the Green Knight.
I am þe wakkest, I wot, and of wyt feblest,
& lest Iur of my lyf, quo laytes þe soþe,

356
Bot for as much as ȝe ar myn em, I am only to prayse,
No bounté bot *your* blod I in my bodé knowe;
& syþen þis note is so nys, þat noȝt hit yow falles,
& I haue frayned hit at yow fyrst, foldez hit to me,

360
& if I carp not comlyly, let alle þis cort rych,
bout blame."

The nobles entreat Arthur to "give Gawayne the game."
Ryche to-geder con roun,
& syþen þay redden alle same,

364
To ryd þe kyng wyth croun,
& gif Gawan þe game.

XVII.

[Fol. 96.]

þen comaunded þe kyng þe knyzt for to ryse;
& he ful radly vp ros, & ruchched hym fayre,
The king gives his nephew his weapon, 368
Kneled doun bifore þe kyng, & cachez þat weppen;
& he luflyly hit hym laft, & lyfte vp his honde,
& gef hym goddez blessyng, & gladly hym biddes
and tells him to keep heart and hand steady.
þat his hert & his honde schulde hardi be bope.

372

"Kepe þe cosyn," *quod* þe kyng, "þat þou on kyrf sette,
& if þou redez hym ryzt, redly I trowe,
þat þou schal byden þe bur þat he schal bede after.
Gawan gotz to þe gome, *with* giserne *in* honde,

376

& he baldly hym bydez, he bayst neuer þe helder
The Green Knight enquires the name of his opponent.
þen carpez to *sir* Gawan þe knyzt *in* þe grene,
"Refourme we oure for-wardes, er we fyrre passe.
Fyrst I epe þe, hapel, how þat þou hattes,

380

þat þou me telle truly, as I tryst may?"
Sir Gawayne tells him his name, and declares that he is willing to
give and receive a blow.

"In god fayth," *quod* þe goode knyzt, "Gawan I hatte,
þat bede þe þis buffet, quat-so bi-fallez after,
& at þis tyme twelmonyth take at þe anoper,

384

Wyth what weppen so¹ þou wylt, & wyth no wyz ellez,
on lyue."
þat oper on-swarez agayn,
"Sir Gawan, so mot I pryue,

The other thereof is glad. 388
As I am ferly fayn.
Þis dint þat þou schal dryue."
¹ MS. fo.

XVIII.

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

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

392

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

396

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

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

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

"Where schulde I wale þe," *quod* Gauan, "where is þy place?

I wot neuer where þou wonyes, bi hym þat me wroȝt,

400

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

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

Bot teche me truly þer-to, & telle me howe þou hattes,

& I schal ware alle my wyt to wynne me þeder,

[Fol. 96b.]

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

404

"Pat is in-nogh in nwe ȝer, hit nedes no more,"
Quod þe gome *in* þe grene to Gawan þe hende,
 "When thou hast smitten me," says the knight, "then tell I thee of my
 home and name;
 "ȝif I þe telle trwly, quen I þe tape haue,
 & þou me smopely hatȝ smyten, smartly I þe teche
 408
 Of my hous, & my home, & myn owen nome,
 Þen may þou frayst my fare, & forwardeȝ holde,
 if I speak not at all, so much the better for thee.
 & if I spende no speche, þenne spedeȝ þou þe better,
 For þou may leng *in* þy londe, & layt no fyrre,
 412
 bot slokes;
 Take now thy grim tool, and let us see how thou knockest."
 Ta now þy grymme tole to þe,
 & let se how þou cnokeȝ."
 "Gladly *sir*, for soþe,"
 416
Quod Gawan; his ax he strokes.

XIX.

The Green Knight

The grene knyȝt vpon grounde graypely hym dresses,
 A littel lut *with* þe hede, þe lere he discouereȝ,
 puts his long lovely locks aside and lays bare his neck.
 His longe louelych lokkeȝ he layd ouer his croun.
 420
 Let þe naked nec to þe note schewe.
 Gauan gripped to his ax, & gederes hit on hyȝt,
 Þe kay fot on þe folde he be-fore sette,

Sir Gawayne lets fall his axe
Let hit doun lyȝtly lyȝt on þe naked,

424

Þat þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones,
and severs the head from the body.

& schrank þurȝ þe schyire grece, & scade hit *in* twynne,
Þat þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde.

The head falls to the earth.

Þe fayre hede fro þe halce hit [felle] to þe erþe,
Many kick it aside with their feet. 428

Þat fele hit foyned wyth her fete, þere hit forth roled;
Þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe grene;

The knight never falters;

& nawþer faltered ne fel þe freke neuer þe helder,
Bot styþly he start forth vpon styf schonkes,

he rushes forth, seizes his head, 432

& ru[n]yschly he raȝt out, þere as renkkez stoden,
Laȝt to his lufly hed, & lyft hit vp sone;

& syþen boȝez to his blonk, þe brydel he cachcheȝ,
steps into the saddle,

Steppeȝ *in* to stel bawe & strydeȝ alofte,
holding the while the head in his hand by the hair, 436

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

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

As non vnhap had hym ayled, þaȝ hedleȝ he¹ we[re],
in stedde;

and turns his horse about. 440

He brayde his bluk² aboute,

[Fol. 97.]

Þat vgly bodi þat bledde,
Moni on of hym had doute,
Bi þat his resounȝ were redde.

¹ MS. ho. ² blunk (?).

XX.

444

For þe hede in his honde he haldeþ vp euen,
The head lifts up its eyelids,
To-ward þe derrest on þe dece he dresseþ þe face,
& hit lyfte vp þe yge-lyddeþ, & loked ful brode,
and addresses Sir Gawayne; "Look thou, be ready to go as thou
hast promised,
& meled þus much *with* his muthe, as ȝe may now here.

448

"Loke, Gawan, þou be graype to go as þou hetteþ,
& layte as lelly til þou me, lude, fynde,
and seek till thou findest me.
As þou hatþ hette *in* þis halle, herande þise knyȝtes;
Get thee to the Green Chapel,
To þe grene chapel þou chose, I charge þe to fotte,

452

Such a dunt as þou hatþ dalt disserued þou habbeþ,
there to receive a blow on New Year's morn.
To be ȝederly ȝolden on nw ȝeres morn;
þe knyȝt of þe grene chapel men knowen me mony;
Fail thou never;

For-þi me forto fynde if þou fraysteþ, fayleþ þou neuer,
come, or recreant be called." 456

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

With a runisch rout þe rayneþ he torneþ,
The Green Knight then rushes out of the hall, his head in his hand.
Halled out at þe hal-dor, his hed *in* his hande,
þat þe fyr of þe flynt flaze fro fole houes.

460

To quat kyth he be-com, knwe non pere,
Neuermore þen þay wyste fram quepen he watþ wonnen;
what þenne?

þe kyng & Gawen þare,
At that green one Arthur and Gawayne "laugh and grin." 464
At þat grene þay laȝe & grenne,
ȝet breued watȝ hit ful bare,
A meruayl among þo menne.

XXI.

Arthur addresses the queen:

þaȝ Arþer þe hende kyng at hert hade wonder,
468
He let no semblaunt be sene, bot sayde ful hyȝe
To þe comlych quene, wyth cortays speche,
"Dear dame, be not dismayed; such marvels well become the
Christmas festival;
"Dere dame, to day demay yow neuer;
Wel by-commes such craft vpon cristmasse,
472
Laykyng of enterludeȝ, to laȝe & to syng.
Among þise, kynde caroles of knyȝteȝ & ladyeȝ;
I may now go to meat.
Neuer-þe-lece to my mete I may me wel dres,
For I haf sen a selly, I may not for-sake."
476
He glent vpon *sir* Gawen, & gaynly he sayde,
Sir Gawayne, hang up thine axe.
"Now *sir*, heng vp þyn ax, þat hatȝ *in-nogh* hewen."
[Fol. 97*b*.]
& hit watȝ don abof þe dece, on doser to henge,
þer alle men for meruayl myȝt on hit loke,
480
& bi trwe tytél þer-of to telle þe wonder.

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

Þenne þay boȝed to a borde þise burnes to-geder,
Þe kyng & þe gode knyȝt, & kene men hem serued
Of alle dayntyȝ double, as derrest myȝt falle,

484

Wyth alle maner of mete & mynstralcie bope;
Wyth wele walt þay þat day, til worped an ende,
in londe.

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

Now þenk wel, *sir* Gawan,

488

For woþe þat þou ne wonde,
Þis auenture forto frayn,
Þat þou hatȝ tan on honde.

[FYTTE THE SECOND.]

I.

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

This hanselle hatȝ Arthur of auenturus on fyrst,

492

In ȝonge ȝer, for he ȝerned ȝelpyng to here,
Thaȝ hym wordeȝ were wane, when þay to sete wenten;
Now ar þay stoken of sturne werk staf-ful her hond.
Gawan watȝ glad to be-gynne þose gomneȝ *in* halle,

496

Bot þaȝ þe ende be heuy, haf ȝe no wonder;

For þaȝ men *ben* mery in *mynde*, quen þay han mayn drynk,
The year passes full quickly and never returns.

A ȝere ȝernes ful ȝerne, & ȝeldeȝ neuer lyke,
Þe forme to þe fynisment foldeȝ ful selden.

500

For-þi þis ȝol ouer-ȝede, & þe ȝere after,
& vche sesoun serlepes sued after oþer;
After Christmas comes the "crabbed Lenten."
After crysten-masse com þe crabbed lentoun,
Þat fraysteȝ flesch wyth þe fysche & fode more symple

504

Bot þenne þe weder of þe worlde wyth wynter hit þrepeȝ,
Spring sets in and warm showers descend;
Colde clengeȝ adoun, cloudeȝ vp-lyften,
Schyre schedeȝ þe rayn *in* schowreȝ ful warme,
Falleȝ vpon fayre flat, flowreȝ þere schewen,
the groves become green, 508

Boþe groundeȝ & þe greueȝ grene ar her wedeȝ,
birds build and sing,

Bryddeȝ busken to bylde, & bremlych syngen,
for joy of the summer that follows;

For solace of þe softe somer þat sues þer after,
bi bonk;

blossoms begin to bloom, 512

& blossomȝ bolne to blowe,

Bi raweȝ ryche & ronk,

and noble notes are heard in the woods

Þen noteȝ noble *in-noȝe*,

[Fol. 98]

Ar herde in wod so wlonk.

II.

Then the soft winds of summer, 516

After þe sesoun of somer wyth þe soft wyndeȝ,
Quen ȝeferus syfleȝ hym-self on sedeȝ & erbeȝ,
beautiful are the flowers wet with dew-drops.

Wela-wynne is þe wort þat woxes þer-oute.

When þe donkande dewe dropeȝ of þe leueȝ,

520

To bide a blysful blusch of þe bryȝt sunne.

But harvest approaches soon,

Bot þen hyȝes heruest, & hardenes hym sone.

Warneȝ hym for þe wynter to wax ful rype;
and drives the dust about.

He dryues wyth droȝt þe dust for to ryse.

524

Fro þe face of þe folde to flyȝe ful hyȝe;

Wrope wynde of þe welkyn wrasteleȝ *with* þe sunne,

The leaves drop off the trees,

Þe leueȝ lancen fro þe lynde, & lyȝten on þe grounde,
the grass becomes gray, and all ripens and rots.

& al grayes þe gres, þat grene watȝ ere;

528

Þenne al rypeȝ & roteȝ þat ros vpon fyrst,

& þus ȝirneȝ þe ȝere *in* ȝisterdayeȝ mony,

Winter winds round again,

& wynter wyndeȝ aȝayn, as þe worlde askeȝ
no sage.

532

Til meȝel-mas mone,

Watȝ *cumen* wyth wynter wage;

and then Sir Gawayne thinks of his dread journey.

Þen þenkkeȝ Gawan ful sone,

Of his anious uyage.

III.

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

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

540

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

After meat, Sir Gawayne thus speaks to his uncle:

For aftter mete, *with* mourmyng he meleȝ to his eme,

544

& spekeȝ of his passage, & pertly he sayde,

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

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

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

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

[Fol. 98b.] 552

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

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

& mony oper menskful, *with* Mador de la Port.

556

Alle þis compayny of court com þe kyng nerre,
For to counseyl þe knyzt, with care at her hert;
Much sorrow prevails in the hall.

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

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

Þe knyzt mad ay god chere,
& sayde, "quat schuld I wonde,
Gawayne declares that he has nothing to fear. 564
Of destines derf & dere,
What may mon do bot fonde?"

¹ derne (?).

IV.

On the morn he asks for his arms.

He dowelleȝ þer al þat day, and dresseȝ on þe morn,
Askeȝ erly hys armeȝ, & alle were þay broȝt
A carpet is spread on the floor, 568
Fyrst a tule tapit, tyȝt ouer þe flet,
& miche wat3 þe gyld gere þat glent þer alofte;
and he steps thereon.

Þe stif mon steppeȝ þeron, & þe stel hondoleȝ,
He is dubbed in a doublet of Tarsic silk, and a well-made hood.
Dubbed *in* a dublet of a dere tars,

572

& syþen a crafty capados, closed aloft,
Þat wyth a bryȝt blaunner was bounden *with-inne*;
They set steel slices on his feet, and lap his legs in steel greaves.
Þenne set þay þe sabatounȝ vpon þe segge foteȝ,

His legeȝ lapped *in* stel *with* luflych greueȝ,
 576
With polayneȝ piched þer-to, policed ful clene,
 Aboute his kneȝ knaged wyth knoteȝ of golde;
 Fair cuisses enclose his thighs,
 Queme quyssewes þen, þat coyntlych closed
 His thik þrawen þyȝeȝ *with* þwonges to-tachched;
 and afterwards they put on the steel habergeon, 580
 & syþen þe brawden bryne of bryȝt stel ryngȝ,
 Vmbe-weued þat wyȝ, vpon wlonk stuffe;
 well-burnished braces, elbow pieces, and gloves of plate.
 & wel bornyst brace vpon his bope armes,
With gode cowers & gay, & gloueȝ of plate,
 584
 & alle þe godlych gere þat hym gayn schulde
 þat tyde;
 Over all this is placed the coat armour.
 Wyth ryche cote armure,
 His spurs are then fixed,
 His gold sporeȝ spend *with* pryde,
 and his sword is attached to his side by a silken girdle. 588
 Gurde wyth a bront ful sure,
With silk sayn vmbe his syde.

V.

[Fol. 99a.]
 Thus arrayed the knight hears mass,
 When he watȝ hasped *in* armes, his harnays watȝ ryche,
 Þe lest lachet ou[þ]er loupe lemed of golde;
 592
 So harnayst as he watȝ he herkneȝ his masse,

Offred & honoured at þe heze auter;
and afterwards takes leave of Arthur and his court.

Syþen he comeþ to þe kyng & to his cort fereþ,
Lacheþ lufly his leue at lordeþ & ladyeþ;

596

& þay hym kyst & conueyed, bikende hym to kryst.
By that time his horse Gringolet was ready,
Bi þat watþ Gryngolet grayth, & gurde *with* a sadel,
Þat glemed ful gayly *with* mony golde frenges,
Ay quere naylet ful nwe for þat note ryched;

600

Þe brydel barred aboute, *with* bryþt golde bounden;
the harness of which glittered like the "gleam of the sun."
Þe apparayl of þe payttrure, & of þe proude skyrteþ,
Þe cropore, & þe couertor, acorded wyth þe arsounes;
& al watþ rayled on red ryche golde nayles,

604

Þat al glytered & glent as glem of þe sunne.
Then Sir Gawayne sets his helmet upon his head,
Þenne hentes he þe holme, & hastily hit kysses,
Þat watþ stapled stifly, & stoffed wyth-inne:
Hit watþ hyþe on his hede, hasped bihynde,
fastened behind with a "urisoun," 608

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

Enbrawden & bounden wyth þe best gemmes,
On brode sylkyn borde, & bryddeþ on semeþ,
As papiayeþ paynted pernyng bitwene,

612

Tortors & trulofes entayled so þyk,
As mony burde þer aboute had *ben* seuen wynter
in toune;
The circle around the helmet was decked with diamonds.

Þe cercle watþ more o prys,

616

Þat vmbe-clypped hys croun,
Of diamaunteþ a deuys,

Þat boþe were bryȝt & broun.

VI.

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

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

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

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

& quy þe pentangel apendeȝ to þat prynce noble,
624

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

[Fol. 99b]

For hit is a figure þat haldeȝ fyue poynteȝ,
628

& vche lyne vmbe-lappeȝ & loukeȝ *in* oper,
It is called the endless knot

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

For-þy hit acordeȝ to þis knyȝt, & to his cler armeȝ,
632

For ay faythful *in* fyue & sere fyue syþeȝ,
It well becomes the good Sir Gawayne,
Gawan watȝ for gode knawen, & as golde pured,
Voyded of vche vylany, wyth vertueȝ² *ennoured*
in mote;

636
For-þy þe pen-tangel nwe

He ber *in* schelde & cote,
a knight the truest of speech and the fairest of form.
As tulk of tale most trwe,
& gentylest knyȝt of lote.
¹ MS emdeleȝ. ² MS verertueȝ

VII.

He was found faultless in his five wits. 640
Fyrst he watȝ funden fautleȝ *in* his fyue wytteȝ,
& efte fayled neuer þe freke *in* his fyue fyngres,
His trust was in the five wounds.
& alle his afyaunce vpon folde watȝ *in* þe fyue woundeȝ
Þat Cryst kaȝt on þe croys, as þe crede telleȝ;
644
& quere-so-euer þys mon *in* melly watȝ stad,
His þro þoȝt watȝ *in* þat, þurȝ alle oþer þyngeȝ,
Þat alle his forsnes he fong at þe fyue ioyeȝ,
Þat þe hende heuen quene had of hir chylde;
648
At þis cause þe knyȝt comlyche hade
The image of the Virgin was depicted upon his shield.
In þe more half of his schelde hir ymage depaynted,
Þat quen he blusched þerto, his belde neuer payred.
Þe fyrst¹ fyue þat I finde þat þe frek vsed,
652
Watȝ fraunchyse, & felaȝschyp for-be² al þyng;
In cleanness and courtesy he was never found wanting,
His clannes & his cortaysye croked were neuer,
& pite, þat passeȝ alle poynteȝ, þyse pure fyue
Were harder happed on þat hapel þen on any oþer.
656

Now alle þese fyue syþeȝ, forsoþe, were fetled on þis knyȝt,
& vchone halched in oper, þat non ende hade,
& fyched vpon fyue poynteȝ, þat fayld neuer,
Ne samned neuer *in* no syde, ne sundred nouþ[er],

660

With-outen ende at any noke [a]i quere fynde,
Where-euer þe gomen bygan, or glod to an ende.
therefore was the endless knot fastened on his shield.
Per-fore on his schene schelde schapen watȝ þe knot,
þus alle wyth red golde vpon rede gowleȝ,

[Fol. 100] 664

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

Now grayped is Gawan gay,
Sir Gawayne seizes his lance and bids all "good day."
& laȝt his launce ryȝt þore,

668

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

¹ MS fyft. ² for-bi (?).

VIII.

He spurs his horse and goes on his way.

