

Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight eBook

Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight

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Contents

Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	6
Page 1.....	7
Page 2.....	9
Page 3.....	11
Page 4.....	12
Page 5.....	13
Page 6.....	14
Page 7.....	15
Page 8.....	16
Page 9.....	17
Page 10.....	18
Page 11.....	19
Page 12.....	20
Page 13.....	21
Page 14.....	22
Page 15.....	24
Page 16.....	26
Page 17.....	28
Page 18.....	30
Page 19.....	32
Page 20.....	34
Page 21.....	36
Page 22.....	38



Page 23..... 40

Page 24..... 42

Page 25..... 44

Page 26..... 46

Page 27..... 48

Page 28..... 50

Page 29..... 52

Page 30..... 54

Page 31..... 56

Page 32..... 58

Page 33..... 60

Page 34..... 62

Page 35..... 64

Page 36..... 66

Page 37..... 68

Page 38..... 70

Page 39..... 72

Page 40..... 74

Page 41..... 76

Page 42..... 78

Page 43..... 80

Page 44..... 82

Page 45..... 84



Page 46..... 86
Page 47..... 88
Page 48..... 90
Page 49..... 92

Page 50..... 94
Page 51..... 96
Page 52..... 98
Page 53..... 100

Page 54..... 102

Page 55..... 104

Page 56..... 106
Page 57..... 108
Page 58..... 110
Page 59..... 112

Page 60..... 114
Page 61..... 116
Page 62..... 118
Page 63..... 120
Page 64..... 122
Page 65..... 124

Page 66..... 126
Page 67..... 128



[Page 68..... 130](#)

[Page 69..... 132](#)

[Page 70..... 134](#)

[Page 71..... 136](#)

[Page 72..... 138](#)

[Page 73..... 140](#)

[Page 74..... 142](#)

[Page 75..... 144](#)

[Page 76..... 146](#)

[Page 77..... 148](#)

[Page 78..... 150](#)



Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.		1
SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNY3T.		15



Page 1

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.

[Footnote 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.

Page 2

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 dais, 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).



Page 3

Then Arthur before the high dais 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



Page 4

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 talking[1] (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.

[Footnote 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

Page 5

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

Page 6

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 land[1] 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).

[Footnote 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.]



Page 7

A table is soon raised, and Gawayne, having washed, proceeds to meat. Many dishes are set before him—"sews" of various kinds, fish of all kinds, some baked in bread, others broiled on the embers, some boiled, and others seasoned with spices. The knight expresses himself well pleased, and calls it a most noble and princely feast. After dinner, in reply to numerous questions, he tells his host that he is Gawayne, one of the Knights of the Round Table. When this was made known great was the joy in the hall. Each one said softly to his companion, "Now we shall see courteous behaviour and learn the terms of noble discourse, since we have amongst us 'that fine father of nurture.' Truly God has highly favoured us in sending us such a noble guest as Sir Gawayne" (ll. 884-927). At the end of the Christmas festival Gawayne desires to take his departure from the castle, but his host persuades him to stay, promising to direct him to the Green Chapel (about two miles from the castle), that he may be there by the appointed time (ll. 1029-1082). A covenant is made between them, the terms of which were that the lord of the castle should go out early to the chase, that Gawayne meanwhile should lie in his loft at his ease, then rise at his usual hour, and afterwards sit at table with his hostess, and that at the end of the day they should make an exchange of whatever they might obtain in the interim. "Whatever I win in the wood," says the lord, "shall be yours, and what thou gettest shall be mine" (ll. 1083-1125). Full early before daybreak the folk arise, saddle their horses, and truss their mails. The noble lord of the land, arrayed for riding, eats hastily a sop, and having heard mass, proceeds with a hundred hunters to hunt the wild deer (ll. 1126-1177). All this time Gawayne lies in his gay bed. His nap is disturbed by a little noise at the door, which is softly opened. He heaves up his head out of the clothes, and, peeping through the curtains, beholds a most lovely lady (the wife of his host). She came towards the bed, and the knight laid himself down quickly, pretending to be asleep. The lady stole to the bed, cast up the curtains, crept within, sat her softly on the bed-side, and waited some time till the knight should awake. After lurking awhile under the clothes considering what it all meant, Gawayne unlocked his eyelids, and put on a look of surprise, at the same time making the sign of the cross, as if afraid of some hidden danger (ll. 1178-1207). "Good morrow, sir," said that fair lady, "ye are a careless sleeper to let one enter thus. I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure." "Good morrow," quoth Gawayne, "I shall act according to your will with great pleasure, but permit me to rise that I may the more comfortably converse with you." "Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one, "ye shall not rise from your bed, for since I have caught my knight I shall



Page 8

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).



Page 9

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).



Page 10

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



Page 11

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

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

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

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

"Mary!" quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life I will not hinder thee. Have thy helmet on thy head, thy spear in thy hand, and ride down this path by yon rock-side, till thou be brought to the bottom of the valley. Then look a little on the plain, on thy left hand, and thou shalt see in that slade the chapel itself, and the burly knight that guards it (ll. 2118-2148). Now, farewell Gawayne the noble! for all the gold upon ground I would not go with thee nor bear thee fellowship through this wood 'on foot farther.'" Thus having spoken, he gallops away and leaves the knight alone. Gawayne now pursues his journey, rides through the dale, and looks about. He sees no signs of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks, and the very shadows of the high woods seemed wild and distorted. No chapel, however, could he discover. After a while he sees a round hill by the side of a stream; thither he goes, alights, and fastens his horse to the branch of a tree. He walks about the hill, debating with himself what it might be. It had a hole in the one end and on each side, and everywhere overgrown with grass, but whether it was only an old cave or a crevice of an old crag he could not tell (ll. 2149-2188). "Now, indeed," quoth Gawayne, "a desert is here; this oratory is ugly with herbs overgrown. It is a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions after the devil's manner.' Now I feel it is the fiend (the devil) in my five wits that has covenanted with me that he may destroy me. This is a chapel of misfortune—evil betide it! It is the most cursed kirk that ever I came in." With his helmet on his head, and spear in his hand, he roams up to the rock, and then he hears from that high hill beyond the brook a wondrous wild noise. Lo! it clattered in the cliff as if one upon a grindstone were grinding a scythe. It whirred like the water at a mill, and rushed and re-echoed, terrible to hear. "Though my life I forgo," says Gawayne, "no noise shall cause me to fear."

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

Page 12

“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 wrath, “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



Page 13

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



Page 14

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.



Page 15

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.

* * * * *

Note: The Old English “yogh” characters have been translated both upper and lower-case yoghs to digit 3’s. There are Unicode allocations for these (in *html* Ȝ and ȝ) but at present no font which implements these. Substituting the digit 3 seemed a workable compromise which anybody can read. The linked *html* “Old English ‘yogh’ file” uses Ȝ and ȝ representations, and is included for users with specialist fonts.

* * * * *

SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNY3T.

[FYTTE *the first.*]

I.

[A] Sipeþ þe sege & þe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye, [Fol. 91a.]
þe bor3 brittened & brent to bronde3 & aske3,
þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wro3t,
4 Wat3 tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe;
Hit wat3 Ennias þe athel, & his highe kynde,
þat sipeþ depreced prouinces, & patrounes bicome
Welne3e of al þe wele in þe west iles,
8 [B] 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;
[C] & fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he sette3,
wyth wyne;
16 [D] Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,
Bi syþe3 hat3 wont þer-inne,
[E] & oft boþe blysse & blunder
Ful skete hat3 skyfted synne.

[Sidenote A: After the siege of Troy] [Sidenote B: Romulus built Rome,] [Sidenote C: and Felix Brutus founded Britain,] [Sidenote D: a land of war and wonder,] [Sidenote E: and oft of bliss and blunder.]

II.



20 Ande quen þis Bretayn wat3 bigged bi þis burn rych,
[A] Bolde bredden þer-inne, baret þat lofdn,
In mony turned tyme tene þat wro3ten;
Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
24 [B] Þen in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
[C] Bot of alle þat here bult of Bretaygne kynges
Ay wat3 Arthur þe hendest; as I haf herde telle;
For-þi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe, [Fol. 91b.]
28 Þat a selly in si3t summe men hit holden,
& an outrage awenture of Arthure3 wondere3;
[D] 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.

[Sidenote A: Bold men increased in the Land,] [Sidenote B: and many marvels happened.] [Sidenote C: Of all Britain's kings Arthur was the noblest.] [Sidenote D: Listen a while and ye shall hear the story of an "outrageous adventure."]



Page 16

III.

[A] þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse,
 With mony luflych lorde, lede3 of þe best,
 [B] Rekenly of þe rounde table alle þo rich breþer,
 40 With rych reuel ory3t, & rechles merþes;
 þer tournayed tulkes bi-tyme3 ful mony,
 lusted ful lolile þise gentyle kni3tes,
 Syþen kayred to þe court, caroles to make.
 44 [C] 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,
 48 [D] 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,
 [E] þe most kyd kny3te3 vnder kryste seluen,
 52 & þe louelokkest ladies þat euer lif haden,
 & he þe comlokest kyng þat þe court haldes;
 For al wat3 þis fayre folk in her first age,
 on sille;
 56 [F] Þe hapnest vnder heuen,
 Kyng hy3est mon of wylle,
 Hit were[1] now gret nye to neuen
 So hardy a here on hille.

[Sidenote A: Arthur held at Camelot his Christmas feast,] [Sidenote B: with all the knights of the Round Table,] [Sidenote C: full fifteen days.] [Sidenote D: All was joy in hall and chamber,] [Sidenote E: among brave knights and lovely ladies,] [Sidenote F: the happiest under heaven.] [Footnote 1: *Ms. werere.*]

IV.

60 [A] Wyle nw 3er wat3 so 3ep þat hit wat3 nwe cummen,
 þat day double on þe dece wat3 þe douth serued,
 Fro þe kyng wat3 cummen with kny3tes in to þe halle,
 þe chauntre of þe chapel cheued to an ende;
 64 Loude crye wat3 þer kest of clerke3 & oper,
 Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte; [Fol. 92]
 & syþen riche forþ runnen to reche honde-selle,
 [B] 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.



[C] Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme;
72 When þay had waschen, worþyly þay wenten to sete,
þe best burne ay abof, as hit best semed;
[D] Whene Guenore ful gay, grayþed in þe myddes.
Dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute,
76 Smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer
Of tryed Tolouse, of Tars tapites in-noghe,
þat were enbrawdred & beten wyth þe best gemmes,
þat my3t be preued of prys wyth penyes to bye,
80 in daye;
[E] Þe comlokest to discrye,
þer glent with y3en gray,
A semloker þat euer he sy3e,
84 Soth mo3t no mon say.

[Sidenote A: They celebrate the New Year with great joy.] [Sidenote B: Gifts are demanded and bestowed.] [Sidenote C: Lords and ladies take their seats at the table.] [Sidenote D: Queen Guenever appears gaily dressed.] [Sidenote E: A lady fairer of form might no one say he had ever before seen.]

V.



Page 17

[A] Bot Arthure wolde not ete til al were serued,
 He wat3 so loly of his loyfnes, & sum-quat child gered,
 His lif liked hym ly3t, he louied þe lasse
 88 [B] Auþer to lenge lye, or to longe sitte,
 So bi-sied him his 3onge blod & his brayn wylde;
 & also anoþer maner meued him eke,
 þat he þur3 nobelay had nomen, ho wolde neuer ete
 92 Vpon such a dere day, er hym deuised were
 [C] Of sum auenturus þyng an vncouþe tale,
 Of sum mayn meruayle, þat he my3t trawe,
 Off[1] alderes, of armes, of oþer auenturus,
 96 Oþer sum segg hym bi-so3t of sum siker kny3t,
 To loyne wyth hym in iustyng in loparde to lay,
 Lede lif for lyf, leue vchon oþer,
 As fortune wolde fulsun hom þe fayrer to haue.
 100 þis wat3 [þe] kynges countenaunce where he in court were,
 At vch farand fest among his fre meny,
 in halle; [Fol. 92b.]
 [D] þer-fore of face so fere.
 104 He sti3tle3 stif in stalle,
 Ful 3ep in þat nw 3ere,
 Much mirthe he mas with alle.