He sperred þe sted *with* þe spureȝ, & sprong on his way,
So stif þat þe ston fyr stroke out þer-after;
All that saw that seemly one mourned in their hearts. 672
Al þat seȝ þat semly syked *in* hert,
& sayde soply al same segges til oper,
Carande for þat comly, "bi Kryst, hit is scape,
þat þou, leude, schal be lost, þat art of lyf noble!
They declared that his equal was not to be found upon earth. 676

To fynde hys fere vpon folde, *in* fayth is not epe;
Warloker to haf wroȝt had more wyt bene,
& haf dyȝt ȝonder dere a duk to haue worped;
It would have been better for him to have been a leader of men,
A lowande leder of ledeȝ *in* londe hym wel semeȝ,
680

& so had better haf ben þen britned to noȝt,
than to die by the hands of "an elvish man."
Hadet wyth an aluisch mon, for angardeȝ pryde.
Who knew euer any kyng such counsel to take,
As knyȝteȝ *in* cauelounȝ on cryst-masse gomneȝ!"
Much was the warm water that poured from eyes that day. 684
Wel much watȝ þe warme water þat waltered of yȝen,
When þat semly syre soȝt fro þo woneȝ
þat¹ daye;
He made non abode,
688

Bot wyȝtly went hys way,
Meanwhile many a weary way goes Sir Gawayne.
Mony wylsum way he rode,
Þe bok as I herde say.
¹ MS. þad.

IX.

Now rides the knight through the realms of England.
Now rideȝ þis renk þurȝ þe ryalme of Logres,
692
Sir Gauan on Godeȝ halue, þaȝ hym no gomen þoȝt;
Oft, leudleȝ alone, he lengeȝ on nyȝteȝ,
Þer he fonde noȝt hym byfore þe fare þat he lyked;
He has no companion but his horse.

Hade he no fere bot his fole, bi frytheȝ & douneȝ,
696

Ne no gome bot God, bi gate wyth to karp,
No men does he see till he approaches North Wales.

Til þat he neȝed ful noghe¹ in to þe Norþe Waleȝ;
Alle þe iles of Anglesay on lyft half he haldeȝ,
& fareȝ ouer þe fordeȝ by þe for-londeȝ,
From Holyhead he passes into Wirral. 700

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

There he finds but few that loved God or man.

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

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

Þay seȝe neuer no segge þat watȝ of suche hweȝ
708
of grene.

Þe knyȝt tok gates straunge,
In mony a bonk vnbene,
His cheer oft changed before he found the Chapel.
His cher ful oft con chaunge,

712
Þat chapel er he myȝt sene.

¹ nyghe (?). ² MS. clapel.

Many a cliff he climbed over;

Mony klyf he ouer-clambe *in* contrayeȝ straunge,

Fer floten fro his frendeȝ fremedly he rydeȝ;

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

At vche warpe oper water þer þe wyȝe passed,

716

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

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

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

So mony meruayl hi mount þer þe mon fyndeȝ,

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

with serpents, wolves, and wild men; 720

Sumwhyle wyth wormeȝ he werreȝ, & *with* wolues als,

Sumwhyle wyth wodwos, þat woned *in* þe knarreȝ,

with bulls, bears, and boars.

Boþe wyth bulleȝ & bereȝ, & boreȝ oper-quyle,

& etayneȝ, þat hym a-nelede, of þe heȝe felle;

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

724

Nade he ben duȝty & dryȝe, & dryȝtyn had serued,

Douteles he hade ben ded, & dreped ful ofte.

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

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

When þe colde cler water fro þe cloudeȝ schadden,

728

& fres er hit falle myȝt to þe fale erþe;

Ner slayn wyth þe slete he sleped *in* his yrnes,

Mo nyȝteȝ þen *in*-noghe *in* naked rokkeȝ,

Þer as claterande fro þe crest þe colde borne renneȝ,

732

& henged heȝe ouer his hede *in* hard ȝsse-ikkles.

Thus in peril he travels till Christmas-eve.

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

Bi contray caryeȝ þis knyȝt, tyl kryst-masse euen,

al one;

736

Þe knyȝt wel þat tyde,

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

To Mary made his mone.

þat ho hym red to ryde,

[Fol. 101.]

& wysse hym to sum wone.

XI.

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

Bi a mounte on þe morne meryly he rydes,

Into a forest ful dep, þat ferly watȝ wylde,

Hize hilleȝ on vche a halue, & holt wodeȝ vnder,
where were old oaks many a hundred.

Of hore okeȝ fill hoge a hundreth to-geder;

744

þe hasel & þe haȝ-borne were harled al samen,

With roȝe raged mosse rayled ay-where,

Many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold.

With mony bryddeȝ vnblyþe vpon bare twyges,

þat pitosly þer piped for pyne of þe colde.

748

þe gome vpon Gryngolet glydeȝ hem vnder,

Through many a mire he goes, that he may celebrate the birth of
Christ.

þurȝ mony misy & myre, mon al hym one,

Carande for his costes, lest he ne keuer schulde,

To se þe seruy¹ of þat syre, þat on þat self nyȝt

752

Of a burde watȝ borne, oure baret to quelle;

He beseeches the Virgin Mary to direct him to some lodging where
he may hear mass.

& þefore sykyng he sayde, "I be-seche þe, lorde,

& Mary, þat is myldest moder so dere.
Of *sum* herber, þer heȝly I myȝt here masse.

756

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

He rode *in* his prayere,

760

& cryed for his mysdede,

Blessing himself, he says, "Cross of Christ, speed me!"

He sayned *hym in* sypes sere,
& sayde "cros Kryst me spede!"

¹ seruyce (?).

XII.

Scarcely had he blessed himself thrice

Nade he sayned *hym-self*, segge, bot þrye,

764

Er he watȝ war *in* þe wod of a won *in* a mote.

when he saw a dwelling in the wood, set on a hill,

Abof a launde, on a lawe, loken vnder boȝeȝ,

Of mony borelych bole, aboute bi þe diches;

the comeliest castle that knight ever owned.

A castel þe comlokest þat euer knyȝt aȝte,

768

Pyched on a prayere, a park al aboute,

With a pyked palays, pyned ful þik,

Þat vmbe-teȝe mony tre mo þen two myle.

Þat holde on þat on syde þe hapel auysed,

It shone as the sun through the bright oaks. 772

As hit schemered & schon þurȝ þe schyre okeȝ;

Þenne hatȝ he hendly of his helme, & heȝly he þonkeȝ
Iesus & say[nt] Gilyan, þat gentyle ar bope,
[Fol. 101*b*.]

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

"Now bone hostel," cope þe burne, "I be-seche yow ȝette!"
Þenne gedereȝ he to Gryngolet *with* þe gilt heleȝ,
Sir Gawayne goes to the chief gate,
& he ful chauncely hatȝ chosen to þe chef gate,
Þat broȝt bremly þe burne to þe bryge ende,

780
in haste;
and finds the draw-bridge raised, and the gates shut fast.
Þe bryge watȝ breme vp-brayde,
Þe ȝateȝ wer stoken faste,
Þe walleȝ were wel arayed,

784
Hit dut no wyndeȝ blaste.

XIII.

The knight abides on the bank,
Þe burne bode on bonk, þat on blonk houed,
Of þe depe double dich þat drof to þe place,
Þe walle wod *in* þe water wonderly depe,
and observes the "huge height," 788
Ande eft a ful huge heȝt hit haled vpon lofte,
Of harde hewen ston vp to þe tableȝ,
with its battlements and watch towers.
Enbaned vnder þe abataylment, *in* þe best lawe;
& syþen garyteȝ ful gaye gered bi-twene,
792

Wyth mony luflych loupe, þat louked ful clene;
A better barbican þat burne blusched vpon neuer;
& innermore he be-helde þat halle ful hyȝe,
Bright and long were its round towers,
Towre telded bytwene trochet ful þik,

796

Fayre fylyoleȝ þat fyȝed, & ferlyly long,
with their well-made capitals.

With coruon coprounes, craftyly sleȝe;
Chalk whyt chymnees þer ches he *in-noȝe*,
Vpon bastel roueȝ, þat blenked ful quyte;

800

So mony pynakle payntet watȝ poudred ay quere,
Among þe castel carneleȝ, clambred so þik,
Þat pared out of papure purely hit semed.

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

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

804

If he myȝt keuer to com þe cloyster wyth-*inne*,
To herber *in* þat hostel, whyl halyday lested
auinant;

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

He calde, & sone þer com

808

A porter pure plesaunt,
On þe wal his ernd he nome,
& haylsed þe knyȝt erraunt.

XIV.

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

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

To þe heȝ lorde of þis hous, herber to craue?"
[Fol. 102.]

"ȝe, Peter," *quod* þe porter, "& purely I trowe,¹
"You are welcome to dwell here as long as you like," replied the
porter.

Þat ȝe be, wyȝe, welcum to won quyle yow lykeȝ."
Þen ȝede þat wyȝe aȝayn awyȝe,
816

& folke frely hym wyth, to fonge þe knyȝt;
The draw-bridge is let down,
Þay let down þe grete draȝt, & derely out ȝeden,
& kneled down on her knes vpon þe colde erȝe,
To welcum þis ilk wyȝ, as worpy hom þoȝt;
and the gate is opened wide to receive him. 820

Þay ȝolden hym þe brode ȝate, ȝarked vp wyde,
& he hem raysed rekenly, & rod ouer þe brygge;
Sere seggeȝ hym sesed by sadel, quel² he lyȝt,
His horse is well stabled.

& syȝen stabeled his stede stif men *in-noȝe*.
Knights and squires bring Gawayne into the hall. 824

Knyȝteȝ & swyereȝ comen down þenne,
For to bryng þis burne³ wyth blys *in-to* halle;
Many a one hastens to take his helmet and sword.
Quen he hef vp his helme, þer hiȝed *in-noghe*
For to hent hit at his honde, þe hende to seruen,

828
His bronde & his blasoun boȝe þay token.
Þen haylsed he ful hendly þo hapeleȝ vch one,
& mony proud mon þer presed, þat prynce to honour;
Alle hasped *in* his heȝ wede to halle þay hym wonnen,

832
Þer fayre fyre vpon flet fersly brenned.
The lord of the country bids him welcome,
Þenne þe lorde of þe lede louteȝ fro his chambre,
For to mete wyth menske þe mon on þe flor;

He sayde, "ȝe ar welcum to welde as yow lykeȝ,
836
Ȕat here is, al is yowre awen, to haue at yowre wyll
& welde."
"Graunt mercy," *quod* Gawayn,
"Ȕer Kryst hit yow for-ȝelde,"
and they embrace each other. 840
As frekeȝ Ȕat semed fayn,
AyȔer oȔer *in* armeȝ con felde.
¹ trowoe, MS. ² quyle (?) or quen (?). ³ buurne, MS.

XV.

Gawayne looks on his host;
Gawayn glyȝt on Ȕe gome Ȕat godly hym gret,
a big bold one he seemed.
& Ȕȝt hit a bolde burne Ȕat Ȕe burȝ aȝte,
844
A hoge hapel for Ȕe noneȝ, & of hyghe elde;¹
Beaver-hued was his broad beard,
Brode bryȝt watȝ his berde, & al beuer hwed,
Sturne stif on Ȕe stryȔpe on stal-worth schonkeȝ,
and his face as "fell as the fire."
Felle face as Ȕe fyre, & fre of hys speche;
848
& wel hym semed for soȔe, as Ȕe segge Ȕȝt,
To lede a lortschyp *in* lee of leudeȝ ful gode.
[Fol. 102*b*.]
The lord leads Gawayne to a chamber, and assigns him a page to
wait upon him.
Ȕe lorde hym charred to a chambre, & chefly cumaundeȝ²
To delyuer hym a leude, hym loȝly to serue;

852

& pere were boun at his bode burnez *in-noze*,
In this bright bower was noble bedding;
Pat broȝt hym to a bryȝt boure, per beddyng watȝ noble,
Of cortynes of clene sylk, wyth cler golde hemmez,
the curtains were of pure silk with golden hems;
& couertoreȝ ful curious, *with* comlych paneȝ,

856

Of bryȝt blaunnier a-boue enbrawdȝ bisydeȝ,
Rudeleȝ rennande on ropeȝ, red golde ryngȝ,
Tarsic tapestries covered the walls and the floor.
Tapyteȝ tyȝt to þe woȝe, of tuly & tars,
& vnder fete, on þe flet, of folȝande sute.
Here the knight doffed his armour, 860
Per he watȝ dispoyled, wyth specheȝ of myerpe,
þe burn of his bruny, & of his bryȝt wedeȝ;
and put on rich robes,
Ryche robes ful rad renkkeȝ hem³ broȝten,
For to charge, & to chaunge, & chose of þe best.

864

Sone as he on hent, & happed per-inne,
Pat sete on hym⁴ semly, wyth saylande skyrteȝ,
which well became him.
þe ver by his uisage verayly hit semed
Wel neȝ to vche hapel alle on hwes,

868

Lowande & lufly, alle his lymmez vnder,
A more comely knight Christ never made.
Pat a comloker knyȝt neuer Kryst made,
hem poȝt;
Whepen *in* worlde he were,

872

Hit semed as he myȝt
Be prynce *with*-outen pere,
In felde per felle men fyȝt.

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

XVI.

A chair is placed for Sir Gawayne before the fireplace.

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

Watȝ grayped for *sir* Gawan, grayþely *with* clopeȝ,
Whyssynes vpon queldepoyntes, þa[t] koynt wer bope;
A mantle of fine linen, richly embroidered, is thrown over him.
& þenne a mere mantyle watȝ on þat mon cast,
Of a broun bleeaunt, enbrauded ful ryche,

880
& fayre furred wyth-inne *with* felleȝ of þe best,
Alle of ermyn *in* erde, his hode of þe same;
& he sete *in* þat settel semlych ryche,
& achaufed hym chefly,¹ & þenne his cher mended.

A table is soon raised, 884

Sone watȝ telded vp a tapit, on tresteȝ ful fayre,
and the knight, having washed, proceeded to meat.
Clad wyth a clene clope, þat cler quyt schewed,
Sanap, & salure, & syluer-*in* sponeȝ;

[Fol. 103.]

Þe wyȝe wesche at his wylle, & went to his mete
888

Seggeȝ hym serued semly *in*-noȝe,
He is served with numerous dishes;

Wyth sere sewes & sete,² sesounde of þe best,
Double felde, as hit falleȝ, & fele kyn fischeȝ;
with fish baked and broiled,

Summe baken *in* bred, summe brad on þe gledeȝ,
or boiled and seasoned with spices. 892

Summe sopen, summe *in* sewe, sauered *with* spyces,
& ay sawes³ so sleȝeȝ, þat þe segge lyked.

Þe freke calde hit a fest ful frely & ofte,
He calls it a full noble feast,

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

as hende;

"Þis penaunce now ȝe take,

& eft hit schal amende;"

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

Þat mon much merþe con make.

900

For wyn in his hed þat wende.

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

XVII.

Sir Gawayne, in answer to questions put to him,

Þenne watȝ spyed & spured vpon spare wyse.

Bi preue poynteȝ of þat prynce, put to hym-seluen,

Þat he be-knew cortaysly of þe court þat he were,

tells the prince that he is of Arthur's court. 904

Þat apel Arthure þe hende haldeȝ hym one,

Þat is þe ryche ryal kyng of þe rounde table;

& hit watȝ Wawen hym-self þat in þat won sytteȝ,

Comen to þat krystmasse, as case hym þen lymped.

When this was made known, 908

When þe lorde hade lerned þat he þe leude hade,

Loude laȝed he þerat, so lef hit hym þoȝt,

great was the joy in the hall.

& alle þe men in þat mote maden much joye,

To apere in his presense prestly þat tyme,

912

Þat alle prys, & prowes, & pured þewes

Apendes to hys persoun, & praysed is euer,

By-fore alle men vpon molde, his mensk is þe most.

Each one said softly to his mate,
 Vch segge ful softly sayde to his fere,
 "Now we shall see courteous manners and hear noble speech, 916
 "Now schal we semlych se sleȝteȝ of þeweȝ,
 & þe teccheles termes of talkyng noble,
 Wich spede is *in* speche, vnspurd may we lerne,
 for we have amongst us the 'father of nurture.'
 Syn we haf fonged þat fyne fader of nurture;
 920
 God hatȝ geuen *vus* his *grace* godly for soþe,
 Þat such a gest as Gawan graunteȝ *vus* to haue,
 When burneȝ blyþe of his burþe schal sitte
 & synge.
 924
In menyng of manereȝ mere,
 [Fol. 103*b*.]
 Þis burne now schal *vus* bryng,
 He that may him hear shall learn of love-talking."
 I hope þat may hym here,
 Schal lerne of luf-talkyng."

XVIII.

After dinner the company go to the chapel, 928
 Bi þat þe diner watȝ done, & þe dere vp,
 Hit watȝ neȝ at þe niȝt neȝed þe tyme;
 Chaplayneȝ¹ to þe chapeles chosen þe gate,
 Rungen ful rychely, ryȝt as þay schulden,
 to hear the evensong of the great season. 932
 To þe hersum euensong of þe hyȝe tyde.
 Þe lorde loutes þerto, & þe lady als,
In-to a comly closet coyntly ho entreȝ;

Gawan glydeȝ ful gay, & gos þeder sone;

936

Þe lorde laches hym by þe lappe, & ledeȝ hym to sytte,

& couply hym knoweȝ, & calleȝ hym his nome,

& sayde he watȝ þe welcomest wyȝe of þe worlde;

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

& he hym þonkked þroly, & ayþer halched oper.

940

& seten soberly samen þe seruisse-quyle;

Þenne lyst þe lady to loke on þe knyȝt.

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

Þenne com ho of hir closet, *with* mony cler burdeȝ,

Ho watȝ þe fayrest *in* felle, of flesche & of lyre,

944

& of compas, & colour, & costes of alle oper,

She appeared even fairer than Guenever.

& wener þen Wenore, as þe wyȝe þoȝt.

He ches þurȝ þe chaunsel, to cheryche þat hende;

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

An oper lady hir lad bi þe lyft honde,

948

Þat watȝ alder þen ho, an auncian hit semed,

& heȝly honowred *with* hapeleȝ aboute.

Very unlike were these two.

Bot yn-lyke on to loke þo ladyes were,

if the young one was fair the other was yellow,

For if þe ȝonge watȝ ȝep, ȝolȝe watȝ þat oper,

952

Riche red on þat on rayled ay quere,

and had rough and wrinkled cheeks.

Rugh ronkled chekeȝ þat oper on rolled;

Kerhofes of þat on wyth mony cler perleȝ

The younger had breast and throat "bare displayed."

Hir brest & hir bryȝt prote bare displayed,

956

Schon schyrer þen snawe, þat scheduler² on hilleȝ;

Þat oper wyth a gorger watȝ gered ouer þe swyre,

Chymbled ouer hir blake chyn *with* mylk-quyte vayles,
The ancient one exposed only her "black brows," her two eyes,
Hir frount folden *in* sylk, enfoubled ay quere,

960

Toret & treieted *with* tryfleȝ aboute,
[Fol. 104.]

nose, and naked lips, all sour and bleared.

Ȕat noȝt watȝ bare of Ȕat burde bot Ȕe blake broȝes.

Ȕe tweyne yȝen, & Ȕe nase, Ȕe naked lyppeȝ,

& Ȕose were soure to se, & sellyly blered;

964

A mensk lady on molde mon may hir calle,
for gode;

Her body was short and thick;

Hir body watȝ schort & Ȕik.

her buttocks broad and round.

Hir buttokeȝ bay & brode,

968

More lykker-wys on to lyk,

Watȝ Ȕat scho hade on lode.

¹ MS. [claplayneȝ.] ² schedes (?).

XIX.

With permission of the lord,

When Gawayn glyȝt on Ȕat gay, Ȕat *graciously* loked,

Wyth leue laȝt of Ȕe lorde he went hem aȝaynes;

Sir Gawayne salutes the elder, 972

Ȕe alder he haylses, heldande ful lowe,

Ȕe loueloker he lappeȝ a lyttel *in* armeȝ,

but the younger he kisses,

He kysses hir comlyly, & knyȝtly he meleȝ;

þay kallen hym of a quoyntaunce, & he hit quyk askeȝ
and begs to be her servant. 976

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

þay tan hym bytwene hem, wyth talkyng hym leden
To chamber all go,

To chambre, to chemné, & chefly þay asken
where spices and wine are served.

Spyceȝ, þat vn-sparely men speded hom to bryng,
980

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

þe lorde luflych aloft lepeȝ ful ofte,

Mynned merthe to be made vpon mony sypeȝ.

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

Hent heȝly of his hode, & on a spere hanged,
984

& wayned hom to wyne þe worchip þer-of,

He who makes most mirth is to win it.

þat most myrþe myȝt mene¹ þat crystenmas whyle;

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

Er me wont þe wedeȝ, with help of my frendeȝ."

988

þus wyth laȝande loteȝ þe lorde hit tayt² makeȝ,
Night approaches, and then

For to glade *sir* Gawayn with gomneȝ in halle

þat nyȝt;

Til þat hit watȝ tyme,

992

þe kyng comaundet lyȝt,

Sir Gawayne takes his leave and retires to rest.

Sir Gawen his leue con nyme,

& to his bed hym diȝt.

¹ meue (?). ² layt (?).

On Christmas morn,

On þe morne, as vch mon mynez þat tyme,
joy reigns in every dwelling in the world. 996

[Þ]at dryȝtyn for oure destyné to deȝe watȝ borne,
Wele waxeȝ *in* vche a won *in* worlde, for his sake;
So did it in the castle where our knight abode.

So did hit pere on þat day, þurȝ dayntes mony;
[Fol. 104*b*.]

Boþe at mes & at mele, messes ful quaynt
1000

Derf men vpon dece drest of þe best.
The lord and "the old ancient wife" sit together.
þe olde auncian wyf heȝest ho sytteȝ;
þe lorde lufly her by lent, as I trowe;
Gawayne sits by the wife of his host.

Gawan & þe gay burde to-geder þay seten,
1004

Euen *in*-myddeȝ, as þe messe metely come;
& syþen þurȝ al þe sale, as hem best semed,
It were too tedious to tell of the meat, the mirth, and the joy that
abounded everywhere.

Bi vche grome at his degre *graypely* watȝ serued.
þer watȝ mete, þer watȝ myrþe, þer watȝ much ioie,
1008

þat for to telle þerof hit me tene were,
& to poynte hit ȝet I pynded me *parauenture*;
Gawayne and his beautiful companion derive much comfort from
each other's conversation.

Bot ȝet I wot þat Wawen & þe wale burde
Such comfort of her compaynye caȝten to-geder,
1012

þurȝ her dere dalyaunce of her derne wordeȝ,
Wyth clene cortays carp, closed fro fylþe;
& hor play watȝ passande vche prynce gomen,
in vayres;
Trumpets and nakers give forth their sounds. 1016
Trumpeȝ & nakerys,

Much pypyng þer repayres,
Vche mon tented hys,
& þay two tented þayres.

XXI.

Great was the joy for three days. 1020
Much dut wat3 þer dryuen þat day & þat oþer,
& þe þryd as þro þronge in þerafter;
St. John's-day was the last of the Christmas festival.
Þe ioie of sayn lone3 day wat3 gentyle to here,
& wat3 þe last of þe layk, leude3 þer þo3ten.

1024

Þer wer gestes to go vpon þe gray morne,
For-þy wonderly þay woke, & þe wyn dronken,
Daunsed ful dre3ly wyth dere carole3;
On the morrow many of the guests took their departure from the
castle.

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

1028

Vchon to wende on his way, þat wat3 wy3e stronge.
Gawan gef hym god-day, þe god mon hym lachche3,
Ledes hym to his awen chambre, þ[e] chymné bysyde,
Sir Gawayne is thanked by his host for the honour and pleasure of
his visit.

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

1032

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

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

[Fol. 105.] 1036

þat Gawayn hatȝ ben my gest, at Goddeȝ awen fest."

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

Al þe honour is your awen, þe heȝe kyng yow ȝelde;

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

1040

As I am halden þer-to, in hyȝe & in loȝe,

bi riȝt."

He endeavours to keep the knight at his court.

þe lorde fast can hym payne,

To holde lenger þe knyȝt,

1044

To hym answeȝ Gawayn,

Bi non way þat he myȝt.

¹ þat (?). ² nerci, in MS.

XXII.

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

Then frayned þe freke ful fayre at him-seluen,

Quat derne¹ dede had hym dryuen, at þat dere tyme,
1048

So kenly fro þe kyngeʒ kourt to kayre al his one,

Er þe halidayeʒ holly were halet out of toun?

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

"For soþe *sir*," *quod* þe segge, "ʒe sayn bot þe trawþe

A heʒe ernde & a hasty me hade fro þo woneʒ,
1052

For I am sumned my selfe to sech to a place,

I wot² *in* worlde wheder warde to wende, hit to fynde;

I nolde, bot if I hit negh myʒt on nwʒeres morne,

For alle þe londe *in*-wyth Logres, so me oure lorde help!
1056

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

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

Þat ʒe me telle *with* trawþe, if euer ʒe tale herde

Of þe grene chapel, quere hit on grounde stondeʒ,

& of þe knyʒt þat hit kepes, of colour of grene?
1060

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

To mete þat mon at þat mere, ʒif I myʒt last;

& of þat ilk nwʒere hot naked now wonteʒ,

& I wolde loke on þat lede, if God me let wolde,
1064

Gladloker, bi Goddeȝ sun, þen any god welde!
 For-þi, I-wysse, bi ȝowre wyllle, wende me bi-houes,
 He would as lief die as fail in his errand.
 Naf I now to busy bot bare pre dayeȝ,
 & me als fayn to falle feye as fayly of myyn ernde."
 The prince tells Sir Gawayne that he will teach him the way. 1068
 Þenne laȝande quod þe lorde, "now leng þe by-houes,
 For I schal teche yow to þa[t] terme bi þe tymeȝ ende,
 Þe grene chapayle vpon grounde, greue yow no more;
 Bot ȝe schal be in yowre bed, burne, at þyn ese,
 1072
 Quyle forth dayej, & ferk on pe fyrst of pe ȝere,
 [Fol. 105b]
 & cum to þat merk at mydmorn, to make quat yow likeȝ
 in spenne;
 Dowelleȝ whyle new ȝeres daye,
 1076
 & rys, & raykeȝ þenne,
 The Green chapel is not more than two miles from the castle.
 Mon schal yow sette in waye,
 Hit is not two myle henne."
¹ derue (?). ² not (?).

XXIII.

Then was Gawayne glad,
 Þenne watȝ Gawan ful glad, & gomenly he laȝed,—
 1080
 "Now I þonk yow þryuandely þurȝ alle oper þynge,
 and consents to tarry awhile at the castle.
 Now acheued is my chaunce, I schal at *your* wyllle
 Dowelle, & elleȝ do quat ȝe demen."

Þenne sesed hym þe syre, & set hym bysyde,
The ladies are brought in to solace him. 1084
Let þe ladiez be fette, to lyke hem þe better;
Þer watȝ seme solace by hem-self stille;
Þe lorde let for luf loteȝ so myry,
As wyȝ þat wolde of his wyte, ne wyst quat he myȝt.

1088

Þenne he carped to þe knyȝt, criande loude,
The lord of the castle asks the knight to grant him one request;
"Ȝe han demed to do þe dede þat I bidde;
Wyl ȝe halde þis hes here at þys oneȝ?"
"Ȝe *sir*, for-soþe," sayd þe segge trwe,

1092

"Whyl I byde *in* yowre borȝe, be bayn to ȝow[r]e hest."
"For ȝe haf trauayled," *quod* þe tulk, "toven fro ferre,
& syþen waked me wyth, ȝe arn not wel waryst,
That he will stay in his chamber during mass time,
Nauper of sostnaunce ne of slepe, soply I knowe;

1096

Ȝe schal lenge *in your* lofte, & lyȝe *in your* ese,
and then go to meat with his hostess.
To morn quyle þe messe-quyle, & to mete wende,
When ȝe wyl, wyth my wyf, þat wyth yow schal sitte,
& comfort yow *with* compayny, til I to cort torne,

1100

ȝe lende;
& I schal erly ryse,
On *huntyng* wyl I wende."
Gawayne accedes to his request.
Gauayn granteȝ alle þyse,

1104

Hym heldande, as þe hende.

XXIV.

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

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

Quat-so-euer I wyne in þe wod, hit worþeȝ to youreȝ,
and what check you achieve shall be mine."

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

1108

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

Queþer, leude, so lymþ lere oþer better."

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

[Fol. 106.]

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

A bargain is made between them. 1112

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

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

Þay dronken, & daylyeden, & dalten vntyȝtel,¹

Þise lordeȝ & ladyeȝ, quyle þat hem lyked;

1116

& syþen *with* frenkysch fare & fele fayre loteȝ

Þay stoden, & stemed, & styilly speken,

Kysten ful comlyly, & kaȝten her leue.

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

With mony leude ful lyȝt, & lemande torches,

1120

Vche burne to his bed watȝ broȝt at þe laste,
ful softe;

To bed ȝet er þay ȝede,

Recorded couenaunteȝ ofte;

1124

Þe olde lorde of þat leude,²

Cowþe wel halde layk a-lofte.

¹ vntyl nyȝte (?). ² lede (?).

[FYTTE THE THIRD.]

I.

Before day-break folks uprise,
Ful erly bifore þe day þe folk vp-rysen,
Gestes þat go wolde, hor gromeȝ þay calden,
saddle their horses, and truss their mails. 1128
& þay busken vp bilyue, blonkkeȝ to sadel,
Tyffen he[r] takles, trussen her males,
Richen hem þe rychest, to ryde alle arayde,
Lepen vp lyȝtly, lachen her brydeles,
Each goes where it pleases him best. 1132
Vche wyȝe on his way, þer hym wel lyked.
The noble lord of the land arrays himself for riding.
þe leue lorde of þe londe watȝ not þe last,
A-rayed for þe rydyng, *with* renkkeȝ ful mony;
He eats a sop hastily and goes to mass.
Ete a sop hastyly, when he hade herde masse,
1136
With bugle to bent felde he buskeȝ by-lyue;
Before day-light he and his men are on their horses.
By þat þat any day-lyȝt lemed vpon erþe,
He *with* his hapeles on hyȝe horsses weren.
Then the hounds are called out and coupled.
þenne þise cacheres þat coupe, cowpled hor houndeȝ,
1140
Vnclosed þe kenel dore, & calde hem þer-oute,
Three short notes are blown by the bugles.
Blwe bygly *in* bugleȝ þre bare mote;
Braches bayed þerfore, & breme noyse maked,
A hundred hunters join in the chase.
& þay chastysed, & charred, on chasyng þat went;
1144
A hundreth of hunteres, as I haf herde telle,
of þe best;

To the stations the "fewters" go,
To trystors vewters ȝod,
Couples huntres of kest,
[Fol. 106*b*.] 1148
Ȑer ros for blasteȝ gode,
and the dogs are cast off.
Gret rurd *in* þat forest.

II.

Roused by the clamour the deer rush to the heights,
At þe fyrst quethe of þe quest quaked þe wylde;
Der drof *in* þe dale, doted for drede,
1152
Hized to þe hyȝe, bot heterly þay were
but are soon driven back.
Restayed *with* þe stablye, þat stoutly ascryed;
The harts and bucks are allowed to pass,
Ȑay let þe hertteȝ haf þe gate, *with* þe hyȝe hedes,
Ȑe breme bukkeȝ also, *with* hor brode paumeȝ;
1156
For þe fre lorde hade de-fende *in* fermysoun tyme,
Ȑat þer schulde no mon mene¹ to þe male dere.
but the hinds and does are driven back to the shades.
Ȑe hindeȝ were halden *in*, *with* hay & war,
Ȑe does dryuen *with* gret dyn to þe depe sladeȝ;
1160
Ȑer myȝt mon se, as þay slypte, slentyng of arwes,
As they fly they are shot by the bowmen.
At vche [þat] wende vnder wande wapped a flone,
Ȑat bigly bote on þe broun, *with* ful brode hedeȝ,
The hounds and the hunters, with a loud cry, follow in pursuit.

What! þay brayen, & bleden, bi bonkkeȝ þay deȝen.

1164

& ay rachches *in* a res radly hem folȝes,

Huntereȝ wyth hyȝe horne hasted hem after,

Those that escaped the arrows are killed by the hounds.

Wyth such a crakkande kry, as klyffes haden brusten;

What wylde so at-waped wyȝes þat schotten,

1168

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

Bi þay were tened at þe hyȝe, & taysed to þe wattreȝ,

Þe ledeȝ were so lerned at þe loȝe trysteres,

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

1172

& hem to fylched, as fast as frekeȝ myȝt loke,

þer ryȝt.

The lord waxes joyful in the chase,

Þe lorde for blys abloy

Ful oft con launce & lyȝt,

which lasted till the approach of night. 1176

& drof þat day wyth loy

Thus to þe derk nyȝt.

¹ meue (?).

III.

All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Þus laykeȝ þis lorde by lynde wodeȝ eueȝ,

& G. þe god mon, *in* gay bed lyȝeȝ,

under "coverture full clear". 1180

Lurkkeȝ quyl þe day-lyȝt lemed on þe woves,

Vnder couertour ful clere, cortyned aboute;

& as *in* slomeryng he slode, sleȝly he herde

He hears a noise at his door.

A littel dyn at his dor, & derfly vpon;

1184

& he heueþ vp his hed out of þe clopes,

[Fol. 107.]

A corner of þe cortyn he caþt vp a lyttel,

& wayteþ warly þider-warde, quat hit be myȝt.

A lady, the loveliest to behold, enters softly.

Hit watþ þe ladi, loflyest to be-holde,

1188

Þat droȝ þe dor after hir ful dernly¹ & styлле,

She approaches the bed.

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

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

Gawayne pretends to be asleep.

& ho stepped stilly. & stel to his bedde,

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

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

& set hir ful softly on þe bed-syde,

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

Þe lede lay lurked a ful longe quyle,

Gawayne has much wonder thereat. 1196

Compast *in* his concience to quat þat cace myȝt

Mene oper amount, to meruayle hym þoȝt;

Bot ȝet he sayde *in* hym-self, "more semly hit were

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

He rouses himself up, 1200

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

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

& vn-louked his yȝe-lyddeþ, & let as hym wondered,

& sayned hym, as bi his saȝe þe sauer to worthe,

with hande;

1204

Wyth chynne & cheke ful swete,

Boþe quit & red *in-blande*,

Ful lufly con ho lete,

Wyth lyppeþ smal laȝande.

¹ deruly (?).

IV.

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

"God moroun, *sir* Gawayn," sayde þat fayr lady,
"Ȝe ar a sleper vn-slyȝe, þat mon may slyde hider;
Now ar ȝe tan astyt, bot true *vus* may schape,
I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure."
I schal bynde yow *in your* bedde, þat be ȝe trayst:"

1212

Al laȝande þe lady lanced þo bourdeȝ.
"Good morrow," says the knight, "I am well pleased to be at your service;

"Goud moroun g[aye],"¹ *quod* Gawayn þe blype,
"Me schal worpe at *your* wille, & þat me wel lykeȝ,
For I ȝelde me ȝederly, & ȝeȝe after grace,
1216
& þat is þe best, be my dome, for me by-houeȝ nede;"
& þus he bourded a-ȝayn *with* mony a blype laȝter.
but permit me to rise and dress myself."

"Bot wolde ȝe, lady louely, þen leue me grante,
& de-prece *your* prysoun, & pray hym to ryse,
1220

I wolde boȝe of þis bed, & busk me better,
I schulde keuer þe more comfort to karp yow wyth."
[Fol. 107b]

"Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one,
"Nay, for sope, beau *sir*," sayd þat swete,
"Ȝe schal not rise of *your* bedde, I rych yow better,
"I shall hold talk with you here. 1224

I schal happe yow here þat oper half als,
& syþen karp wyth my knyȝt þat I kaȝt haue;
I know well that you are Gawayne that all the woild worships.

For I wene wel, Iwysse, *sir Wawen* ȝe are,
þat alle þe worlde worchipeȝ, quere-so ȝe ride;

1228

Your honour, your hendelayk is hendely praysed
We are by ourselves;

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

& now ȝe ar here, iwysse, & we bot oure one;
My lord and his men are far off.

"My lorde & his ledeȝ ar on lenþe faren,
Other men are in their beds, so are my maidens. 1232

Oper burneȝ *in* her bedde, & my burdeȝ als,
The door is safely closed.

þe dor drawen, & dit *with* a derf haspe;
Since I have him in house that every one likes, I shall use my time
well while it lasts.

& syþen I haue *in* þis hous hym þat al lykeȝ,
I schal ware my whyle wel, quyl hit lasteȝ,

1236

with tale;

Ye are welcome to my body.

ȝe ar welcum to my cors,

Yowre awen won to wale,

Me be-houeȝ of fyne force,

I shall be your servant." 1240

Your seruauunt be & schale."

¹ This word is illegible in the MS.

V.

"In god fayth," *quod* Gawayn, "gayn hit me þynkkeȝ,
"I am unworthy," says Sir Gawayne, "to reach to such reverence as
ye rehearse.

Þaȝ I be not now he þat ȝe of speken;
To reche to such reuerence as ȝe reherce here

1244

I am wyȝe vn-worpy, I wot wel my-seluen;
Bi God, I were glad, & yow god þoȝt,
I shall be glad, however, to please you by word, or service."
At saȝe oþer at seruyce þat I sette myȝt
To þe plesaunce of *your* prys, hit were a pure ioye."

1248

"In god fayth, *sir* Gawayn," *quod* þe gay lady,
"Þe prys & þe prowes þat pleseȝ al oþer,
If I hit lakked, oþer set at lyȝt, hit were littel daynté;
"There are ladies," says his visitor, "who would prefer thy company
Bot hit ar ladyes *in-noȝe*, þat leuer wer nowþe

1252

Haf þe hende *in* hor holde, as I þe habbe here,
To daly witt derely *your* daynté wordeȝ,
Keuer hem comfort, & colen her careȝ,
to much of the gold that they possess."
Þen much of þe garysourn oþer golde þat¹ þay hauen;

1256

Bot I louue² þat ilk lorde þat þe lyfte haldeȝ,
I haf hit holly *in* my honde þat al desyres,
þurȝe grace."
Scho made hym so gret chere,

[Fol. 108.] 1260

Þat watȝ so fayr of face,
The knight answers the lady's questions.
Þe knyȝt *with* speches skere,
A[n]swared to vche a cace.

¹ MS. þat þat. ² louie or loune (?).

VI.

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

"Madame," *quod* þe myry mon, "Mary yow ȝelde,
1264
For I haf founden, *in* god fayth, yowre fraunchis nobele,
& oper ful much of oper folk fongen hor dedeȝ;
Bot þe daynté þat þay delen for my disert nysen,
Hit is þe worchyp of *your*-self, þat noȝt hot wel conneȝ."

The lady declares by Mary, 1268

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

1272
For þe costes þat I haf knowen vpun þe knyȝt here,
Of bewté, & debonerté, & blyþe semblaunt,
she would select Gawayne before any man on earth.
& þat I haf er herkkened, & halde hit here trwee,
þer schulde no freke vpon folde bifore yow be chosen."

1276
"I-wysse, worpy," *quod* þe wyȝe, "ȝe haf waled wel better,
Gawayne tells her that he will become her own knight and faithful
servant.

Bot I am proude of þe prys þat ȝe put on me,
& soberly *your* seruaunt my souerayn I holde yow,
& yowre knyȝt I be-com, & Kryst yow for-ȝelde."