[Sidenote A: Arthur would not eat,] [Sidenote B: nor would he long sit] [Sidenote C: until he had witnessed a “wondrous adventure” of some kind.] [Sidenote D: He of face so bold makes much mirth with all.] [Footnote 1: Of of, in Ms.]

VI.

[A] Thus þer stondes in stale þe stif kyng his-seluen,
 108 Talkkande bifore þe hy3e table of trifles ful hende
 [B] There gode Gawan wat3 grayþed, Gwenore bisyde
 [C] & Agrauayn a la dure mayn on þat oþer syde sittes
 Boþe þe kynges sister sunes, & ful siker kni3tes;
 112 [D] Bischop Bawdewyn abof bi-gine3 þe table,
 [E] & Ywan, Vryn son, ette wit hym-seluen;
 þise were di3t on þe des, & derworþly serued,
 & sipen mony siker segge at þe sidborde3.
 116 [F] Þen þe first cors come with crakkyng of trumpes,
 Wyth mony baner ful bry3t, þat þer-bi hinged,
 Nwe nakryn noyse with þe noble pipes,
 Wylde werbles & wy3t wakned lote,
 120 þat mony hert ful hi3e hef at her towches;
 [G] Dayntes dryuen þer-wyth of ful dere metes,



Foysoun of þe fresche, & on so fele disches,
þat pine to fynde þe place þe peple bi-forne
124 For to sette þe syluener,[1] þat sere sewes halden,
on clothe;
Iche lede as he loued hym-selue
þer laght with-uten loþe,
128 [H] Ay two had disches twelue,
[I] Good ber, & bry3t wyn boþe.

[Sidenote A: The king talks with his knights.] [Sidenote B: Gawayne,] [Sidenote C: Agravayn,] [Sidenote D: Bishop Bawdewyn,] [Sidenote E: and Ywain sit on the dais.] [Sidenote F: The first course is served with cracking of trumpets.] [Sidenote G: It consisted of all dainties in season.] [Sidenote H: Each two had dishes twelve,] [Sidenote I: good beer and bright wine both.] [Footnote 1: svlueren (?) (dishes).]

VII.



Page 18

[A] Now wyl I of hor seruise say yow no more,
 For veh wy3e may wel wit no wont þat þer were;
 132 [B] 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,
 136 [C] Per 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,
 [D] & his lyndes & his lymes so longe & so grete,
 140 Half etayn in erde I hope þat he were. [Fol. 93.]
 [E] Bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene,
 & þat þe myriest in his muckel þat my3t ride;
 [F] For of bak & of brest al were his bodi sturne,
 144 [G] 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.

[Sidenote A: There was no want of anything.] [Sidenote B: Scarcely had the first course commenced,] [Sidenote C: when there rushes in at the hall-door a knight;] [Sidenote D: the tallest on earth] [Sidenote E: he must have been.] [Sidenote F: His back and breast were great,] [Sidenote G: but his belly and waist were small.]

VIII.

[A] Ande al grayped in grene þis gome & his wedes,
 152 A strayt cote ful stre3t, þat stek on his sides,
 A mere mantile abof, mensked with-inne,
 With pelure pured apert þe pane ful clene,
 With blyþe blaunner ful bry3t, & his hod boþe,
 156 þat wat3 la3t fro his lokke3, & layde on his schulderes
 Heme wel haled, hose of þat same grene,
 [B] þat spenet on his sparlyr, & clene spures vnder,
 Of bry3t golde, vpon silk bordes, barred ful ryche
 160 & scholes vnder schankes, þere þe schalk rides;
 & alle his vesture uerayly wat3 clene verdure,
 Boþe þe barres of his belt & oper blyþe stones,
 þat were richely rayled in his aray clene,
 164 [C] Aboutte hym-self & his sadel, vpon silk werke3,
 þat were to tor for to telle of tryfles þe halue,



þat were enbrauded abof, wyth bryddes & fly3es,
With gay gaudi of grene, þe golde ay in myddes;
168 þe pendauntes of his payttrure, þe proude cropure
His molaynes, & alle þe metal anamayld was þenne
þe steropes þat he stod on, stayned of þe same,
& his arsoun3 al after, & his ap̄el sturtes,
172 þat euer glemered[1] & glent al of grene stones.
[D] þe fole þat he ferkkes on, fyn of þat ilke,
sertayn;
A grene hors gret & þikke,
176 [E] A stede ful stif to strayne,
In brawd̄en brydel quik,
To þe gome he wat3 ful gayn. [Fol. 93b.]

[Sidenote A: He was clothed entirely in green.] [Sidenote B: His spurs were of bright gold.] [Sidenote C: His saddle was embroidered with birds and flies.] [Sidenote D: The foal that he rode upon was green;] [Sidenote E: it was a steed full stiff to guide.]
[Footnote 1: glemed (?).]



Page 19

IX.

[A] 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;
 [B] A much berd as[1] a busk ouer his brest henges,
 þat wyth his hi3lich here, þat of his hed rechtes,
 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.
 [C] Þe mane of þat mayn hors much to hit lyke,
 188 Wel cresped & cemmed wyth knottes ful mony,
 Folden in wyth fildore aboute þe fayre grene,
 Ay a herle of þe here, an oþer of golde;
 [D] Þe tayl & his toppyng twynnen of a sute,
 192 & bounden boþe wyth a bande of a bry3t grene,
 Dubbed wyth ful dere stone3, as þe dok lasted,
 Syþen þrawen wyth a þwong a þwarle knot alofte,
 Þer mony belle3 ful bry3t of brende golde rungen.
 196 [E] 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,
 [F] Hit semed as no mon my3t,
 Vnder his dyntte3 dry3e.