1280
þus þay meled of much-quat, til myd-morn paste,
& ay þe lady let lyk, a¹ hym loued mych;
The remembrance of his adventure prevents him from thinking of
love.

Þe freke ferde *with* defence, & feted ful fayre.
 Þaȝ I were burde bryȝtest, þe burde *in* mynde hade,
 1284
 Þe lasse luf *in* his lode, for lur þat he soȝt,
 boute hone;
 Þe dunte þat schulde² hym deue,
 & nedeȝ hit most be done;
 The lady takes leave of Sir Gawayne. 1288
 Þe lady þenn spek of leue.
 He *granted* hir ful sone.
¹ and (?) ² sclulde, in MS.

VII.

With a laughing glance, she says,
 Þenne ho gef hym god-day, & wyth a glent laȝed.
 & as ho stod, ho stonyed hym wyth ful stor wordeȝ:
 "I am doubtful whether ye be Gawayne. 1292
 "Now he þat spedeȝ vche spech, þis disport ȝelde yow!
 Bot þat ȝe be Gawan, hit gotȝ *in* mynde."
 "Quer-fore?" *quod* þe freke, & freschly he askeȝ,
 Ferde lest he hade fayled *in* foume of his castes;
 1296
 Bot þe burde hym blessed, & bi þis skyl sayde,
 [Fol. 108b.]
 "So god as Gawayn gaynly is halden,
 & cortaysye is closed so clene *in* hym-seluen,
 Were it he, surely, ere this, he would have craved a kiss."
 Couth not lyȝtly haf lenged so long wyth a lady,
 1300
 Bot he had craued a cosse, bi his *courtaysye*,
 Bi *sum* towch of *summe* tryfle, at *sum* taleȝ ende."

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

þen *quod* Wowen, "I-wysse, worþe as yow lykeþ,
I schal kysse at *your* comaundement, as a knyȝt falleþ,

1304

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

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

Ho comes nerre *with* þat, & cacheþ hym in armeþ,

Louteþ luflych adoun, & þe leude kysseþ;

þay comly bykennen to Kryst ayþer oþer;

1308

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

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

Gawayne then rises and goes to mass.

Clepes to his chamberlayn, choses his wede,

Boȝeþ forth, quen he watþ boun, blyþely to masse,

1312

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

He makes mirth all day till the moon rises,

& made myry al day til þe mone rysed,

with game;

*With*³ neuer freke fayrer fonge,

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

Bitwene two so dyngne dame,

þe alder & þe ȝonge,

Much solace set þay same.

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

VIII.

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

And ay þe lorde of þe londe is lent on his gamneþ,

1320

To hunt *in* holtez & hepe, at hyndeȝ barayne,
Such a sowme he þer slowe bi þat þe sunne heldet,
Of dos & of oper dere, to deme were wonder.
Þenne fersly þay flokked *in* folk at þe laste,
Quickly of the killed a "*quarry*" they make. 1324
& quykly of þe quelled dere a querré þay maked;
Þe best boȝed þerto, *with* burnez *in*-noghe,
Then they set about *breaking* the deer.
Gedered þe grattest of gres þat þer were,
& didden hem derely vndo, as þe dede askeȝ;
They take away the *assay* or fat, 1328
Serched hem at þe asay, summe þat þer were,
Two fyngeres þay fonde of þe fowlest of alle;
then they slit the *slot* and remove the *erber*.
Syþen þay slyt þe slot, sesed þe erber,
They afterwards rip the four limbs and rend off the hide.
Schaued wyth a scharp knyf, & þe schyre knitten;

1332

Syþen rytte þay þe foure lymmes, & rent of þe hyde,
They next open the belly
Þen brek þay þe bale, þe baleȝ out token,
[Fol. 109.]
and take out the bowels.
Lystily forlancyng, & bere of þe knot;
Þay gryped to þe gargulun, & graypely departed
They then separate the *weasand* from the windhole and throw out
the guts. 1336
Þe wesaunt fro þe wynt-hole, & walt out þe gutteȝ;
Þen scher þay out þe schuldereȝ *with* her scharp knyueȝ,
The shoulders are cut out, and the breast divided into halves.
Haled hem by a lyttel hole, to haue hole sydes;
Sipen britned þay þe brest, & brayden hit *in* twynne,
1340
& eft at þe gargulun bigyneȝ on þenne,
The *numbles* are next removed.
Ryueȝ hit vp radly, ryȝt to þe byȝt,

Voydeȝ out þe a-vantern, & verayly þerafter
Alle þe rymeȝ by þe rybbeȝ radly þay lance;

1344

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

1348

bi kynde;

By the fork of the thighs,

Bi þe byȝt al of þe þyȝes,

Þe lappeȝ þay lance bi-hynde,

the flaps are hewn in two by the backbone.

To hewe hit in two þay hyȝes,

1352

Bi þe bak-bon to vnbynde.

IX.

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

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

1356

Þenn þurled þay ayþer þik side þurȝ, bi þe rybbe,
& hinged þenne a[y]þer bi hoȝes of þe fourcheȝ,
Vche freke for his fee, as falleȝ forto haue.

Vpon a felle of þe fayre best, fede þay þayr houndes,
With the liver, lights and paunches, they feed the hounds. 1360

Wyth þe lyuer & þe lyȝteȝ, þe leþer of þe pauncheȝ,
& bred baped in blod, blende þer amongeȝ;

Baldely pay blw prys, bayed payr rachcheȝ,
Then they make for home.

Syben fonge pay her flesche folden to home,
1364

Strakande ful stoutly mony stif moteȝ.

Bi þat þe daylyȝt watȝ done, þe douthe watȝ al wonen
In-to þe comly castel, þer þe knyȝt bideȝ
ful stille;

1368

Wyth blys & bryȝt fyr bette,

Þe lord is comen þer-tylle,

Gawayne goes out to meet his host.

When Gawayn wyth hym mette,

Þer watȝ bot wele at wylle.

¹ grene (?).

X.

[Fol. 109b.]

The lord commands all his household to assemble, 1372

Thenne comaunded þe lorde *in* þat sale to samen alle þe meny,
Boþe þe ladyes on loghe to lyȝt *with* her burdes,
and the venison to be brought before him.

Bi-fore alle þe folk on þe flette, frekeȝ he beddeȝ

Verayly his venysoun to fech hym byforne;

He calls Gawayne, 1376

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

Techeȝ hym to þe tayles of ful tayt bestes,

Scheweȝ hym þe schyree grece schorne vpon rybbes.

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

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

1380

Haue I pryuandely þonk þurȝ my craft serued?"

"Ȝe I-wysse," *quod* þat oper wyȝe, "here is wayth fayrest

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

Þat I seȝ þis seuen ȝere *in* sesoun of wynter."

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

1384

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

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

&¹ I haf worthyly þis woneȝ wyth-inne,

Gawayne gives the knight a comely kiss in return.

I-wysse *with* as god wylle hit worþeȝ to ȝoureȝ."

1388

He hasppeȝ his fayre hals his armeȝ wyth-inne,

& kysses hym as comlyly as he² coupe awyse:

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

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

1392

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

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

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

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

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

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

1396

For ȝe haftan þat yow tydeȝ, traweȝe non oper
ȝe mowe."

Þay laȝed, & made hem blyþe,

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

Wyth loteȝ þat were to lowe,

1400

To soper þay ȝede asswyþe,

Wyth dayntes nwe *in*-nowe.

¹ And = an. ² ho, in MS. ³ your (?).

XI.

By the hearth they sit.

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

Wine is carried round.

Wyȝeȝ þe walle wyn weȝed to hem oft,

1404

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

To fyllen þe same forwardeȝ þat þay by-fore maden,

Again Sir Gawayne and his host renew their agreement.

Þat chaunce so bytydeȝ hor cheuysaunce to chaunge,

What nweȝ so þay nome, at naȝt quen þay metten

1408

Þay acorded of þe couenaunteȝ byfore þe court alle;

[Fol. 110.]

Þe beuerage watȝ broȝt forth *in* bourde at þat tyme;

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

Þenne þay louelych leȝten leue at þe last,

Vche burne to his bedde busked bylyue.

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

Bi þat þe coke hade croweȝ¹ & cakled bot pryse,

Þe lorde watȝ lopen of his bedde, [&] þe leudeȝ vch one,

So þat þe mete & þe masse watȝ metely delyuered;

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

1416

to chace;

With his hunters and horns they pursue the chase.

Heȝ *with* hunte & horneȝ,

Þurȝ playneȝ þay passe *in* space,

Vn-coupled among þo þorneȝ,

1420

Racheȝ þat ran on race.

¹ crowed (?).

XII.

The hunters cheer on the hounds,
Sone þay calle of a quest *in* aker syde,
Þe hunt re-hayted þe houndez, þat hit fyrst mynged,
which fall to the scent forty at once.

Wylde wordez hym warp wyth a wrast noyce;

1424

Þe howndez þat hit herde, hastid þider swyþe,
& fellen as fast to þe fuyt, fourty at ones;
Þenne such a glauerande glam of gedered rachchez
Ros, þat þe rocherez rungen aboute;

1428

Hunterez hem hardened *with* horne & wyth muthe.
All come together by the side of a cliff.

Þen al *in* a semblé sweyed to-geder,
Bitwene a flosche *in* þat fryth, & a foo cragge;
In a knot, bi a clyffe, at þe kerre syde,

1432

Þer as þe rogh rocher vn-rydely wat3 fallen,
[Þay] ferden to þe fyndyng, & freke3 hem after;
They look about on all sides,
Þay vmbe-kesten þe knarre & þe knot bope.
Wy3ez, whyl þay wysten wel wyt *inne* hem hit were,

1436

Þe best þat þer breued wat3 wyth þe blod houndez.
and beat on the bushes.
Þenne þay beten on þe buskez, & bede hym vp ryse,
& he vnsoundly out so3t seggez ouer-þwert,
Out there rushes a fierce wild boar,
On þe sellokest swyn swenged out pere,

1440

Long sythen for¹ þe sounder þat wigt for-olde,
For he wat3 b[este &] bor alþer grattest,

[And eue]re quen he gronyed, þenne greued mony,
At the first thrust he fells three to the ground.

For [þre a]t þe fyrst þrast he þryȝt to þe erþe,
1444

& [sped hym] forth good sped, bote spyt more,
[Ande þay] halowed hyghe ful hyȝe & hay! hay! cryed
[Fol. 110b.]

Haden horneȝ to mouþe heterly rechated;
Full quickly the hunters pursue him.

Mony watȝ þe myry mouthe of men & of houndeȝ,
1448

Þat buskkeȝ after þis bor, *with* bost & wyth noyse,
To quelle;
Ful oft he bydeȝ þe baye,
& maymeȝ þe mute *Inn*-melle,
However, he attacks the hounds, causing them to yowl and yell. 1452
He hurteȝ of þe houndeȝ, & þay
Ful ȝomerly ȝaule & ȝelle.
1 fro (?).

XIII.

The bowmen send their arrows after this wild swine,
Schalkeȝ to schote at hym schowen to þenne,
Haled to hym of her areweȝ, hitten hym oft;

1456
Bot þe poynteȝ payred at þe pyth þat pyȝt *in* his scheldeȝ,
& þe barbeȝ of his browe bite non wolde,
but they glide off shivered in pieces.

Þaȝ þe schauen schaft schyndered *in* peceȝ,
Þe hede hypped aȝayn, were-so-euer hit hitte;
Enraged with the blows, 1460

Bot quon þe dyntez hym dered of her dryȝe strokeȝ,
þen, brayn-wod for bate, on burnez he raseȝ,
he attacks the hunters.

Hurtez hem ful heterly þer he forth hyȝez,
& mony arȝed þerat, & on-lyte droȝen.

1464

Bot þe lorde on a lyȝt horce launces hym after,
The lord of the land blows his bugle,
As burne bolde vpon bent his bugle he blowez,
He rechated, & r[ode]¹ þurȝ roneȝ ful þyk,
Suande þis wy[ld]e swyn til þe sunne schafted.
and pursues the boar. 1468

þis day wyth þis ilk dede þay dryuen on þis wyse,
Whyle oure luflych lede lys in his bedde,
All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Gawayn graypely at home, in gereȝ ful ryche
of hewe;

1472

þe lady noȝt forȝate,
Com to hym to salue,
Ful erly ho watȝ hym ate,
His mode forto remwe.

¹ The MS. is here almost illegible.

XIV.

The lady of the castle again visits Sir Gawayne. 1476

Ho commes to þe cortyn, & at þe knyȝt totes,
Sir Wawen her welcumed worþy on fyrst,
& ho hym ȝeldeȝ aȝayn, ful ȝerne of hir wordeȝ,
Softly she sits by his side,
Setteȝ hir soff[t]ly by his syde, & swypely ho laȝez,

1480

& wyth a luflych loke ho layde¹ hym þyse wordez:

"Sir, ȝif ȝe be Wawen, wonder me þynkkeȝ,

Wyȝe þat is so wel wrast alway to god,

& conneȝ not of compaynye þe costeȝ vnder-take,

[Fol. 111] 1484

& if mon kennes yow hom to knowe, ȝe kest hom of *your* mynde;
and tells the knight that he has forgotten what she taught him the
day before.

Þou hatȝ for-ȝeten ȝederly þat ȝisterday I taȝtte
alder-truest token of talk þat I cowþe."

"What is þat?" *quod* þe wyghe, "I-wysse I wot neuer,

1488

If hit be sothe þat ȝe breue, þe blame is myn awen."

"I taught you of kissing," she says, "that becomes every knight."

"ȝet I kende yow of kyssyng," *quod* þe clere þenne,

"Quere-so countenaunce is coupe, quikly to clayme,

þat bicumes vche a knyȝt, þat cortaysy vses."

1492

"Do way," *quod* þat derf mon, "my dere, þat speche,

Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden.

For þat durst I not do, lest I denyed were,

If I were werned, I were wrang I-wysse, ȝif I profered."

"Ma fay," *quod* þe mere wyf, "ȝe may not be werned,

He is told that he is strong enough to enforce it. 1496

ȝe ar stif *in-noghe* to constrayne wyth strenkþe, ȝif yow lykeȝ,

ȝif any were so vilanous þat yow denaye² wolde."

"ȝe, be God," *quod* Gawayn, "good is *your* speche,

Bot þrete is vn-þryuande *in* þede þer I lende,

The knight replies that every gift is worthless that is not given
willingly. 1500

& vche gift þat is geuen not *with* goud wylle;

I am at *your* comaundement, to kysse quen yow lykeȝ,

ȝe may lach quen yow lyst, & leue quen yow þynkkeȝ,
in space."

The lady stoops down and kisses him. 1504

Þe lady louteȝ a-doun,

& comlyly kysses his face,
Much speche þay þer expoun,
Of druryes greme & grace.

¹ sayde (?). ² de vaye, in MS.

XV.

"I would learn," she says, "why you, who are so young and active,
1508

"I woled¹ wyt at yow, wyȝe," þat worpy þer sayde,
"& yow wrathed not þer-wyth, what were þe skylle,
þat so ȝong & so ȝepe, as ȝe [ar] at þis tyme,
So cortayse, so knyȝtyly, as ȝe ar knowen oute,
so skilled in the true sport of love, 1512
& of alle cheualry to chose, þe chef þyng a-losed,
Is² þe lel layk of luf, þe lettrure of armes;
F[or] to telle of þis tenelyng of þis trwe knyȝteȝ,
Hit is þe tytelet, token, & tyxt of her werkkeȝ,

1516

How le[des] for her lele luf hor lyueȝ han auntered,
Endured for her drury dulful stoundeȝ,
& after wenged *with* her walour & voyded her care,
and so renowned a knight,
& broȝt blysse *in-to* boure, *with* bountees hor awen.

1520

& ȝe ar knyȝt com-lokest kyd of *your* elde,
[Fol. 111b.]
Your worde & *your* worchip walkeȝ ay quere,
& I haf seten by *your*-self here sere twyes,
have never talked to me of love.

ȝet herde I neuer of *your* hed helde no wordeȝ
1524

Pat euer longed to luf, lasse ne more;
You ought to show a young thing like me some token of 'true-love's
crafts.'

& ȝe, pat ar so cortays & coynt of *your* hetes,
Oghe to a ȝonke þynk ȝern to schewe,
& teche sum tokeneȝ of trweluf craftes.

1528

Why ar ȝe lewed, pat alle þe los weldeȝ,
Oþer elles ȝe demen me to dille, *your* dalyaunce to herken?
for schame!

I com hider sengel, & sitte,

1532

To lerne at yow sum game,
So teach me of your 'wit' while my lord is from home."
Dos, techeȝ me of *your* wytte,
Whil my lorde is fro hame."

¹ wolde (?). ² In (?).

XVI.

"It is a great pleasure to me," says Sir Gawayne, "to hear you talk,
"In goud fayþe," *quod* Gawayn, "God yow forȝelde,

1536

Gret is þe gode gle, & gomen to me huge,
Pat so worpy as ȝe wolde wynne hidere,
& pyne yow *with* so pouer a mon, as play wyth *your* knyȝt,
With any skynneȝ countenaunce, hit keuereȝ me ese;
but I cannot undertake the task to expound true-love and tales of
arms. 1540

Bot to take þe toruayle¹ to my-self, to trwluf expoun,
& towche þe temeȝ of tyxt, & taleȝ of armeȝ,
To yow pat, I wot wel, weldeȝ more slyȝt

Of þat art, bi þe half, or a hundreth of seche

1544

As I am, oþer euer schal, in erde þer I leue,

Hit were a fole fele-folde, my fre, by my trawþe.

I will, however, act according to your will,

I wolde yowre wylnyng worche at my myȝt,

As I am hyȝly bihalden, & euer-more wylle

and ever be your servant." 1548

Be seruaunt to *your*-seluen, so saue me dryȝtyn!"

Þus hym frayned þat fre, & fondet hym ofte,

Forto haf wonnen hym to woȝe, what-so scho þoȝt elleȝ,

Thus Gawayne defends himself.

Bot he de fended hym so fayr, þat no faut semed,

1552

Ne non euel on nawþer halue, nawþer þay wysten,

bot blysse;

Þay laȝed & layked longe,

At þe last scho con hym kysse,

The lady having kissed the knight, takes leave of him. 1556

Hir leue fayre con scho fonge,

& went hir waye lwysse.

¹ tornayle (?).

XVII.

Gawayne rises, hears mass, and then dines.

Then rupes hym þe renk, & ryses to þe masse,
[Fol. 112.]

& sipen hor diner watȝ dyȝt & derely serued.
Meanwhile the lord pursues the wild boar, 1560
þe lede *with* þe ladyeȝ layked alle day,
Bot þe lorde ouer þe londeȝ launced ful ofte,
Sweȝ his vncely swyn, þat swyngeȝ bi þe bonkkeȝ,
that bit the backs of his hounds asunder,
& bote þe best of his bracheȝ þe bakkeȝ *in* sunder;
1564

þer he bode *in* his bay, tel¹ bawe-men hit breken,
& made² hym, maw-gref his bed, forto mwe vtter;
and caused the stiffest of the hunters to start.
So felle floneȝ per flete, when þe folk gedered;
Bot ȝet þe styffest to start bi stoundeȝ he made,
1568

Til at þe last he watȝ so mat, he myȝt no more renne,
The boar runs into a hole in a rock by the side of a brook.
Bot *in* þe hast þat he myȝt, he to a hole wyneȝ,
Of a rasse, bi a rokk, þer renneȝ þe boerne,
He gete þe bonk at his bak, bigyneȝ to scrape,
The froth foams at his mouth. 1572

þe frope femed³ at his mouth vnfayre bi þe wykeȝ,
Whetteȝ his whyte tuscheȝ; *with* hym þen irked
Alle þe burneȝ so bolde, þat hym by stoden,
None durst approach him,
To nye hym on-ferum, bot neȝe hym non durst
1576

for woþe;
He hade hurt so mony byforne,
þat al þuȝt⁴ þenne ful loþe,
so many had he torn with his tusks.
Be more wyth his tuscheȝ torne,
1580
þat breme watȝ [&] brayn-wod bothe.
¹ til (?). ² madee, in MS. ³ fomed (?). ⁴ þoȝt (?).

XVIII.

The knight, seeing the boar at bay,
Til þe knyȝt com hym-self, kachande his blonk,
Syȝ hym byde at þe bay, his burneȝ bysyde,
alights from his horse,
He lyȝtes luflych¹ adoun, leueȝ his corsour,
1584
Braydeȝ out a bryȝt bront, & bigly forth strydeȝ,
Foundeȝ fast þurȝ þe forth, þer þe felle bydeȝ,
and seeks to attack him with his sword.
þe wylde watȝ war of þe wyȝe *with* weppen *in* honde,
Hef hyȝly þe here, so hetterly he fnast,
1588
þat fele ferde for þe frekeȝ,² lest felle hym þe worre;
The "swine sets out" upon the man,
þe swyn setteȝ hym out on þe segge euen,
þat þe burne & þe bor were boþe vpon hepeȝ,
In þe wyȝt-est of þe water, þe worre hade þat oper,
who, aiming well, 1592
For þe mon merkkeȝ hym wel, as þay mette fyrst,
Set sadly þe scharp *in* þe slot euen,
wounds him in the pit of the stomach.

Hit hym vp to þe hult, þat þe hert schyndered,
& he ȝarrande hym ȝelde, & ȝedoun³ þe water,
1596
ful tyt;

[Fol. 112*b*.]

A hundreth houndez hym hent,
The boar is soon bitten to death by a hundred hounds.
Þat bremely con hym bite,
Burnez him broȝt to bent,
1600
& doggez to dethe endite.

¹ MS. luslych. ² freke (?). ³ ȝede doun (?).

XIX.

Then was there blowing of horns
There watȝ blawynȝ of prys in mony breme home,
Heȝe halowing on hiȝe, with hapelez þat myȝt;
and baying of hounds.
Brachetes bayed þat best, as bidden þe maysterez,
1604
Of þat chargeaunt chace þat were chef huntres.
One wise in woodcraft begins to unlace the boar.
Þenne a wyȝe þat watȝ wys vpon wod craftez,
To vnlace þis bor lufly bigynnez;
First he hews off the head, then rends him by the back.
Fyrst he hewes of his hed, & on hiȝe setteȝ,
1608
& syȝen rendez him al roghe bi þe rygge after,
He next removes the bowels, broils them on the ashes, and
therewith rewards his hounds.

Braydez out þe boweles, brennez hom on glede,

With bred blent þer-*with* his braches rewardeþ;
 Syþen he britneþ out þe brawen *in* bryȝt brode [s]cheldeþ,
 Then the hastlets are removed. 1612
 & hatþ out þe hastletteþ, as hiȝtly bisemeþ;
 The two halves are next bound together and hung upon a pole.
 & ȝet hem halcheþ al hole þe halueþ to-geder,
 & syþen on a stif stange stoutly hem henges.
 Now with þis ilk swyn þay swengen to home;
 The boar's head is borne before the knight, who hastens home. 1616
 Þe bores hed watþ borne bifore þe burnes seluen,
 Þat him for-ferde *in* þe forþe, þurþ forse of his honde,
 so stronge;
 Til he seþ *sir* Gawayne,
 1620
In halle hym þoȝt ful longe,
 Gawayne is called to receive the spoil.
 He calde, & he com gayn,
 His feeþ þer for to fonge.

XX.

The lord of the land is well pleased when he sees Sir Gawayne,
 Þe lorde ful lowde *with* lote, & laȝed myry,
 1624
 When he seþe *sir* G: *with* solace he spekeþ;
 Þe goude ladyeþ were geten, & gedered þe meyny,
 He shows him the shields of the wild boar, and tells him of its length
 and breadth.
 He scheweþ hem þe scheldeþ, & schapes hem þe tale,
 Of þe largesse, & þe lenþe, þe liþerneþ also,
 1628
 Of þe were of þe wylde swyn, *in* wod þer he fled.

þat oper knyȝt ful comly comended his dedeȝ,
& praysed hit as gret prys, þat he proued hade;
Such a "brawn of a beast," Sir Gawayne says, he never has seen.

For suche a brawne of a best, þe bolde burne sayde,
1632

Ne such sydes of a swyn, segh he neuer are.
þenne hondeled þay þe hoge hed, þe hende mon hit praysed,
[Fol. 113.]

& let lodly þerat þe lorde forte here:
Gawayne takes possession of it according to covenant,
"Now Gawayn," *quod* þe god mon, "þis gomen is *your* awen,
1636

Bi fyn for-warde & faste, faythely ȝe knowe."
"Hit is sothe," *quod* þe segge, "& as siker trwe;
Alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe."
and in return kisses his host,

He [hent] þe hapel aboute þe halse, & hendely hym kysses,
1640

& efter-sones of þe same he serued hym pere.
"Now ar we euen," *quod* þe hapel, "in þis euen-tide,
Of alle þe couenauntes þat we knyȝt, syþen I com hider,
bi lawe;"

who declares his guest to be the best he knows. 1644

þe lorde sayde, "bi saynt Gile,
ȝe ar þe best þat I knowe,
ȝe ben ryche *in* a whyle,
Such chaffer & ȝe drowe."

XXI.

Tables are raised aloft, 1648

þenne þay teldet tableȝ [on] trestes alofte,

cloths cast upon them,

Kesten cloþeȝ vpon, clere lyȝt þenne
and torches are lighted.

Wakned bi woȝeȝ, waxen torches

Seggeȝ sette, & serued *in* sale al aboute;
With much mirth and glee, 1652

Much glam & gle glent vp þer-inne,
Aboute þe fyre vpon flet, & on fele wyse,
supper is served in the hall,

At þe soper & after, mony apel songeȝ,
As coundutes of kryst-masse, & caroleȝ newe,
1656

With alle þe manerly merþe þat mon may of telle.
and ever our lovely knight by the lady sits,
& euer oure luflych knyȝt þe lady bi-syde;
Such semblaunt to þat segge semly ho made,
who does all she can to please her companion.

Wyth stille stollen countenance, þat stalworth to plese,
1660

Þat al for-wondered watȝ þe wyȝe, & wroth *with* hym-seluen,
Bot he nolde not for his nurture nurne hir a-ȝayneȝ,
Bot dalt *with* hir al *in* daynte, how-se-euer þe dede turned
to wrast;

When they had long played in the hall, 1664

Quen þay hade played *in* halle,
As longe as hor wylle hom last,
they proceeded "to chamber."

To chambre he¹ con hym calle,
& to þe chem-ne þay past.

¹ ho (?).

There they drank and discoursed. 1668

Ande þer þay dronken, & dalten, & demed eft nwe,
To norne on þe same note, on nweʒereʒ euen;

Gawayne begs leave to depart on the morrow.

Bot þe knyʒt craued leue, to kayre on þe morn,

For hit watʒ neʒ at þe terme, þat he to¹ schulde.

[Fol. 113*b*.] 1672

Þe lorde hym letted of þat, to lenge hym resteyed,
His host swears to him,

& sayde, "as I am trwe segge, I siker my trawþe,
that he shall come to the Green Chapel on New Year's morn long
before prime.

Þou schal cheue to þe grene chapel, þy charres to make,
Leude, on nwʒereʒ lyʒt, longe bifore pryme:

1676

For-þy þow lye *in* þy loft, & lach þyn ese,
& I schal hunt in þis holt, & halde þe towcheʒ,
Chaunge wyth þe cheuisaunce, bi þat I charre hider;
For I haf fraysted þe twys, & faythful I fynde þe,

1680

Now prid tyme þrowe best þenk on þe morne,
Make we mery quyl we may, & mynne vpon loye,
For þe lur may mon lach, when so mon lykeʒ."

Þis watʒ graybely graunted, & Gawayn is langed,
Our knight consents to remain for another night. 1684

Bliþe broʒt watʒ hym drynk, & þay to bedde ʒeden,
with liʒt;

Full still and softly he sleeps all night.

Sir G: lis & slepes,

Ful stille & softe al niʒt;

Early in the morning the lord is up. 1688

Þe lorde þat his crafteʒ kepes,

Ful erly he watʒ diʒt.

¹ te (?).

XXIII.

After mass, a morsel he take with his men.

After messe a morsel¹ he & his men token,
Miry watȝ þe mornynȝ, his mounture he askes;
Then were all on their horses before the hall-gates. 1692
Alle þe hapeles þat on horse schulde helden hym after,
Were boun busked on hor blonkkeȝ, bi-fore² þe halle ȝateȝ;
It was a clear frosty morning.

Ferly fayre watȝ þe folde, for þe forst clenged,
In rede rudede vpon rak rises þe sunne,
The hunters, dispersed by a wood's side, 1696
& ful clere costeȝ³ þe clowdes of þe welkyn.
Huntes vnhardeled bi a holt syde,
Rocheres rounȝen bi rys, for rurde of her hornes;
come upon the track of a fox,
Summe fel in þe fute, þer þe fox bade,
1700

Trayleȝ ofte a trayteres⁴, bi traunt of her wyles;
A kenet kryes þerof, þe hunt on hym calles,
His felages fallen hym to, þat fnasted ful pike,
which is followed up by the hounds.

Runnen forth in a rabel, in his ryȝt fare;
1704
& he fyskeȝ hem by-fore, þay founden hym sone,
They soon get sight of the game,
& quen þay seghe hym with syȝt, þay sued hym fast,
Wreȝande h[ym] ful [w]eterly with a wroth noyse;
and pursue him through many a rough grove.
& he trantes & tornayeeȝ þurȝ mony tene greue;
1708

Hamlouneȝ, & herkeneȝ, bi heggeȝ ful ofte;
[Fol. 114.]
The fox at last leaps over a spinny,

At þe last bi a littel dich he lepez ouer a spenné,
Stelez out ful stilly bi a strothe rande,
and by a rugged path seeks to get clear from the hounds.

Went haf wylt of þe wode, *with* wylez fro þe houndes,
1712

Þenne wat3 he went, er he wyst, to⁵ a wale tryster,
He comes upon one of the hunting stations, where he is attacked by
the dogs.

Þer þre þro at a þrich þrat hym at ones,
al graye;

However, he slips them,
He blenched azayn bilyue,

1716
& stifly start onstray,
With alle þe wo on lyue,
and makes again for the wood.

To þe wod he went away.

¹ MS. nnorsel. ² bi-forere, in MS. ³ caste3 (?). ⁴ trayveres (?). ⁵ to
to, in MS.

XXIV.

Then was it fine sport to listen to the hounds,
Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list to lyþen þe hounde3,

1720
When alle þe mute hade hym met, menged to-geder,
Suche a sorze at þat sy3t þay sette on his hede,
As alle þe clamberande clyffes hade clatered on hepes;
and the hallooing of the hunters.

Here he wat3 halawed, when hapelez hym metten,
1724

Loude he wat3 3ayned, *with* 3arande speche;

There the fox was threatened and called a thief.

þer he watȝ þreted, & ofte þef called,

& ay þe titleres at his tayl, þat tary he ne myȝt;

Ofte he watȝ runnen at, when he out rayked,

But Reynard was wily, 1728

& ofte reled *in* aȝayn, so reniarde watȝ wylé.

and led them astray over mounts.

& ȝe he lad hem bi lag, mon, þe lorde & his meyny;

On þis maner bi þe mountes, quyle myd, ouer, vnder,

Meanwhile the knight at home soundly sleeps within his comely curtains.

Whyle þe hende knyȝt at home holsumly slepeȝ,

1732

With-inne þe comly cortynes, on þe colde morne.

Bot þe lady for luf let not to slepe,

Ne þe purpose to payre, þat pyȝt *in* hir hert,

Bot ros hir vp radly, rayked hir þeder,

The lady of the castle, clothed in a rich mantle, 1736

In a mery mantyle, mete to þe erþe,

þat watȝ furred ful fyne *with* felleȝ, wel pured,

No hweȝ goud on hir hede, bot þe hazer stones

Trased aboute hir tressour, be twenty *in* clusteres;

her throat and bosom all bare, 1740

Hir pryuen face & hir prote þrowen al naked,

Hir brest bare bifore, & bihinde eke.

comes to Gawayne's chamber,

Ho comeȝ *with-inne* þe chambre dore, & closes hit hir after,
opens a window, and says,

Wayneȝ¹ vp a wyndow, & on þe wyȝe calleȝ,

1744

& radly þus re-hayted hym, *with* hir riche wordeȝ,

*with*² chere;

"Ah! man, how canst thou sleep,

"A! mon, how may þou slepe,

[Fol. 114b.]

this morning is so clear?"

þis morning is so clere?"

1748

He watȝ *in* drowping depe,
Bot þenne he con hir here.

¹ wayueȝ(?). ² bi, à sec. manu.

XXV.

The knight was then dreaming of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel.

In dreȝ droupyng of dreme draueled þat noble,
As mon þat watȝ in mornyng of mony þro þoȝtes,

1752

How þat destiné schulde þat day [dyȝt] his wyrde,
At þe grene chapel, when he þe gome metes,
& bi-houes his buffet abide, with-oute debate more;

He awakes and speaks to his fair visitor,

Bot quen þat comly he keuered his wyttes,

1756

Swenges out of þe sweuenes, & swarez *with* hast.

Þe lady luflych com laȝande swete,

who sweetly kisses him.

Felle ouer his fayre face, & fetly *him* kyssed;

He welcumeȝ hir worpily, with a wale chere;

1760

He seȝ hir so glorious, & gayly atyred,

So fautles of hir fetures, & of so fyne hewes,

Great joy warms the heart of Sir Gawayne,

Wiȝt wallande loye warmed his hert;

With smoþe smylyng & smolt þay smeten *in-to* merþe,

1764

Þat al watȝ blis & bonchef, þat breke hem bi-twene,
& wyne,

þay lanced wordes gode,
Much wele þen wat3 þer-inne,
and "great peril between them stood." 1768
Gret perile bi-twene hem stod,
Nif mare of hir kny3t mynne.

XXVI.

The knight is sorely pressed.
For þat prynce of pris de-presed hym so þikke.
Nurned hym so ne3e þe þred, þat nede hym bi-houed,
1772
Oþer lach þer hir luf, oþer lodly re-fuse;
He cared for his cortaysye, lest crapayn he were,
He fears lest he should become a traitor to his host.
& more for his meschef, 3if he schulde make synne,
& be traytor to þat tolke, þat þat telde a3t.
1776
"God schylde," quod þe schalk, "þat schal not be-falle!"
With luf-lazyng a lyt, he layd hym by-syde
Alle þe spechez of specialté þat sprange of her mouthe.
Quod þat burde to þe burne, "blame 3e disserue,
1780
3if 3e luf not þat lyf þat 3e lye nexte,
Bifore alle þe wy3ez in þe worlde, wounded in hert,
The lady inquire whether he has a mistress that he loves better than
her.
Bot if 3e haf a lemman, a leuer, þat yow lykez better,
& folden fayth to þat fre, festned so harde,
[Fol. 115.] 1784
þat yow lausen ne lyst, & þat I leue noupe;
And þat 3e telle me þat, now trwly I pray yow,

For alle þe lufeȝ vpon lyue, layne not þe soþe,
for gile."

Sir Gawayne swears by St. John that he neither has nor desires one.

1788

Þe knyȝt sayde, "be sayn Ion,"
& smepely con he smyle,
"In fayth I welde riȝt non,
Ne non wil welde þe quile."

XXVII.

1792

"Þat is a worde," *quod* þat wyȝt, "þat worst is of alle,
Bot I am swared for soþe, þat sore me þinkkeȝ;
She then kisses him, sighing for sorrow.
Kysse me now coraly, & I schal cach hepen,
I may bot moume vpon molde, as may þat much louyes."

1796

Sykande ho sweȝe doun, & semly hym kyssed,
& siþen ho seueres hym fro, & says as ho stondes,
"Now, dere, at þis de-partyng, do me þis ese,
She desires some gift,
Gif me sumquat of þy gifte, þi gloue if' hit were,
by which to remember him. 1800
Þat I may mynne on þe mon, my mounyng to lassen."
"Now lwysse," *quod* þat wyȝe, "I wolde I hade here
Þe leuest þing for þy luf, þat I in londe welde,
Gawayne tells her that she is worthy of a better gift than he can
bestow.

For ȝe haf deserued, forsoþe, sellyly ofte

1804

More rewarde bi resoun, þen I reche myȝt,

Bot to dele yow for drurye, þat dawed bot naked;
 Hit is not *your* honour to haf at þis tyme
 A gloue for a garysoun, of Gawayneʒ gifteʒ,
 1808
 & I am here [on] an erande *in* erdeʒ vncoupe,
 He has no men with mails containing precious things.
 & haue no men wyth no maleʒ, *with* menskful þingeʒ;
 Þat mislykeʒ me, ladé, for luf at þis tyme,²
 Iche tolke mon do as he is tan, tas to non ille,
 1812
 ne pine."
 Then says that lovesome,
 "Nay, hende of hyʒe honours,"
Quod þat lufsum vnder lyne,
 "Though I had nought of yours, yet should ye have of mine."
 "Þaʒ I hade oʒt³ of *youreʒ*,
 1816
 ʒet schulde ʒe haue of myne."
¹ of, in MS. ² tyne, in MS. ³ noʒt (?).

XXVIII.

She offers him a gold ring,
 Ho raʒt hym a riche rynk¹ of red golde werkeʒ,
 Wyth a starande ston, stondande alofte,
 Þat bere blusschande bemeʒ as þe bryʒt sunne;
 1820
 Wyt ʒe wel, hit watʒ worth wele ful hoge.
 but he refuses to accept it,
 Bot þe renk hit renayed, & redyly he sayde,
 [Fol. 115*b*.]
 "I wil no gifteʒ for gode, my gay, at þis tyme;

as he has none to give in return.

I haf none yow to norne, ne noȝt wyl I take."

1824

Ho bede hit hym ful bysily, & he hir bode wernes,
& swere swyftel[y] his sothe, þat he hit sese nolde;

Very sorrowful was that fair one on account of his refusal.

& ho sore þat he forsoke, & sayde þer-after,
"If ȝe renay my rynk, to ryche for hit semeȝ,

1828

ȝe wolde not so hyȝly halden be to me,
I schal gif yow my girdel, þat gaynes yow lasse."

Ho laȝt a lace lyȝtly, þat² leke vmbe hir sydeȝ,
She takes off her "girdle,"

Knit vpon hir kyrtel, vnder þe clere mantyle,

1832

Gered hit watȝ *with* grene sylke, & *with* golde schaped,
Noȝt bot arounde brayden, beten *with* fyngreȝ;

& þat ho bede to þe burne, & blypely bi-soȝt
and beseeches him to take it.

Þaȝ hit vn-worpi were, þat he hit take wolde.

1836

& he nay þat he nolde neghe *in* no wyse,
Gawayne again refuses to accept anything,
Nauper golde ne garysoun, er God hym *grace* sende,
To acheue to þe chaunce þat he hade chosen þere.

"& þerfore, I pray yow, displese yow noȝt,

1840

& letteȝ be *your* bisnesse, for I baype hit yow neuer
to graunte;

I am derely to yow biholde,

Bi-cause of *your* sembelaunt,

but promises, "ever in hot and in cold, to be her true servant." 1844

& euer *in* hot & colde

To be *your* trwe seruaunt.

¹ ryng (?). ² þat þat, in MS.

XXIX.