[Sidenote A: Gaily was the knight attired.] [Sidenote B: His great beard, like a bush, hung on his breast.] [Sidenote C: The horse's mane was decked with golden threads.] [Sidenote D: Its tail was bound with a green band.] [Sidenote E: Such a foal nor a knight were never before seen.] [Sidenote F: It seemed that no man might endure his dints.] [Footnote 1: as as, in *Ms.*]

X.

[A] Wheþer hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauþer,
 204 Ne no pysan, ne no plate þat pented to armes,
 Ne no schafte, ne no schelde, to schwne ne to smyte,
 [B] Bot in his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe,
 þat is grattest in grene, when greue3 ar bare,
 208 [C] & an ax in his oper, 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,



212 [D] 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,
þat watȝ wounde wyth yrn to þe wandeȝ ende, [Fol. 94.]
216 [E] & al bigrauen with grene, in gracios[1] werkes;
A lace lapped aboute, þat louked at þe hede,
& so after þe halme halched ful ofte,
Wyth tryed tasseleȝ þerto tacched in-noghe,
220 [F] 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,
[G] Haylsed he neuer one, bot heȝe he ouer loked.
224 Þe fyrst word þat he warp, “wher is,” he sayd,
[H] “Þe gouernour 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,
[I] He stemmed & con studie,
Quo walt þer most renoun.



Page 20

[Sidenote A: The knight carried neither spear nor shield,] [Sidenote B: In one hand was a holly bough,] [Sidenote C: in the other an axe,] [Sidenote D: the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor,] [Sidenote E: and the handle was encased in iron, curiously “graven with green, in gracious works.”]

[Sidenote F: Thus arrayed the Green Knight enters the hall,] [Sidenote G: without saluting any one.] [Sidenote H: He asks for the “governor” of the company,] [Sidenote I: and looks for the most renowned.] [Footnote 1: looks like gracons in *Ms.*]

XI.

232 [A] Ther wat3 lokyng on lenþe, þe lude to be-holde,
 For vch mon had meruayle quat hit mene my3t,
 þat a hapel & a horse my3t such a hwe lach,
 [B] As growe grene as þe gres & grener hit semed,
 236 Þen grene aumayl on golde lowande bry3ter;
 Al studied þat þer stod, & stalked hym nerre,
 [C] 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;
 [D] Þer-fore to answere wat3 ar3e mony apel freke,
 & al stoued at his steuen, & stonstil seten,
 [E] 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,
 [F] Bot sum for cortaysye,
 248 Bot let hym þat al schulde loute,
 Cast vnto þat wy3e.

[Sidenote A: Much they marvel to see a man and a horse] [Sidenote B: as green as grass.] [Sidenote C: Never before had they seen such a sight as this.] [Sidenote D: They were afraid to answer,] [Sidenote E: and were as silent as if sleep had taken possession of them,] [Sidenote F: some from fear and others from courtesy.]

XII.

[A] 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,
 [B] þe hede of þis ostel Arthour I hat, [Fol. 94b.]
 Li3t luflych adoun, & lenge, I þe praye,
 & quat so þy wylle is, we schal wyt after.”
 256 [C] “Nay, as help me,” quod þe hapel, “he þat on hy3e syttes,



To wone any quyle in þis won, hit wat3 not myn ernde;
Bot for þe los of þe lede is lyft vp so hy3e,
& þy bur3 & þy burnes best ar holden,
260 Stifest vnder stel-gere on stedes to ryde,
[D] Þe wy3test & þe worþyest of þe worldes kynde,
Preue for to play wyth in oþer pure layke3;
& here is kydde cortaysye, as I haf herd carp,
264 & þat hat3 wayned me hider, I-wyis, at þis tyme.
3e may be seker bi þis braunch þat I bere here,
[E] þat I passe as in pes, & no ply3t seche;
For had I founded in fere, in fe3tyng wyse,
268 [F] I haue a hauberghe at home & a helme boþe,
A schelde, & a scharp spere, schinande bry3t,
Ande oþer weppenes to welde, I wene wel als,
Bot for I wolde no were, my wede3 ar softer.
272 Bot if þou be so bold as alle burne3 tellen,
þou wyl grant me godly þe gomen þat I ask,
bi ry3t.”
[G] Arthour con onsware,
276 & sayd, “sir cortays kny3t,
If þou craue batayl bare,
Here fayle3 þou not to fy3t.”



Page 21

[Sidenote A: Arthur salutes the Green Knight.] [Sidenote B: bids him welcome, and invites him to stay awhile.] [Sidenote C: The knight says that he will not tarry.] [Sidenote D: He seeks the most valiant that he may prove him.] [Sidenote E: He comes in peace.] [Sidenote F: At home, however, he has both shield and spear.] [Sidenote G: Arthur assures him that he shall not fail to find an opponent worthy of him.]

XIII.

[A] "Nay, frayst I no fy3t, in fayth I þe telle,
 280 [B] Hit arn aboute on þis bench bot berdle3 chylder;
 If I were hasped in armes on a he3e stede,
 [C] Here is no mon me to mach, for my3te3 so[1] wayke.
 For-þy I craue in þis court a crystmas gomen,
 284 [D] For hit is 3ol & nwe 3er, & here ar 3ep mony;
 If any so hardy in þis hous holde3 hym-seluen,
 [E] 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,
 [F] Þis ax, þat is heue in-nogh, to hondele as hym lykes,
 & I schal bide þe fyrst bur, as bare as I sitte. [Fol. 95.]
 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,
 [G] & 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,
 [H] A twelmonyth & a day;—
 Now hy3e, & let se tite
 300 Dar any her-inne o3t say."

[Sidenote A: "I seek no fight," says the knight.] [Sidenote B: "'Here are only beardless children.')] [Sidenote C: Here is no man to match me.] [Sidenote D: Here are brave ones many,] [Sidenote E: if any be bold enough to 'strike a stroke for another,'] [Sidenote F: this axe shall be his;] [Sidenote G: but I shall give him a 'stroke' in return] [Sidenote H: within a twelvemonth and a day.]" [Footnote 1: Ms. fo.]

XIV.

[A] If he hem stowned vpon fyrst, stiller were þanne
 Alle þe hered-men in halle, þe hy3 & þe lo3e;
 [B] Þe renk on his rounce hym ruced in his sadel,
 304 & runisch-ly his rede y3en he reled aboute,



[C] Bende his bresed bro3e3, bly-cande grene,
[D] Wayued his berde for to wayte quo-so wolde ryse.
When non wolde kepe hym with carp he co3ed ful hy3e,
308 Ande rimed hym ful richley, & ry3t hym to speke:
[E] "What, is þis Arþures hous," quod þe hapel þenne,
"Þat al þe rous rennes of, þur3 ryalmes so mony?
Where is now your sourquydrye & your conquestes,
312 Your gry[n]del-layk, & your greme, & your grete wordes?
[F] Now is þe reuel & þe renoun of þe rounde table
Ouer-walt wyth a worde of on wy3es speche;
For al dares for drede, with-oute dynt schewed!"
316 Wyth þis he la3es so loude, þat þe lorde greued;
[G] Þe blod schot for scham in-to his schyre face
& lere;
[H] 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.



Page 22

[Sidenote A: Fear kept all silent.] [Sidenote B: The knight rolled his red eyes about,
[Sidenote C: and bent his bristly green brows.] [Sidenote D: Waving his beard awhile,
he exclaimed:] [Sidenote E: “What! is this Arthur’s court?”] [Sidenote F: Forsooth the
renown of the Round Table is overturned ‘with a
word of one man’s speech.’”]

[Sidenote G: Arthur blushes for shame.] [Sidenote H: He waxes as wroth as the wind.]

XV.

[A] Ande sayde, “hæpel, by heuen þyn askyng is nys,
324 & as þou foly hat3 frayst, fynde þe be-houes;
I know no gome þat is gast of þy grete wordes.
Gif me now þy geserne, vpon gode3 halue,
& I schal bayþen þy bone, þat þou boden habbes.”
328 Ly3tly lepe3 he hym to, & la3t at his honde; [Fol. 95b.]
þen feersly þat oþer freke vpon fote ly3tis.

[B] Now hat3 Arthure his axe, & þe halme grype3,
& sturnely sture3 hit aboute, þat stryke wyth hit þo3t.
332 þe stif mon hym bifore stod vpon hy3t,
Herre þen ani in þe hous by þe hede & more;

[C] Wyth sturne schere[1] þer he stod, he stroked his berde,
& wyth a countenaunce dry3e he dro3 doun his cote,
336 No more mate ne dismayd for hys mayn dinte3,
þen any burne vpon bench hade bro3t hym to drynk
of wyne,

[D] Gawan, þat sate bi þe quene,
340 To þe kyng he can enclyne,
“I be-seche now with sa3e3 sene,
þis melly mot be myne.”

[Sidenote A: He assures the knight that no one is afraid of his great
words.]

[Sidenote B: Arthur seizes his axe.] [Sidenote C: The knight, stroking his beard, awaits
the blow, and with a
“dry countenance” draws down his coat.]

[Sidenote D: Sir Gawayne beseeches the king to let him undertake the blow.] [Footnote
1: chere (?).]

XVI.

“Wolde 3e, worþilych lorde,” quod Gawan to þe kyng,
344 [A] “Bid me bo3e fro þis benche, & stonde by yow þere,
þat I wyth-oute vylanye my3t voyde þis table,
& þat my legge lady lyked not ille,



I wolde com to your counseyl, bifore your cort ryche.
348 [B] For me þink hit not semly, as hit is sob knawen,
þer such an askyng is heuened so hy3e in your sale,
þa33e 3our-self be talenttyf to take hit to your-seluen,
[C] Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten,
352 þat vnder heuen, I hope, non ha3er er of wylle,
Ne better bodyes on bent, þer baret is rered;
[D] 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 bounte bot your blod I in my bode knowe;
& syþen þis note is so nys, þat no3t hit yow falles,
& I haue frayned hit at yow fyrst, folde3 hit to me,
360 & if I carp not comlyly, let alle þis cort rych,
bout blame.”
[E] Ryche to-geder con roun,
& syþen þay redder alle same,
364 To ryd þe kyng wyth croun,
& gif Gawan þe game.



Page 23

[Sidenote A: He asks permission to leave the table; he says,] [Sidenote B: it is not meet that Arthur should be active in the matter,] [Sidenote C: while so many bold ones sit upon bench.] [Sidenote D: Although the weakest, he is quite ready to meet the Green Knight.]

[Sidenote E: The nobles entreat Arthur to “give Gawayne the game.”]

XVII.

þen comaunded þe kyng þe kny3t for to ryse; [Fol. 96.]
 & he ful radly vp ros, & ruchched hym fayre,
 368 [A] Kneled doun bifore þe kyng, & cache3 þat weppen;
 & he luflyly hit hym laft, & lyfte vp his honde,
 & gef hym godde3 blessyng, & gladly hym biddes
 [B] þat his hert & his honde schulde hardi be boþe.
 372 “Kepe þe cosyn,” quod þe kyng, “þat þou on kyrf sette,
 & if þou rede3 hym ry3t, redly I trowe,
 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
 [C] þen carppe3 to sir Gawan þe kny3t in þe grene,
 “Refourme we oure for-wardes, er we fyrre passe.
 Fyrst I eþe þe, hapel, how þat þou hattes,
 380 þat þou me telle truly, as I tryst may?”
 [D] “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 anoþer,
 384 Wyth what weppen so[1] þou wylt, & wyth no wy3 elle3,
 on lyue.”
 þat oþer on-sware3 agayn,
 “Sir Gawan, so mot I þryue,
 388 [E] As I am ferly fayn.
 þis dint þat þou schal dryue.”

[Sidenote A: The king gives his nephew his weapon,] [Sidenote B: and tells him to keep heart and hand steady.] [Sidenote C: The Green Knight enquires the name of his opponent.] [Sidenote D: Sir Gawayne tells him his name, and declares that he is willing to give and receive a blow.]

[Sidenote E: The other thereof is glad.] [Footnote 1: Ms. fo.]