"Do you refuse it," says the lady, because it is simple?

"Now forsake ȝe þis silke." sayde þe burde þenne,

"For hit is symple *in* hit-self. & so hit wel semeȝ?

1848

Lo! so hit is littel, & lasse hit is worpy;

Whoso knew the virtues that it possesses, would highly prize it.

Bot who-so knew þe costes þat knit ar þer-inne,

He wolde hit prayse at more prys, parauenture;

For he who is girded with this green lace,

For quat gome so is gorde *with* þis grene lace,

1852

While he hit hade hemely halched aboute,

Þer is no hapel vnder heuen to-hewe hym þat myȝt;
cannot be wounded or slain."

For he myȝt not he slayn, for slyȝt vpon erþe."

Þen kest þe knyȝt, & hit come to his hert,

The knight thinks of his adventure at the Green Chapel. 1856

Hit were a luel for þe lopardé, þat hym iugged were,

When he acheued to þe chapel, his chek forto fech;

The lady presses him to accept the lace.

Myȝ¹ he haf slypped to þe vn-slayn, þe sleȝt were noble.

[Fol. 116.]

Þenne ho þulged with hir prepe, & þoled hir to speke,

1860

& ho bere on hym þe belt, & bede hit hym swyþe,

He consents not only to take the girdle, but to keep the possession
of it a secret.

& he *granted*, & [ho] hym gafe with a goud wylle,

& bisoȝt hym, for hir sake, disceuer hit neuer,

Bot to lelly layne for² hir lorde; þe leude hym acordeȝ.

1864

Þat neuer wyȝe schulde hit wyt, lwysse, bot þay twayne,

for noȝte;
He þonkked hir oft ful swype,
Ful þro *with* hert & þoȝt.
By that time the lady has kissed him thrice. 1868
Bi þat on þrynne syþe,
He hatȝ kyst þe knyȝt so toȝt.
¹ myȝt (?). ² fro (?).

XXX.

Then she takes her leave.
Thenne lachchez ho hir leue, & leuez hym þere,
For more myrþe of þat mon moȝt ho not gete;
Gawayne then dresses himself, 1872
When ho¹ watȝ gon, *sir* G. gereȝ hym sone,
Rises, & riches hym *in* araye noble,
and conceals the love-lace about his person.
Lays vp þe luf-lace, þe lady hym raȝt,
Hid hit ful holdely, þer he hit eft fonde;
1876
Syþen cheuely to þe chapel choses he þe waye,
He then hies to mass,
Preuely aproched to a prest, & prayed hym þere
Þat he wolde lyfte² his lyf, & lern hym better,
How his sawle schulde be saued, when he schuld seye heþen.
and shrives him of his misdeeds. 1880
Þere he schrof hym schyrly, & schewed his mysdedeȝ,
Of þe more & þe mynne, & merci besecheȝ,
and prays for absolution.
& of absolucioun he on þe segge calles;
& he asoyled hym surely, & sette hym so clene,

He returns to the hall, and makes himself so merry among the ladies,
1884

As domeȝ-day schulde haf ben diȝt on þe morn.
& syþen he mace hym as mery among þe fre ladyes,
with comely carols,
With comlych caroles, & alle kynnes ioie,
As neuer he did bot þat daye, to þe derk nyȝt,
1888

with blys;
Vche mon hade daynte þare,
that they said,
Of hym, & sayde lwysse,
"Thus merry was he never before since hither he came."
þus myry he watȝ neuer are,
1892
Syn he com hider, er þis.
¹ he, in MS. ² lyste (?).

XXXI.

Gawayne's host is still in the field.
Now hym lenge in þat lee, þer luf hym bi-tyde;
ȝet is þe lorde on þe launde, ledande his gomnes,
He has destroyed the fox.

He hatȝ forfaren þis fox, þat he folȝed longe;
1896
As he sprent ouer a spenné, to spye þe schrewe,
[Fol. 116b.]

þer as he herd þe howndes, þat hasted hym swyþe,
He spied Reynard coming through a "rough grove,"
Renaud com richchande þurȝ a roȝe greue,
& alle þe rabel in a res, ryȝt at his helez.

and tried to hit him with his sword. 1900

þe wyȝe watȝ war of þe wylde, & warly abides,
& braydeȝ out þe bryȝt bronde, & at þe best casteȝ;
& he schunt for þe scharp, & schulde haf arered,
The fox "shunts," and is seized by one of the dogs.
A rach rapes hym to, ryȝt er he myȝt,

1904

& ryȝt bifore þe hors fete þay fel on hym alle,
& worried me þis wyly wyth a wroth noyse.
The lord takes him out of the hound's mouth.

þe lorde lyȝteȝ bilyue, & cacheȝ by¹ sone,
Rased hym ful radly out of þe rach moupes,

1908

Haldeȝ heȝe ouer his hede, haloweȝ faste,
& þer bayen hym mony bray² houndeȝ;
Hunters hasten thither with horns full many.
Huntes hyȝed hem þeder, *with* horneȝ ful mony,
Ay re-chatande aryȝt til þay þe renk seȝen;

1912

Bi þat watȝ comen his compeyny noble,
Alle þat euer ber bugle blowed at ones,
It was the merriest meet that ever was heard.
& alle þise oper halowed, þat hade no hornes,
Hit watȝ þe myriest mute þat euer men herde,

1916

þe rich rurd þat þer watȝ raysed for renaude saule,
with lote;
The hounds are rewarded,
Hor houndeȝ þay þer rewarde,
Her³ hedeȝ þay fawne & frote,
and then they take Reynard and "turn off his coat." 1920
& syþen þay tan reynarde,
& tyrnen of his cote.

¹ hym (?). ² brap (?). ³ Her her, in MS.

XXXII.

The hunters then hasten home.

& þenne þay helden to home, for hit watȝ nieȝ nyȝt,
Strakande ful stoutly *in* hor store horneȝ;

The lord at last alights at his dear home, 1924

Þe lorde is lyȝt at þe laste at hys lef home,

Fyndeȝ fire vpon flet, þe freke þer by-side,

Sir Gawayn þe gode, þat glad watȝ *with* alle,

where he finds Gawayne amusing the ladies.

Among þe ladies for luf he ladde much ioie,

1928

He were a bleaunt of blwe, þat bradde to þe erþe,

His surkot semed hym wel, þat softe watȝ forred,

& his hode of þat ilke hinged on his schulder,

The knight comes forward and welcomes his host,

Blande al of blaunner were bope al aboute.

1932

He meteȝ me þis god mon *in* myddeȝ þe flore,

& al with gomen he hym gret, & goudly he sayde,

"I schal fyllen vpon fyrst oure forwardeȝ nouþe,

[Fol. 117.]

Þat we spedly han spoken, þer spared watȝ no drynk;"
and according to covenant kisses him thrice. 1936

Þen acoles he [þe] knyȝt, & kysses hym þryes,

(See l. 1868.)

As sauerly & sadly as he hem sette coupe.

"By Christ," says the other, "ye have had much bliss!"

"Bi Kryst," *quod* þat oper knyȝt, "ȝe cach much sele,

In cheuisaunce of þis chaffer, ȝif ȝe hade goud chepeȝ."

1940

"ȝe of þe chepe no charg," *quod* chefly þat oper,

"As is pertly payed þe chepeȝ þat I aȝte."

"Mary," *quod* þat oper mon, "myn is bi-hynde,

I have hunted all day and have gotten nothing,
For I haf hunted al þis day, & noȝt haf I geten,
but the skin of this foul fox, 1944

Bot þis foule fox felle, þe fende haf þe godeȝ,
a poor reward for three such kisses."
& þat is ful pore, for to pay for suche prys þinges,
As ȝe haf þryȝt me here, þro suche þre cosses,
so gode."

1948

"I-noȝ," *quod sir* Gawayn,
"I þonk yow, bi þe rode;"
He then tells him how the fox was slain.
& how þe fox watȝ slayn,
He tolde hym, as þay stode.

XXXIII.

With much mirth and minstrelsy they made merry, 1952
With merþe & mynstralsye, wyth meteȝ at hor wylle,
Þay maden as mery as any men moȝten,
With laȝyng of ladies, *with* loteȝ of bordes;
Gawayn & þe gode mon so glad were þay boþe,

1956

Bot if þe douthe had doted, oþer dronken ben oþer,
Boþe þe mon & þe meyny maden mony iapeȝ,
until the time came for them to part.

Til þe sesoun watȝ seȝen, þat þay seuer moste;
Burneȝ to hor bedde be-houed at þe laste.

Gawayne takes leave of his host. 1960

Þenne loȝly his leue at þe lorde fyrst
Fochchez þis fre mon, & fayre he hym þonkkeȝ;
and thanks him for his happy "sojourn."

"Of such a sellyly¹ soiorne, as I haf hade here,
Your honour, at þis hyȝe fest, þe hyȝe kyng yow ȝelde!

1964

I ȝef yow me for on of youreȝ, if yowre-self lykeȝ,
For I mot nedes, as ȝe wot, meue to morne;
He asks for a man to teach him the way to the Green Chapel.
& ȝe me take sum tolke, to teche, as ȝe hyȝt,
þe gate to þe grene chapel, as god wyl me suffer

1968

To dele, on nwȝereȝ day, þe dome of my wyrdes."
"In god fayþe," *quod* þe god mon. "wyth a goud wylle;
Al þat euer I yow hyȝt, halde schal I rede."

A servant is assigned to him,

þer asyngnes he a seruaunt, to sett hym in þe waye,
[Fol. 117*b*.] 1972

& coundue hym by þe downeȝ, þat he no drechch had,
For to f[e]rk þurȝ þe fryth, & fare at þe gaynest,
bi greue.

þe lorde Gawayn con þonk,

1976

Such worchip he wolde hym weue;
and then he takes leave of the ladies,
þen at þo ladyeȝ wlonk.
þe knyȝt hatȝ tan his leue.

¹ selly (?).

XXXIV.

kissing them sorrowfully.

With care & wyth kyssyng he carppez hem tille,
1980

& fele pryuande þonkkeȝ he þrat hom to haue,

& þay ȝelden hym aȝay[n] ȝeþly þat ilk;
They commend him to Christ.

Þay bikende hym to Kryst, *with* ful colde sykynges.
He then departs, thanking each one he meets "for his service and solace."

Syþen fro þe meyny he menskly de-partes;
1984

Vche mon þat he mette, he made hem a þonke,
For his seruyse, & his solace, & his sere pyne,
Þat þay wyth busynes had ben, aboute hym to serue;
& vche segge as sore, to seuer *with* hym pere,

1988
As þay hade wonde worpyly *with* þat wlonk euer.

He retires to rest but sleeps but little,
Þen *with* ledes & lyȝt he watȝ ladde to his chambre,
& blybely broȝt to his bedde, to be at his rest;
ȝif he ne slepe soundly, say ne dar I,

for much has he to think of on the morrow. 1992

For he hade mucche on þe morn to mynne, ȝif he wolde,
in þoȝt;

Let him there lie still.

Let hym lyȝe pere stille,

He hatȝ¹ nere þat he soȝt,

Be still awhile, and I shall tell how they wrought. 1996

& ȝe wyl a whyle be styлле,

I schal telle yow how þay wroȝt.

¹ watȝ (?).

[FYTTE THE FOURTH.]

I.

New Year's Day approaches.

Now neȝeȝ þe nwȝere, & þe nyȝt passeȝ,
þe day dryueȝ to þe derk, as dryȝtyn biddeȝ;

The weather is stormy. 2000

Bot wylde wedereȝ of þe worlde wakned þeroute,
Clowdes kesten kenly þe colde to þe erþe,
Wyth nyȝe¹ in-noghe of þe norþe, þe naked to tene;

Snow falls.

þe snawe snitered ful snart, þat snayped þe wylde;

2004

þe werbelande wynde wapped fro þe hyȝe,

The dales are full of drift.

& drof vche dale ful of dryftes ful grete.

þe leude lystened ful wel, þat leȝ *in* his bedde,
Gawayne in his bed hears each cock that crows.

Þaȝ he lowkeȝ his liddeȝ, ful lyttel he slepes;

2008

Bi vch kok þat crue, he knwe wel þe steuen.

[Fol. 118.]

De-liuerly he dressed vp, er þe day sprenged,

For þere watȝ lyȝt of a lau[m]pe, þat lemed *in* his chambre;

He calls for his chamberlain, and bids him bring him his armour.

He called to his chamberlayn, þat cofly hym swared,

2012

& bede hym bryng hym his bruny, & his blonk sadel;

þat oper ferkeȝ hym vp, & fecheȝ hym his wedeȝ,

& graypeȝ me *sir* Gawayn vpon a grett wyse.

Fyrst he clad hym *in* his clopeȝ, þe colde for to were;

2016

& syþen his oper harnays, þat holdely watȝ keped,

Boþe his paunce, & his plateȝ, piked ful clene,

Men knock off the rust from his rich habergeon.

þe ryngȝ² rokked of þe roust, of his riche bruny;

& al watȝ fresch as vpon fyrst, & he watȝ fayn þenne

2020

to þonk;

He hade vpon vche pece,

Wypped ful wel & wlonk;
The knight then calls for his steed.

Þe gayest *in* to Grece,
2024
Þe burne bede bryng his blonk.
¹ nywe (?). ² rynkeȝ (?).

II.

While he clothed himself in his rich weeds,
Whyle þe wlonkest wedes he warp on *hym*-seluen;
His cote, wyth þe conysaunce of þe clere werkeȝ,
Ennurned vpon veluet *vertuuus*¹ stoneȝ,

2028
Aboute beten, & bounden, enbrauded semeȝ,
& fayre furred *with-inne* wyth fayre pelures.
he forgot not the "lace," the lady's gift,
ȝet laft he not þe lace, þe ladieȝ gifte,
Þat for-gat not Gawayn, for gode of *hym*-seluen;

2032
Bi he hade belted þe bronde vpon his balȝe hauncheȝ,
but with it doubly girded his loins.

Þenn dressed he his drurye double *hym* aboute;
Swyþe sweþled vmbe his swange swetely, þat knyȝt,
Þe gordel of þe grene silke, þat gay wel bisemed,

2036
Vpon þat ryol red cloþe, þat ryche watȝ to schewe.
He wore it not for its rich ornaments,
Bot wered not þis ilk wyȝe for wele þis gordel,
For pryde of þe pendaunteȝ, þaȝ polyst þay were,
& þaȝ þe glyterande golde glent vpon endeȝ,
"but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer." 2040

Bot forto sauen *hym*-self, when suffer *hym* by-houed,
To byde bale *with*-oute dabate, of bronde *hym* to were,
oper knyffe;

Bi þat þe bolde mon boun,

2044

Wynnez þeroute bilyue,

All the renowned assembly he thanks full oft.

Alle þe meyny of renoun,

He þonkkeþ ofte ful ryue.

¹ *vertuous* (?).

III.

[Fol. 118*b*.]

Then was Gringolet arrayed,

Thenne watȝ Gryngolet graype, þat gret watȝ & huge,
2048

& hade ben soioumed sauerly, & *in* a siker wyse,
full ready to prick on.

Hym lyst prik for poynt, þat proude hors þenne;
þe wyȝe wynneȝ hym to, & wyteȝ on his lyre,
& sayde soberly hym-self, & by his soth swereȝ,
2052

"Here is a meyny *in* þis mote, þat on menske þenkkeȝ,
Gawayne returns thanks for the honour and kindness shown to him
by all.

þe mon hem maynteines, ioy mot þay haue;
þe leue lady, on lyue luf hir bityde;
ȝif þay for charyté cherysen a gest,
2056

& halden honour *in* her honde, þe hapel hem ȝelde,
þat haldeȝ þe heuen vpon hyȝe, & also yow alle!
& ȝif I myȝt lyf vpon londe lede any quyle,
I schuld rech yow sum rewarde redyly, if I myȝt."

He then steps into his saddle, 2060

þenn steppeȝ he *in*-to stirop, & strydeȝ alofte;
His schalk schewed hym his schelde, on schulder he hit laȝt,
Gordeȝ to Gryngolet, *with* his gilt heleȝ,
and "starts on the stone" without more delay.

& he starteȝ on þe ston, stod he no lenger,
2064
to prounce;

His hapel on hors watȝ þenne,
Þat bere his spere & launce.
"This castle to Christ I commend; may he give it ever good chance!"
"Þis kastel to Kryst I kenne,
2068
He gef hit ay god chaunce!"

IV.

The gates are soon opened.
The brygge watȝ brayde doun, & þe brode ȝateȝ
Vnbarred, & born open, vpon boþe halue;
The knight passes thereout,
Þe burne blessed hym bilyue, & þe bredeȝ passed;
2072
Prayses þe porter, bifore þe prynce kneled,
Gef hym God & goud day, þat Gawayn he saue;
and goes on his way accompanied by his guide.
& went on his way, *with* his wyȝe one,
Þat schulde teche hym to *toume* to þat tene place,
2076
Per þe rufol race he schulde re-sayue.
Þay boȝen bi bonkkeȝ, þer boȝeȝ ar bare,
They climb by cliffs,
Þay clomben bi clyffeȝ, þer clengeȝ þe colde;
Þe heuen watȝ vp halt, bot vgly þer vnder,
2080
Mist mugged on þe mor, malt on þe mounteȝ,
where each "hill had a hat and a mist-cloak,"
Vch hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge;
Brokeȝ byled, & breke, bi bonkkeȝ aboute,
Schyre schaterande on schoreȝ, þer þay doun schouwued.

[Fol. 119.] 2084

Welawylle watȝ þe way, þer þay bi wod schulden,
until daylight.

Til hit watȝ sone sesoun, þat þe sunne ryses,
þat tyde;

They were then on a "hill full high."

Þay were on a hille ful hyȝe,
2088

Þe quyte snaw lay bisyde;
The servant bade his master abide, saying,
Þe burne þat rod hym by
Bede his mayster abide.

V.

"I have brought you hither,

"For I haf wonnen yow hider, wyȝe, at þis tyme,
2092

& now nar ȝe not fer fro þat note place,
ye are not now far from the noted place.

Þat ȝe han spied & spuryed so specially after;
Bot I schal say yow for soþe, syþen I yow knowe,
& ȝe ar a lede vpon lyue, þat I wel louy,
2096

Wolde ȝe worch bi my wytte, ȝe worped þe better.
Full perilous is it esteemed.

Þe place þat ȝe prece to, ful perelous is halden;
The lord of that 'waste' is stiff and stern.

Þer woneȝ a wyȝe in þat waste, þe worst vpon erþe;
For he is stiffe, & sturne, & to strike louies,
2100

& more he is þen any mon vpon myddelerde,

His body is bigger 'than the best four in Arthur's house.'
 & his body bigger þen þe best fowre.
 Þat ar in Arpureȝ hous, Hestor¹ oper oper.
 He cheueȝ þat chaunce at þe chapel grene;
 None passes by the Green Chapel, 'that he does not ding to death
 with dint of his hand.' 2104
 Þer passes non bi þat place, so proude in his armes,
 Þat he ne dynneȝ hym to depe, with dynt of his honde;
 For he is a mon methles, & mercy non vses,
 For be it churl or chaplain, monk, mass-priest, 'or any man else,' he
 kills them all.
 For he hit chorle, oper chaplayn, þat bi þe chapel rydes,
 2108
 Monk, oper masse-prest, oper any mon elles,
 Hym þynk as queme hym to quelle, as quyk go hym seluen.
 For-þy I say þe as sope as ȝe in sadel sitte,
 Com ȝe þere, ȝe be kyllled, [I] may þe knyȝt rede,
 2112
 Trawe ȝe me þat trwely, þaȝ ȝe had twenty lyues
 to spende;
 He has lived there full long.
 He hatȝ wonyd here ful ȝore,
 On bent much baret bende,
 Against his dints sore ye may not defend you. 2116
 Aȝayn his dynteȝ sore,
 ȝe may not yow defende."
¹ Hector (?).