XVIII.

[A] “Bigog,” quod þe grene kny3t, “sir Gawan, melykes,
 þat I schal fange at þy fust þat I haf frayst here;



392 & þou hat3 redily rehersed, bi resoun ful trwe,
Clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kyng asked,
Saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawþe,
þat þou schal seche me þi-self, where-so þou hopes
396 I may be funde vpon folde, & foch þe such wages
[B] As þou deles me to day, bifore þis douþe ryche.”
[C] “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.
[D] Bot teche me truly þer-to, & telle me howe þou hattes,
& I schal ware alle my wyt to wynne me þeder,
& þat I swere þe for soþe, & by my seker trawþe.” [Fol. 96b.]
404 “þat is in-nogh in nwe 3er, hit nedes no more,”
Quod þe gome in þe grene to Gawan þe hende,
[E] “3if I þe telle trwly, quen I þe tape haue,
& þou me smopely hat3 smyten, smartly I þe



Page 24

teche

408 Of my hous, & my home, & myn owen nome,
 þen may þou frayst my fare, & forwarde3 holde,
 [F] & if I spende no speche, þenne spede3 þou þe better,
 For þou may leng in þy londe, & layt no fyrre,
 412 bot slokes;
 [G] Ta now þy grymme tole to þe,
 & let se how þou cnoke3.”
 “Gladly sir, for soþe,”
 416 Quod Gawan; his ax he strokes.

[Sidenote A: “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,]

[Sidenote B: to receive the blow in return.”] [Sidenote C: “Where shall I seek thee?”
 says Sir Gawayne;] [Sidenote D: “tell me thy name and abode and I will find thee.”]

[Sidenote E: “When thou hast smitten me,” says the knight, “then tell I
 thee of my home and name;]

[Sidenote F: if I speak not at all, so much the better for thee.] [Sidenote G: Take now
 thy grim tool, and let us see how thou knockest.”]

XIX.

[A] The grene kny3t vpon grounde grayþely hym dresses,
 A littel lut with þe hede, þe lere he discourere3,
 [B] His longe louelych lokke3 he layd ouer his croun.
 420 Let þe naked nec to þe note schewe.
 Gauan gripped to his ax, & gederes hit on hy3t,
 Þe kay fot on þe folde he be-fore sette,
 [C] Let hit doun ly3tly ly3t on þe naked,
 424 þat þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones,
 [D] & schrank þur3 þe schyire grece, & scade hit in twynne,
 þat þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde.
 [E] Þe fayre hede fro þe halce hit [felle] to þe erpe,
 428 [F] þat fele hit foyned wyth her fete, þere hit forth roled;
 Þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe grene;
 [G] & nawþer faltered ne fel þe freke neuer þe helder,
 Bot styþly he start forth vpon styf schonkes,
 432 [H] & ru[n]yschly he ra3t out, þere as renkke3 stoden,
 La3t to his lufly hed, & lyft hit vp sone;
 & syþen bo3e3 to his blonk, þe brydel he cachche3,
 [I] Steppe3 in to stel bawe & stryde3 alofte,



436 [J] & 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 he[1] we[re],
in stedde;
440 [K] He brayde his bluk[2] aboute,
þat vgly bodi þat bledde, [Fol. 97.]
Moni on of hym had doute,
Bi þat his resoun3 were redde.

[Sidenote A: The Green Knight] [Sidenote B: puts his long lovely locks aside and lays bare his neck.] [Sidenote C: Sir Gawayne lets fall his axe] [Sidenote D: and severs the head from the body.] [Sidenote E: The head falls to the earth.] [Sidenote F: Many kick it aside with their feet.] [Sidenote G: The knight never falters;] [Sidenote H: he rushes forth, seizes his head,] [Sidenote I: steps into the saddle,] [Sidenote J: holding the while the head in his hand by the hair,] [Sidenote K: and turns his horse about.]
[Footnote 1: *Ms. ho.*] [Footnote 2: blunk (?).]



Page 25

XX.

444 For þe hede in his honde he halde3 vp euen,
 [A] To-ward þe derrest on þe dece he dresse3 þe face,
 & hit lyfte vp þe y3e-lydde3, & loked ful brode,
 [B] & meled þus much with his muthe, as 3e may now here.
 448 “Loke, Gawan, þou be grayþe to go as þou hette3,
 & layte as lelly til þou me, lude, fynde,
 [C] As þou hat3 hette in þis halle, herande þise kny3tes;
 [D] To þe grene chapel þou chose, I charge þe to fotte,
 452 Such a dunt as þou hat3 dalt disserued þou habbe3,
 [E] To be 3ederly 3olden on nw 3eres morn;
 þe kny3t of þe grene chapel men knowen me mony;
 [F] For-þi me forto fynde if þou frayste3, fayle3 þou neuer,
 456 [G] Þer-fore com, oþer recreaunt be calde þe be-houeus.”
 With a runisch rout þe rayne3 he torne3,
 [H] 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,
 464 [I] At þat grene þay la3e & grenne,
 3et breued wat3 hit ful bare,
 A meruayl among þo menne.

[Sidenote A: The head lifts up its eyelids,] [Sidenote B: and addresses Sir Gawayne;
 “Look thou, be ready to go as thou
 hast promised,]
 [Sidenote C: and seek till thou findest me.] [Sidenote D: Get thee to the Green
 Chapel,] [Sidenote E: there to receive a blow on New Year’s morn.] [Sidenote F: Fail
 thou never;] [Sidenote G: come, or recreant be called.”] [Sidenote H: The Green Knight
 then rushes out of the hall, his head in his
 hand.]
 [Sidenote I: At that green one Arthur and Gawayne “laugh and grin.”]

XXI.

[A] 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,
 [B] “Dere dame, to day demay yow neuer;
 Wel by-commes such craft vpon cristmasse,
 472 Laykyng of enterlude3, to la3e & to syng.



Among þise, kynde caroles of kny3te3 & ladye3;
[C] 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,
[D] “Now sir, heng vp þyn ax, þat hat3 in-nogh hewen.”
& hit wat3 don abof þe dece, on doser to henge, [Fol. 97b.]
þer alle men for meruayl my3t on hit loke,
480 & bi trwe tytel þer-of to telle þe wonder.

[E] Þenne þay bo3ed 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 boþe;
Wyth wele walt þay þat day, til worþed an ende,
in londe.

[F] Now þenk wel, sir Gawan,
488 For woþe þat þou ne wonde,
þis auenture forto frayn,
þat þou hat3 tan on honde.



Page 26

[Sidenote A: Arthur addresses the queen:] [Sidenote B: “Dear dame, be not dismayed; such marvels well become the

Christmas festival;]

[Sidenote C: I may now go to meat.] [Sidenote D: Sir Gawayne, hang up thine axe.]

[Sidenote E: The king and his knights sit feasting at the board till day is ended.]

[Sidenote F: Now beware, Sir Gawayne, lest thou fail to seek the adventure that thou hast taken in hand.]

[FYTTE *the second.*]

I.

[A] This hanselle hat³ Arthur of auenturus on fyrst,
 492 In 3onge 3er, for he 3erned 3elpyng to here,
 Tha³ hym worde³ were wane, when þay to sete wenten;
 Now ar þay stoken of sturne werk staf-ful her hond.
 Gawan wat³ glad to be-gynne þose gomne³ in halle,
 496 Bot þa³ þe ende be heuy, haf 3e no wonder;
 For þa³ men ben mery in mynde, quen þay han mayn drynk,
 [B] 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 oper;
 [C] 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,
 [D] Colde clenge³ adoun, cloude³ vp-lyften,
 Schyre schede³ þe rayn in schowre³ ful warme,
 Falle³ vpon fayre flat, flowre³ þere schewen,
 508 [E] Boþe grounde³ & þe greue³ grene ar her wede³,
 [F] Brydde³ busken to bylde, & bremlych syngen,
 [G] For solace of þe softe somer þat sues þer after,
 bi bonk;
 512 [H] & blossom³ bolne to blowe,
 Bi rawe³ rych & ronk,
 [I] Þen note³ noble in-no³e,
 Ar herde in wod so wlonk. [Fol. 98]

[Sidenote A: This marvel serves to keep up a brisk conversation in Court.] [Sidenote B: The year passes full quickly and never returns.] [Sidenote C: After Christmas comes the “crabbed Lenten.”] [Sidenote D: Spring sets in and warm showers descend;]
 [Sidenote E: the groves become green,] [Sidenote F: birds build and sing,] [Sidenote



G: for joy of the summer that follows;] [Sidenote H: blossoms begin to bloom,]
[Sidenote I: and noble notes are heard in the woods]

II.

516 [A] After þe sesoun of somer wyth þe soft wynde3,
Quen 3eferus syfle3 hym-self on sede3 & erbe3,
[B] 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.
[C] Bot þen hy3es heruest, & hardenes hym sone.
Warne3 hym for þe wynter to wax ful rype;
[D] 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,
[E] þe leue3 lancen fro þe lynde, & ly3ten on þe grounde,
[F] & al grayes þe gres, þat grene wat3 ere;
528 Þenne al rype3 & rote3 þat ros vpon fyrst,
& þus 3irne3 þe 3ere in 3isterdaye3 mony,
[G] & wynter wynde3 a3ayn, as þe worlde aske3
no sage.
532 Til me3el-mas mone,
Wat3 cumen wyth wynter wage;
[H] Þen þenkke3 Gawan ful sone,
Of his anious uyage.



Page 27

[Sidenote A: Then the soft winds of summer,] [Sidenote B: beautiful are the flowers wet with dew-drops.] [Sidenote C: But harvest approaches soon,] [Sidenote D: and drives the dust about.] [Sidenote E: The leaves drop off the trees,] [Sidenote F: the grass becomes gray, and all ripens and rots.] [Sidenote G: Winter winds round again,] [Sidenote H: and then Sir Gawayne thinks of his dread journey.]

III.

536 [A] 3et quyl al-hal-day with Arþer he lenges,
 & he made a fare on þat fest, for þe freke3 sake,
 With much reuel & ryche of þe rounde table;
 Kny3te3 ful cortays & comlych ladies,
 540 Al for luf of þat lede in longynge þay were,
 Bot neuer-þe-lece ne þe later þay neuened bot merþe,
 Mony ioyle3 for þat ientyle iape3 þer maden.
 [B] For aftter mete, with mournyng he mele3 to his eme,
 544 & speke3 of his passage, & pertly he sayde,
 [C] “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;
 548 [D] Bot I am boun to þe bur barely to morne,
 To sech þe gome of þe grene, as god wyl me wysse.”
 Þenne þe best of þe bur3 bo3ed to-geder,
 Aywan, & Errik, & oþer ful mony,
 552 Sir Doddinaual de Sauage, þe duk of Clarence, [Fol. 98b.]
 Launcelot, & Lyonel, & Lucan þe gode,
 Sir Boos, & sir Byduer, big men boþe,
 [E] & mony oþer menskful, with Mador de la Port.
 556 Alle þis compayny of court com þe kyng nerre,
 For to counseyl þe kny3t, with care at her hert;
 [F] þere wat3 much derue[1] doel driuen in þe sale,
 Pat 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,
 564 [G] Of destines derf & dere,
 What may mon do bot fonde?”

[Sidenote A: On All-hallows day Arthur makes a feast for his nephew's sake.]

[Sidenote B: After meat, Sir Gawayne thus speaks to his uncle:] [Sidenote C: “Now, liege lord, I ask leave of you,] [Sidenote D: for I am bound on the morn to seek the Green Knight.”] [Sidenote E: Many nobles, the best of the court, counsel and comfort



him.] [Sidenote F: Much sorrow prevails in the hall.] [Sidenote G: Gawayne declares that he has nothing to fear.] [Footnote 1: derne (?).]

IV.