VI.

Wherefore, good Sir Gawayne, let this man alone.
 "For-þy, goude *sir* Gawayn, let þe gome one,

& gotȝ a-way sum oȝer gate; vpon Goddeȝ halue;
Go by some other region, 2120

Cayreȝ bi sum oȝer kyth, ȝer Kryst mot yow spede;

& I schal hyȝ me hom aȝayn, & hete yow fyrre,

[Fol. 119b.]

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

ȝat I schal swere bi God, & alle his gode halȝeȝ,

As help me God & ȝe halydam, & oȝeȝ *in-noghe*,

2124

ȝat I schal lelly yow layne, & lance neuer tale,

ȝat euer ȝe fondet to fle, for freke ȝat I wyst."

"Grant merci;" *quod* Gawayn, & gruchyng he sayde,

"Wel worth ȝe wyȝe, ȝat woldeȝ my gode,

2128

& ȝat lelly me layne, I leue wel ȝou woldeȝ!

Gawayne replies that to shun this danger would mark him as a "coward knight."

Bot helde ȝou hit neuer so holde, & I here passed,

Founded for ferde for to fle, *in foume* ȝat ȝou telleȝ,

I were a knyȝt kowarde, I myȝt not¹ be excused.

To the Chapel, therefore, he will go, 2132

Bot I wy¹ to ȝe chape¹, for chaunce ȝat may falle,

& talk wyth ȝat ilk tulk ȝe tale ȝat me lyste,

Worpe hit wele, oȝer wo, as ȝe wyrde lykeȝ

hit hafe;

though the owner thereof were a stern knave. 2136

ȝaȝe he be a sturn knape,

To stȝtel, &² stad *with* staue,

"Full well can God devise his servants for to save."

Ful wel con dryȝtyn schape,

His seruanteȝ forto saue."

¹ mot, in MS. ² & &, in MS.

VII.

"Mary!" quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life, 2140

"Mary!" *quod* þat oper mon, "now þou so much spelleþ,

þat þou wylt þyn awen nye nyme to þy-seluen,

& þe lyst lese þy lyf, þe lette I ne kepe;

take thy helmet on thy head, and thy spear in thy hand, and ride
down this path by yon rock-side,

Haf here þi helme on þy hede, þi spere *in* þi honde,

2144

& ryde me doun þis ilk rake, bi ʒon rokke syde,

till thou come to the bottom of the valley;

Til þou be broʒt to þe boþem of þe brem valay;

look a little to the left,

Þenne loke a littel on þe launde, on þi lyfte honde,

and thou shalt see the Chapel itself and the man that guards it."

& þou schal se *in* þat slade þe self chapel,

2148

& þe borelych burne on bent, þat hit kepeþ.

Now fareþ wel on Godeþ half, Gawayn þe noble,

For alle þe golde vpon grounde I nolde go with þe,

Ne bere þe felazschip þurþ þis fryth on fote fyrre."

Having thus spoken the guide takes leave of the knight. 2152

Bi þat þe wyʒe *in* þe wod wendeþ his brydel,

Hit þe hors *with* þe heleþ, as harde as he myʒt,

Lepeþ hym ouer þe launde, & leueþ þe knyʒt pere,

al one.

"By God's self," says Sir Gawayne, "I will neither weep nor groan.

2156

"Bi Goddeþ self," *quod* Gawayn,

"I wyl nauper grete ne grone,

To God's will I am full ready."

To Goddeþ wylle I am ful bayn,

& to hym I haf me tone."

VIII.

[Fol. 120.]

Then he pursues his journey, 2160

Thenne gyrdez he to Gryngolet, & gederez þe rake,
Schowuez *in* bi a schore, at a schaze syde,
rides through the dale, and looks about.

Ridez þurȝ þe roȝe bonk, ryȝt to þe dale;
& þenne he wayted hym aboute, & wylde hit hym þoȝt,
He sees no sign of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks.

2164

& seȝe no syngne of resette, bisydez nowhere,
Bot hyȝe bonkkeȝ & brent, vpon boȝe halue,
& ruȝe knokled knarrez, *with* knorned stoneȝ;
þe skwez of þe scowtes skayued¹ hym þoȝt.

2168

þenne he houed, & wyth-hylde his hors at þat tyde,
& ofte chaunged his cher, þe chapel to seche;
No chapel could he discern.

He seȝ non suche *in* no syde, & selly hym þoȝt,
Sone a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit we[re];
At last he sees a hill by the side of a stream; 2172

A balȝ berȝ, bi a bonke, þe brymme by-syde,
Bi a forȝ of a flode, þat ferked þare;
þe borne blubred þer-inne, as hit boyled hade.

thither he goes,

þe knyȝt kacheȝ his caple, & com to þe lawe,
alights and fastens his horse to a branch of a tree. 2176

Lizteȝ doun luflyly, & at a lynde tacheȝ
þe rayne, & his riche, with a roȝe braunche;
He walks around the hill, debating with himself what it might be,
þen[n]e he boȝez to þe berȝe, aboute hit he walke,
D[e]batande *with* hym-self, quat hit be myȝt.

2180

Hit hade a hole on þe ende, & on ayþer syde,
& ouer-grown *with* gresse *in* glodes ay where,
& al watȝ holȝ *in-with*, nobot an olde caue,
and at last finds an old cave in the crag.

Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he coupe hit noȝt deme
2184

with spelle,
"We,² lorde," *quod* þe gentyle knyȝt,
"Wheþer þis be þe grene chapelle;
He prays that about midnight he may tell his matins.
He myȝt aboute myd-nyȝt,

2188
[Þ]e dele his matynnes telle!"

¹ skayned (?). ² wel (?).

IX.

"Truly," says Sir Gawayne, "a desert is here,
"Now i-wysse," *quod* Wowayn, "wysty is here;
Þis oritore is vgly, *with* erbeȝ ouer-grown;
a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions in devil
fashion.'

Wel bisemeȝ þe wyȝe wruxled *in* grene
2192

Dele here his deuocioun, on þe deueleȝ wyse;
Now I fele hit is þe fende, *in* my fyue wytteȝ,
Þat hatȝ stoken me þis steuen, to strye me here;
It is most cursed kirk that ever I entered."

Þis is a chapel of meschaunce, þat chekke hit by-tyde,
2196

Hit is þe corsesdest kyrk, þat euer i com *inne*!"
[Fol. 120b.]

With heȝe helme on his hede, his launce *in* his honde,
Roaming about he hears a loud noise,

He romeȝ vp to þe rokke of þo roȝ woneȝ;

Þene herde he of þat hyȝe hil, *in* a harde roche,
from beyond the brook. 2200

Biȝonde þe broke, *in* a bonk, a wonder breme noyse,
It clattered like the grinding of a scythe on a grindstone.

Quat! hit clatered *in* þe clyff, as hit cleue schulde,

As one vpon a gryndelston hade grounden a syȝe;
It whirred like a mill-stream.

What! hit wharred, & whette, as water at a mulne,
2204

What! hit rusched, & ronge, rawȝe to here.

Þenne "bi Godde," *quod* Gawayn, "þat gere as¹ I trowe,
Is ryched at þe reuerence, me renk to mete,
bi rote;

2208

Let God worche we loo,

"Though my life I forgo," says the knight, "no noise shall terrify me."

Hit helppeȝ me not a mote,

My lif þaȝ I for-goo,

Drede dotȝ me no lote."

¹ at, in MS.

X.

Then cried he aloud, 2212

Thenne þe knyȝt con calle ful hyȝe,

"Who dwells here discourse with me to hold?"

"Who stiztleȝ *in* þis sted, me steuen to holde?

Now is the good Gawayne going aright

For now is gode Gawayn goande ryȝt here,

If any wyȝe oȝt wyl wyȝne hider fast,
2216

Oȝer now, oȝer neuer, his nedeȝ to spede."
He hears a voice commanding him to abide where he is.
"Abyde," *quod* on on þe bonke, abouen ouer his hede,
"& þou schal haf al *in* hast, þat I þe hyȝt ones."
ȝet he rusched on þat rurde, rapely a þrowe,

2220
& wyth quettyng a-wharf, er he wolde lyȝt;
Soon there comes out of a hole, with a fell weapon,
& syȝen he keuereȝ bi a cragge, & comeȝ of a hole,
Whyrlande out of a wro, wyth a felle weppen,
a Danish axe, quite new,
A deneȝ ax nwe dyȝt, þe dynt *with* [t]o ȝelde

2224
With a borelych bytte, bende by þe halme,
Fyled *in* a fylor, fowre fote large,
Hit watȝ no lasse, bi þat lace þat lemed ful bryȝt.
the "knight in green," clothed as before.
& þe gome *in* þe erene gered as fyrst,

2228
Boþe þe lyre & þe leggeȝ, lokkeȝ, & berde,
Saue þat fayre on his fote he foundeȝ on þe erþe,
Sette þe stele to þe stone, & stalked bysyde.
When he reaches the stream, he hops over and strides about.
When he wan to þe watter, þer he wade nolde,

2232
He hypped ouer on hys ax, & orpedly strydeȝ,
Bremly broþe on a bent, þat brode watȝ a-boute,
on snawe.

[Fol. 121.]
He meets Sir Gawayne without obeisance.
Sir Gawayn þe knyȝt con mete.

2236
He ne lutte hym no pyng lowe,
The other tells him that he is now ready for conversation
þat oȝer sayde, "now, *sir* swete,

Of steuen mon may þe trowe."

XI.

"God preserve thee!" says the Green Knight,
"Gawayn," *quod* þat grene gome, "God þe mot loke!
2240

I-wysse þou art welcom,¹ wyȝe, to my place,
"as a true knight 'thou hast timed thy travel'
& þou hatȝ tyled þi trauayl as *true*² mon schulde;
Thou knowest the covenant between us,
& þou knoweȝ þe couenaunteȝ kest *vus* by-twene,
At þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat þe falled,
that on New Year's day I should return thy blow 2244
& I schulde at þis nwe ȝere ȝeþly þe quyte.

Here we are alone,
& we ar *in* þis valay, verayly oure one,
Here ar no renkes vs to rydde, rele as *vus* likeȝ;
Have off thy helmet and take thy pay at once."

Haf þy³ helme of þy hede, & haf here þy pay;
2248

Busk no more debate þen I þe bede þenne,
"When þou wypped of my hede at a wap one."
"By God," quoth Sir Gawayne, "I shall not begrudge thee thy will."
"Nay, bi God," *quod* Gawayn, "þat me gost lante,
I schal gruch þe no grwe, for grem þat falleȝ;

2252
Botstyȝtel þe vpon on strok, & I schal stonde styлле,
& warp þe no wernyng, to worch as þe lykeȝ,
no whare."

Then he shows his bare neck,
He lened *with* þe nek, & lutte,

2256

& schewed þat schyre al bare,
& lette as he noȝt dutte,
and appears undaunted.

For drede he wolde not dare.

¹ welcon, in MS. ² truee in MS. ³ MS. þy þy.

XII.

Then the man in green seizes his grim tool.

Then þe gome *in* þe grene grayped hym swyþe,
2260

Gedereȝ yp hys grymme tole, Gawayn to smyte;
With all his force he raises it aloft.

With alle þe bur *in* his body he ber hit on lofte,
Munt as maȝtyly, as marre hym he wolde;
Hade hit dryuen adoun, as dreȝ as he atled,

2264

Þer hade ben ded of his dynt, þat doȝty watȝ euer.
Bot Gawayn on þat giserne glyfte hym bysyde,
As it came gliding down,
As hit com glydande adoun, on glode hym to schende,
Sir Gawayne shrank a little with his shoulders.
& schranke a lytel *with* þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrne.

2268

Þat oper schalk wyth a schunt þe schene wythhaldeȝ,
The other reproved him, saying,
& þenne repreued he þe prynce *with* mony prowde wordeȝ:
"Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed,
"Þou art not Gawayn," *quod* þe gome, "þat is so goud halden,
Þat neuer arȝed for no here, by hylle ne be vale,

[Fol. 121*b*.]

for thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm. 2272

& now þou fles for ferde, er þou fele harmez;

Such cowardise of þat knyȝt cowþe I neuer here.

I never flinched when thou struckest.

Nawþer fyked I, ne flaȝe, freke, quen þou myntest,

Ne kest no kaulacion, in kyngeȝ hous Arthor,

My head flew to my foot, yet I never fled, 2276

My hede flaȝ to my fote, & ȝet flaȝ I neuer;

& þou, er any harme hent, arȝez in hert,

wherefore I ought to be called the better man."

Wherefore þe better burne me burde be called

þer-fore."

"I shunted once," says Gawayne, "but will no more. 2280

Quod G:, "I schunt oneȝ,

& so wyl I no more,

Bot paȝ my hede falle on þe stoneȝ,

I con not hit restore.

XIII.

Bring me to the point; deal me my destiny at once." 2284

Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, & bryng me to þe poynt,

Dele to me my destiné, & do hit out of honde,

For I schal stonde þe a strok, & start no more,

Til þyn ax haue me hitte, haf here my trawþe."

"Have at thee, then," says the other. 2288

"Haf at þe þenne," *quod* þat oþer, & heueȝ hit alofte,

& wayteȝ as wroþely, as he wode were;

With that he aims at him a blow.

He mynteȝ at hym maȝtyly, bot not þe mon ryueȝ,¹

With-helde heterly h[i]s honde, er hit hurt myȝt.

Gawayne never flinches, but stands as still as a stone. 2292

Gawayn graypely hit bydeȝ, & glent *with* no membre,

Bot stode styлле as þe ston, oper a stubbe auþer,

Þat rapeled is *in* roche grounde, *with* roteȝ a hundreth.

Þen muryly efte con he mele, þe mon *in* þe grene,

"Now," says the Green Knight, "I must hit thee, since thy heart is whole." 2296

"So now þou hatȝ þi hert holle, hitte me bihou[e]s;

Halde þe now þe hyȝe hode, þat Arþur þe raȝt,

& kepe þy kanel at þis kest, ȝif hit keuer may."

G: ful gryndelly *with* greme þenne sayde,

"Thrash on," says the other. 2300

"Wy þresch on, þou þro mon, þou þreteȝ to longe,

I hope þat þi hert arȝe wyth þyn awen seluen."

"For soþe," *quod* þat oper freke, "so felly þou spekeȝ,

I wyl no lenger on lyte lette þin ernde,

2304

riȝt nowe."

Then the Green Knight makes ready to strike.

Þenne tas he² hym stryþe to stryke,

& frounses boþe lyppe & browe,

No meruayle þaȝ hym myslyke,

2308

Þat hoped of no rescowe.

¹ ? *ryneȝ* = touches. ² he he, in MS.

XIV.

He let fall his loom on the bare

He lyftes lyȝtly his lome, & let hit doun fayre,

[Fol. 122.]

neck of Sir Gawayne.

With þe barbe of þe bitte bi þe bare nek
Þaȝ he homered heterly, hurt hym no more,

2312

Bot snyrt hym on þat on syde, þat seuered þe hyde;
The sharp weapon pierced the flesh so that the blood flowed.
Þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þurȝ þe schyre grece,
Þat þe schene blod over his schulderes schot to þe erþe.
When the knight saw the blood on the snow,
& quen þe burne seȝ þe blode blenk on þe snawe,

2316

He sprit forth spenne fote more þen a spere lenþe,
Hent heterly his helme, & on his hed cast,
Schot with his schuldereȝ his fayre schelde vnder,
he unsheathed his sword, and thus spake:
Braydeȝ out a bryȝt sworde, & bremely he spekeȝ;

2320

Neuer syn þat he watȝ burne borne of his moder,
Watȝ he neuer in þis worlde, wyȝe half so blyþe:—
"Cease, man, of thy blow.

"Blynne, burne, of þy bur, bede me no mo;
I haf a stroke in þis sted with-oute stryf hent,
If thou givest me any more, readily shall I requite thee. 2324
& if þow recheȝ me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,
& ȝelde ȝederly aȝayn, & þer to ȝe tryst,
& foo;

Our agreement stipulates only one stroke."

Bot on stroke here me falleȝ,

2328

Þe couenaunt schop ryȝt so,
[Sikered]¹ in Arpureȝ halleȝ,
& þer-fore, hende, now hoo!"

¹ Illegible.

The Green Knight rested on his axe,
The hapel heldet hym fro, & on his ax rested,

2332

Sette þe schaft vpon schore, & to be scharp lened,
looked on Sir Gawayne, who appeared bold and fearless,
& loked to þe leude, þat on þe launde ȝede,
How þat doȝty dredles deruely þer stondeȝ,
Armed ful aȝleȝ; *in* hert hit hym lykeȝ.

2336

þenn he meleȝ muryly, wyth a much steuen,
and addressed him as follows: "Bold knight, be not so wroth,
& wyth a r[a]ykande rurde he to þe renk sayde,
"Bolde burne, on þis bent be not so gryndel;
No mon here vn-manerly þe mys-boden habbe,

2340

Ne kyd, bot as couenaunde, at kynȝeȝ kort schaped;
I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it, be satisfied.
I hyȝt þe a strok, & þou hit hatȝ, halde þe wel payed,
I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ryȝtes alle oþer;
ȝif¹ I deliuer had bene, a boffet, paraunter,
I could have dealt worse with thee. 2344

I coupe wroþeloker haf waret, [&] to þe haf wroȝt anger.²

Fyrst I mansed þe muryly, *with* a mynt one,
I menaced thee with one blow for the covenant
& roue þe wyth no rof, sore *with* ryȝt I þe profered,
[Fol. 122b.]

between us on the first night.

For þe forwarde that we fest *in* þe fyrst nyȝt,

2348

& þou trystyly þe trawþe & trwly me haldeȝ,
Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon shulde;
Another I aimed at thee because thou kissedst my wife.
Þat oþer munt for þe morne, mon, I þe profered,
Þou kyssedes my clere wyf, þe cosseȝ me raȝteȝ,

2352

For boþe two here I þe bede bot two bare myntes,
boute scape;

A true man should restore truly, and then he need fear no harm.

Trwe mon trwe restore,

Þenne þar mon drede no wape;

Thou failedst at the third time, and therefore take thee that tap. (See l. 1861.) 2356

At þe þrid þou fayled þore,

& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.

¹ uf, in MS. ² This word is doubtful.

XVI.

For my weed (woven by my wife) thou wearest.

For hit is my wede þat þou wereȝ, þat ilke wouen girdel,

Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel forsoþe;

I know thy kisses and my wife's wooing. 2360

Now know I wel þy cosses, & þy costes als,

& þe wowyng of my wyf, I wroȝt hit myseluen;

I sent her to try thee, and faultless I found thee.

I sende hir to asay þe, & sothly me þynkkeȝ,

On þe fautlest freke, þat euer on fote ȝede;

2364

As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,

So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oper gay knyȝteȝ.

But yet thou sinnedst a little,

Bot here you lakked a lyttel, *sir*, & lewte yow wanted,

Bot þat watȝ for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauper,
for love of thy life." 2368

Bot for ȝe lufed *your* lyf, þe lasse I yow blame."

Þat oper stif mon in study stod a gret whyle;

So agreued for greme he gryed *with-inne*,

Gawayne stands confounded.

Alle þe blode of his brest blende in his face,

2372

þat al he schrank for schome, þat þe schalk talked.
þe forme worde vpon folde, þat þe freke meled,—
"Cursed," he says, "be cowardice and covetousness both!"
"Corsed worth cowarddyse & couetyse boþe!
In yow is vylany & vyse, þat vertue disstryeþ."
Then he takes off the girdle and throws it to the knight. 2376
þenne he kaþt to þe knot, & þe kest lawseþ,
Brayde broþely þe belt to þe burne seluen:
"Lo! þer þe falssyng, foule mot hit falle!
He curses his cowardice,
For care of þy knokke cowardyse me taþt

2380

To a-corde me *with* couetyse, my kynde to for-sake,
þat is larges & lewte, þat longeþ to knyþteþ.
and confesses himself to have been guilty of untruth.
Now am I fawty, & falce, & ferde haf ben euer;
Of trecherye & vn-trawþe boþe bityde sorþe

2384

& care!

[Fol. 123.]

I bi-knowe yow, knyþt, here styлле,
Al fawty is my fare,
Leteþ me ouer-take *your* wylle,

2388

& efle I schal be ware."

XVII.

Then the other, laughing, thus spoke:

Thenne loþe þat oper leude, & luflyly sayde,
"I halde hit hardily¹ hole, þe harme þat I hade;

"Thou art confessed so clean,

þou art confessed so clene, be-knowen of þy mysses,
2392

& hatȝ þe penaunce apert, of þe poynt of myn egge,
that I hold thee as pure as if thou hadst never been guilty.

I halde þe polysed of þat plyȝt, & pured as clene,
As þou hadeȝ neuer forfeȝed, syþen þou watȝ fyrst borne.
I give thee, sir, the gold-hemmed girdle,
& I gif þe, *sir*, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;

2396

For hit is grene as my goune, *sir* G:, ȝe maye
þenk vpon þis ilke þrepe, þer þou forth þryngeȝ
Among prynces of prys, & þis a pure token
as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel.

Of þe chaunce of þe grene chapel, at cheualrous knyȝteȝ;
Come again to my abode, and abide there for the remainder of the
festival." 2400

& ȝe schal in þis nwe ȝer azayn to my woneȝ,
& we schyn reuel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest,
ful bene."

þer laped hym fast þe lorde,

2404

& sayde, "*with* my wyf, I wene,
We schal yow wel acorde,
þat watȝ *your* enmy kene."

¹ hardilyly, in MS.

XVIII.

"Nay, forsooth," says Gawayne,

"Nay, for soþe," *quod* þe segge, & sesed hys helme,
2408

& hatȝ hit of hendely, & þe hapel þonkkeȝ,
"I have sojourned sadly, but bliss betide thee!
"I haf soioined sadly, sele yow bytyde,
& he ȝelde hit yow ȝare, þat ȝarkkeȝ al menskes!
Commend me to your comely wife and that other lady who have
beguiled me.

& comaundeȝ me to þat cortays, *your* comlych fere,
2412

Boþe þat on & þat oper, myn honoured ladyeȝ.
Þat þus hor knyȝt wyth hor kest han koyntly bigyled.
But it is no marvel for a man to be brought to grief through a
woman's wiles.

Bot hit is no ferly, þaȝ a fole madde,
& þurȝ wyles of wymmen be wonen to sorȝe;
Adam, Solomon, Samson, and David were beguiled by women. 2416
For so watȝ Adam *in* erde *with* one bygyled,
& Salamon *with* fele sere, & Samson eft soneȝ,
Dalyda dalt hym hys wyrde, & Dauyth þer-after
Watȝ blended *with* Barsabe, þat much bale poled.
How could a man love them and believe them not? 2420

Now þese were wrathed wyth her wyles, hit were a wyne huge,
To luf hom wel, & leue hem not, a leude þat coupe,
[Fol. 123*b*.]

For þes wer forme¹ þe freest þat folȝed alle þe sele,
Ex-ellently of alle pyse oper, vnder heuen-ryche,
2424
þat mused;
& alle þay were bi-wyled,
With² wymmen þat þay vsed,
Though I be now beguiled, methinks I should be excused.

Þaȝ I be now bigyled,
2428
Me þink me burde be excused."

¹ forme (?) ² with wyth, in MS.

XIX.

But God reward you for your girdle.

"Bot *your* gordel," quod G: "God yow for-ȝelde!

Ȓat wyl I welde wyth good wylle, not for þe wyne golde,

Ne þe saynt, ne þe sylk, ne þe syde pendaundes,

2432

For wele, ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk werkkeȝ,

I will wear it in remembrance of my fault.

Bot *in* syngne of my surfet I schal se hit ofte;

When I ride *in* renoun, remorde to myseluen

Þe faut & þe fayntyse of þe flesche crabbed,

2436

How tender hit is to entyse teches of fylþe;

And when pride shall prick me,

& þus, quen pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
a look to this lace shall abate it.

Þe loke to þis luf lace schal leþe my hert.

Bot on I wolde yow pray, displeses yow neuer;

2440

Syn ȝe be lorde of þe ȝonde[r] londe, þer I haf lent inne,

Wyth yow wyth worschyp,—þe wyȝe hit yow ȝelde

Ȓat vp-haldeȝ þe heuen, & on hyȝ sitteȝ,—

But tell me your right name and I shall have done."

How norne ȝe yowre ryȝt nome, & þenne no more?"

2444

"Ȓat schal I telle þe trwly," quod þat oþer þenne,

The Green Knight replies, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert,
through might of Morgain la Fey, the pupil of Merlin.

"Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat *in* þis londe,

Þurȝ myȝt of Morgne la Faye, þat *in* my hous lenges,

&¹ koyntyse of clergie, bi craftes wel lerned,

2448

Þe maystres of Merlyn, mony ho² taken;

For ho hatȝ dalt drwry ful dere *sum* tyme,
With þat conable klerk, þat knowes alle *your* knyȝtez
at hame;

2452

Morgne þe goddes,
Þer-fore hit is hir name;

She can tame even the haughtiest.

Weldeȝ non so hyȝe hawtesse,
Þat ho ne con make ful tame.

¹ in (?). ² ho hatȝ (?).

XX.

It was she who caused me to test the renown of the Round Table,

2456

Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to *your* wyne halle,
For to assay þe surquidre, ȝif hit soth were,
Þat rennes of þe grete renown of þe Rounde Table;
Ho wayned me þis wonder, *your* wytteȝ to reue,

[Fol. 124.]

hoping to grieve Guenever and cause her death through fear. 2460

For to haf greued Gaynour, & gart hir to dyȝe.
With gopnyng¹ of þat ilke gomen, þat gostlych speked,
With his hede *in* his honde, bifore þe hyȝe table.
Þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian lady;

She is even thine aunt. 2464

Ho is euen þyn aunt, Arpureȝ half suster,
Þe duches doȝter of Tyntagelle, þat dere *Vter* after
Therefore come to her and make merry in my house."

Hade Arpur vpon, þat apel is nowþe.
Þerfore I epe þe, hapel, to com to þy naunt,

2468

Make myry *in* my hous, my meny þe louies,
& I wol þe as wel, wyȝe, bi my faythe,
As any gome vnder God, for þy grete troupe."
Gawayne refuses to return with the Green Knight.
& he nikked hym naye, he nolde bi no wayes;

2472

þay acolen & kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer
To þe prynce of paradise, & parten ryȝt þere,
on coolde;
On horse full fair he bends to Arthur's hall.
Gawayn on blonk ful bene,

2476

To þe kynges burȝ buskes bolde,
& þe knyȝt *in* þe enker grene,
Whider-warde so euer he wolde.
¹ glopnyng (?).

XXI.

Wild ways now Gawayne rides.

Wylde wayes *in* þe worlde Wowen now rydeȝ,
2480

On Gryngolet, þat þe *grace* hade geten of his lyue;
Oft he harboured in house and oft thereout.

Ofte he herbered *in* house, & ofte al þeroute,
& mony a-venture *in* vale, & venquyst ofte,
þat I ne tyȝt, at þis tyme, *in* tale to remene.

The wound in his neck became whole. 2484

þe hurt watȝ hole, þat he hade hent *in* his nek,
He still carried about him the belt,
& þe blykkande belt he bere þeraboutte,
A belef as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde,

Loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace, *with* a knot,
in token of his fault. 2488

In tokenyng he watȝ tane *in* tech of a faute;
Thus he comes to the Court of King Arthur.

& þus he *commes* to þe court, knyȝt al *in* sounde.
Great then was the joy of all.

Þer wakned wele *in* þat wone, when wȝst þe grete,
Þat gode G: watȝ *commen*, gayn hit hym þoȝt;
The king and his knights ask him concerning his journey. 2492

Þe kyng kysseȝ þe knyȝt, & þe where alce,
& syþen mony syker knyȝt, þat soȝt hym to haylce,
Gawayne tells them of his adventures,

Of his fare þat hym frayned, & ferlyly he telles;
Biknowoȝ alle þe costes of care þat he hade,—
2496

Þe chaunce of þe chapel, þe chere of þe knyȝt,
[Fol. 124*b*.]

the love of the lady, and lastly of the lace.

Þe luf of þe ladi, þe lace at þe last.

Þe nirt *in* þe nek he naked hem schewed,
He showed them the cut in his neck.

Þat he laȝt for his vnleute at þe leudes hondes,
2500

for blame;

He tened quen he schulde telle,
He groaned for grief and shame, and the blood rushed into his face.

He groned for gref & grame;

Þe blod *in* his face con melle,
2504

When he hit schulde schewe, for schame.

XXII.

"Lo!" says he, handling the lace, "this is the band of blame,

"Lo! lorde," *quod* þe leude, & þe lace hondeled,

"Þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere [in] my nek,

Þis is þe lape & þe losse, þat I laȝt haue,

a token of my cowardice and covetousness, 2508

Of couardise & couetyse, þat I haf caȝt þare,

Þis is þe token of vn-trawþe, þat I am tan inne,

I must needs wear it as long as I live."

& I mot nedeȝ hit were, wyle I may last;

For non may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit,

2512

For þer hit oneȝ is tachched, twynne wil hit neuer."

The king comforts the knight, and all the court too.

Þe kyng comforteȝ þe knyȝt, & alle þe court als,

Lazen loude þer-at, & luflyly acorden,

Þat lordes & ladis, þat longed to þe Table,

Each knight of the brotherhood agrees to wear a bright green belt,

2516

Vche burne of þe broþer-hede a bauderyk schulde haue,

A bende, a belef hym aboute, of a bryȝt grene,

for Gawayne's sake,

& þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.

For þat watȝ acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table,

who ever more honoured it. 2520

& he honoured þat hit hade, euer-more after,

As hit is breued in þe best boke of romaunce.

Thus in Arthur's day this adventure befell.

Þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,

Þe Brutus bokees þer-of beres wyttenesse;

2524

Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, boȝed hider fyrst,

After þe segge & þe asaute watȝ sesed at Troye,

I-wysse;

Mony auntereȝ here bi-forne,

2528

Haf fallen suche er þis:

He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to His bliss!

Now þat bere þe croun of þorne,
He bryng *vus* to his blysse! AMEN.

NOTES.

- Ricchis turns, goes,
The king ...
Line 8 *Ricchis* his reynys and the Renke metys:
Girden to gedur with þere grete speires.—T.B. I. 1232.
þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse.
Camalot, in Malory's "Morte Arthure," is said to be the same
as Winchester. Ritson supposes it to be *Caer-went*, in
37 Monmouthshire, and afterwards confounded with *Caer-*
wynt, or *Winchester*. But popular tradition here seems the
best guide, which assigned the site of *Camalot* to the ruins
of a castle on a hill, near the church of South Cadbury, in
Somersetshire (Sir F. Madden).
Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte.
65 Christmas celebrated anew, mentioned full often.
Sir F. Madden leaves the word *nayted* unexplained in his
Glossary to "Syr Gawayne."
124 *syluener* = *sylueren*, i.e. silver dishes.
139 *lyndes* = *lendes*, loins.
142 *in his muckel*, in his greatness.
Watȝ euesed al umbe-torne—? was trimmed, all cut evenly
184 around; *umbe-torne* may be an error for *vmbe-corue* = cut
round.
216 *in gracios werkes*. Sir F. Madden reads *gracons* for *gracios*,
and suggests *Greek* as the meaning of it.
244-5 *As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor loteȝ*
in hyȝe.
As all were fallen asleep so ceased their words
in haste (suddenly).
Sir F. Madden reads *slaked horloteȝ*, instead of *slaked hor*
loteȝ, which, according to his glossary, signifies drunken

vagabonds. He evidently takes *horloteȝ* to be another (and a very uncommon) form of *harloteȝ* = *harlots*. But *harlot*, or vagabond, would be a very inappropriate term to apply to the noble *Knights of the Round Table*. Moreover, *slaked* never, I think, means drunken. The general sense of the verb *slake* is to let loose, lessen, cease. Cf. lines 411-2, where *sloke*, another form of *slake*, occurs with a similar meaning:

— *layt no fyrre; bot slokes.*

— seek no further, but stop (cease).

Sir F. Madden suggests *blows* as the explanation of *slokes*. It is, however, a *verb* in the imperative mood.

286 *Brayn*. Mätzner suggests *brayn-wod*.

barlay = par loi. This word is exceedingly common in the T. Book (see l. 3391).

296 I bid you now, *barlay*, with besines at all

Pat ye set you most souverainly my suster to gete.—T.B.
l. 2780.

394 *siker*. Sir F. Madden reads *swer*.

bluk. Sir F. Madden suggests *blunk* (horse). I am inclined to keep to the reading of the MS., and explain *bluk* as = *bulk* = trunk. Cf. the use of the word *Blok* in "Early English Alliterative Poems," p. 100, l. 272.

558 *derue doel*, etc. = great grief. Sir F. Madden reads *derne*, i.e. secret, instead of *derue* (= *derf*). Cf. line 564.

knaged, fastened.

The braunches were borly, sum of bright gold,
With leuys full luffly, light of the same;
577 With burions aboue bright to beholde;
And fruit on yt fourmyt of fairest of shap,
Of mony kynd that was knyght, *knagged* aboue.—T.B.
l. 4973.

& *ay quere hit is endeleȝ*, etc.

629 And everywhere it is *endless*, etc.

Sir F. Madden reads *emdeleȝ*, i.e. with equal sides.

652 *for-be* = *for-bi* = surpassing, beyond.

- 681 for *Hadet* read *Halet* = *haled* = exiled (?). See line 1049.
- 806 *auinant* = *auenaunt*, pleasantly. Sir F. Madden reads *amnant*.
- 954 *of*. Should we not read *on* (?).
Pat oper wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre.
 The *gorger* or *wimple* is stated first to have appeared in Edward the First's reign, and an example is found on the monument of Aveline, Countess of Lancaster, who died in 1269. From the poem, however, it would seem that the *gorger* was confined to elderly ladies (Sir F. Madden)
- 957 *More lykker-wys on to lyk,*
Wat3 þat scho had on lode.
 A more pleasant one to like,
 Was that (one) she had under her control.
- 968 *tayt* = lively, and hence pleasant, agreeable.
- 988 *in vayres*, in purity.
- 1015 *dut* = *dunt* (?) = *dint* (?), referring to *sword-sports*.
- 1020 *sayn[t] lone3 day*. This is the 27th of December, and the last of the feast. Sometimes the Christmas festivities were prolonged to New Year's Day (Sir F. Madden).
- 1022 *derne dede* = secret deed. I would prefer to read *derue dede* = great deed. Cf. lines 558, 564.
- 1047 *I wot in worlde*, etc. = *I not* (I know not) *in worlde*, etc.
I nolde, bot if I hit negh my3t on nw3eres morne,
For alle þe londe in-wyth Logres, etc.
- 1053 I would not [delay to set out], unless I might approach it on New Year's morn, for all the lands within England, etc.
- 1054 *in spenne* = *in space* = in the interval = meanwhile. See line 1503.
- 1074 *slentyng of arwes*. Sir F. Madden reads *sleutyng*.
 "Of drawyn swordis *sclentyng* to and fra,
 The brycht mettale, and othir armouris seir,
 Quharon the sonnys blenkis betis cleir,
 Glitteris and schane, and vnder bemys brycht,
- 1160

Castis ane new twynklyng or a lemand lyght."
(G. Douglas' *Æneid*, Vol. i, p. 421.)

1281 *let lyk* = appeared pleased.

þaȝ I were burde bryȝtest, þe burde in mynde hade, etc.
The sense requires us to read:

1283 *þaȝ ho were burde bryȝtest, þe burne in mynde hade*,
etc.

i.e., Though she were lady fairest, the knight in mind had,
etc.

Long sythen [seuered] for þe sounder þat wiȝt for-olde
Long since separated from the *sounder* or herd that fierce
(one) for-aged (grew very old).

"Now to speke of the boore, the fyrste year he is
A pygge of the *sounder* callyd, as haue I blys;
1440 The secounde yere an hogge, and soo shall he be,
And an hoggestere, whan he is of yeres thre;
And when he is foure yere, a boor shall he be,
From the *sounder* of the swyne thenne departyth he;
A synguler is he soo, for alone he woll go."
(Book of St. Alban's, ed. 1496, sig. *d.*, i.)

totes = looks, toots.

1476 Sho went up wightly by a walle syde.
To the toppe of a toure and *tot* ouer the water.—T.B.
l. 862.

1623 A verb [*? laled* = cried] seems wanting after *lorde*.
fnasted, breathed.

1702 These balfull bestes were, as the boke tellus,
Full flaumond of fyre with *fnastyng* of logh.—T.B. l. 168.

1710 *a strothe rande* = a rugged path. Cf. the phrases *tene*
greue, l. 1707; *roȝe greue*, l. 1898.

1729 *bi lag* = *be-lagh*(?) = below (?).

Thenne watȝ hit lif vpon list, etc.

1719 Should we not read:
Thenne watȝ hit list vpon lif, etc.
i.e., Then was there joy in life, etc.

- 1780 *lyf* = *lef*(?), beloved (one).
Ho hatȝ kyst þe knyȝt so toȝt.
She has kissed the knight so courteous.
 Sir F. Madden explains *toȝt*, promptly. *Toȝt* seems to be the same as the Northumbrian *taght* in the following extract from the "Morte Arthure":
- 1869 "There come in at the fyrste course, before the kyng seluene,
 Bare hevedys that ware bryghte, burnyste with sylver,
 Alle with *taghte* mene and *towne* in togers fulle ryche."—
 (p. 15.)
 The word *towne* (well-behaved) still exists in *wan-ton*, the original meaning of which was ill-mannered, ill-bred.
- 1909 *bray houndeȝ* = *brap houndeȝ*, i.e. fierce hounds.
- 1995 *He hatȝ nere þat he soȝt* = *He watȝ nere þat he soȝt* = He was near to that which he sought.
- 2160 *gedereȝ þe rake* = takes the path or way.
þe skweȝ of þe scowtes skayued hym þoȝt.
 The shadows of the hills appeared wild (desolate) to him.
- 2167 Sir F. Madden reads *skayned*, of which he gives no explanation. *Skayued* = *skayfed*, seems to be the N. Prov. English *scafe*, wild. Scotch *schaivie*, wild, mad. O.N. *skeifr*. Sw. *skef*, awry, distorted.
- 2204 *ronge* = clattered.
- 2211 *Drede dotȝ me no lote* =
 No noise shall cause me to dread (fear).
& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.
 And therefore take thee that tap.
- 2357 *ta þe* = take thee. Sir F. Madden reads *tape* = *taketh*. See l. 413, where *to þe* rhymes with *sothe*. We have no imperatives in *th* in this poem.
- 2401 *We schyn reuel*, etc. Sir F. Madden reads *wasch yn reuel*. But *schyn* = shall. See Glossary to "Alliterative Poems."
- 2474 *on-coolde* = *on-colde* = *coldly* = sorrowfully.
- 2489 *in-sounde* = *soundly*, well. Cf. *in-blande* = together; *in-lyche*,

alike; *inmydde3*, amidst.



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