[A] He dowelle3 þer al þat day, and dresse3 on þe morn,
Aske3 erly hys arme3, & alle were þay bro3t
568 [B] Fyrst a tule tapit, ty3t ouer þe flet,
& miche wat3 þe gyld gere þat glent þer alofte;
[C] Þe stif mon steppe3 þeron, & þe stel hondole3,
[D] Dubbed in a dublet of a dere tars,
572 & syþen a crafty capados, closed aloft,
þat wyth a bry3t blaunner was bounden with-inne;
[E] 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,



Page 28

Aboute his kne3 knaged wyth knote3 of golde;
 [F] Queme quyssewes þen, þat coyntlych closed
 His thik þrawen þy3e3 with þwonges to-tachched;
 580 [G] & syþen þe brawdren bryne of bry3t stel rynges,
 Vmbe-weued þat wy3, vpon wlonk stuffe;
 [H] & wel bornyst brace vpon his boþe armes,
 With gode cowters & gay, & gloue3 of plate,
 584 & alle þe godlych gere þat hym gayn schulde
 þat tyde;
 [I] Wyth ryche cote armure,
 [J] His gold spore3 spend with pryde,
 588 [K] Gurde wyth a bront ful sure,
 With silk sayn vmbe his syde.

[Sidenote A: On the morn he asks for his arms.] [Sidenote B: A carpet is spread on the floor,] [Sidenote C: and he steps thereon.] [Sidenote D: He is dubbed in a doublet of Tarsic silk, and a well-made hood.]

[Sidenote E: They set steel slices on his feet, and lap his legs in steel greaves.]

[Sidenote F: Fair cuisses enclose his thighs,] [Sidenote G: and afterwards they put on the steel habergeon,] [Sidenote H: well-burnished braces, elbow pieces, and gloves of plate.] [Sidenote I: Over all this is placed the coat armour.] [Sidenote J: His spurs are then fixed,] [Sidenote K: and his sword is attached to his side by a silken girdle.]

V.

[A] When he wat3 hasped in armes, his harnays wat3 ryche, [Fol. 99a.]
 þe lest lachet ou[þ]er loupe lemed of golde;
 592 So harnayst as he wat3 he herkne3 his masse,
 Offred & honoured at þe he3e auter;
 [B] Syþen he come3 to þe kyng & to his cort fere3,
 Lache3 lufly his leue at lorde3 & ladye3;
 596 & þay hym kyst & conueyed, bikende hym to kryst.
 [C] Bi þat wat3 Gryngolet grayth, & gurde with a sadel,
 þat glemed ful gayly with mony golde frenges,
 Ay quere naylet ful nwe for þat note ryched;
 600 þe brydel barred aboute, with bry3t golde bounden;
 [D] þe apparayl of þe payttrure, & of þe proude skyrte3,
 þe cropore, & þe couertor, acorded wyth þe arsoune3;



& al wat3 rayled on red ryche golde nayle3,
604 þat al glytered & glent as glem of þe sunne.
[E] þenne hentes he þe holme, & hastily hit kysses,
þat wat3 stapled stifly, & stoffed wyth-inne:
Hit wat3 hy3e on his hede, hasped bihynde,
608 [F] Wyth a ly3tli vrysoun ouer þe auentayle,
[G] Enbrawden & bounden wyth þe best gemme3,
On brode sylkyn borde, & brydde3 on seme3,
As papiaye3 paynted pernyng bitwene,
612 Tortors & trulofe3 entayled so þyk,
As mony burde þer aboute had ben seuen wynter
in toune;
[H] þe cercle wat3 more o prys,
616 þat vmbe-clypped hys croun,
Of diamaunte3 a deuys,
þat boþe were bry3t & broun.

[Sidenote A: Thus arrayed the knight hears mass,] [Sidenote B: and afterwards takes leave of Arthur and his court.] [Sidenote C: By that time his horse Gringolet was ready,] [Sidenote D: the harness of which glittered like the "gleam of the sun."] [Sidenote E: Then Sir Gawayne sets his helmet upon his head,] [Sidenote F: fastened behind with a "urisoun,"] [Sidenote G: richly embroidered with gems.] [Sidenote H: The circle around the helmet was decked with diamonds.]



Page 29

VI.

[A] Then þay schewed hym þe schelde, þat was of schyr goule3,
620 Wyth þe pentangel de-paynt of pure golde hwe3;
He brayde3 hit by þe baude-ryk, aboute þe hals kestes,
þat bisemed þe segge semlyly fayre.

[B] & quy þe pentangel apende3 to þat prynce noble,
624 I am in tent yow to telle, þof tary hyt me schulde;
Hit is a syngne þat Salamon set sum-quyle,
In bytoknyng of trawþe, bi tyle þat hit hadde3,
For hit is a figure þat halde3 fyue poynte3, [Fol. 99b]

628 & vche lyne vmbe-lappe3 & louke3 in oper,
[C] & ay quere hit is endeles,[1] & Englych hit callen
Ouer-al, as I here, þe endeles knot.

For-þy hit acorde3 to þis kny3t, & to his cler arme3,
632 For ay faythful in fyue & sere fyue syþe3,

[D] Gawan wat3 for gode knawen, & as golde pured,
Voyded of vche vylany, wyth vertue3[2] ennourned
in mote;

636 For-þy þe pen-tangel nwe
He ber in schelde & cote,

[E] As tulk of tale most trwe,
& gentylest kny3t of lote.

[Sidenote A: Then they show him his shield with the “pentangle” of pure gold.]

[Sidenote B: The “pentangle” was devised by Solomon as a token of truth.] [Sidenote

C: It is called the endless knot] [Sidenote D: It well becomes the good Sir Gawayne,]

[Sidenote E: a knight the truest of speech and the fairest of form.] [Footnote 1: *Ms emdele3.*] [Footnote 2: *Ms verertue3*]

VII.

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

[B] & 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

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



þe fyrst[1] fyue þat I finde þat þe frek vsed,
652 Wat3 fraunchyse, & fela3schyp for-be[2] al þyng;
[D] 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 kny3t,
& vchone halched in oper, þat non ende hade,
& fyched vpon fyue poynte3, þat fayld neuer,
Ne samned neuer in no syde, ne sundred nouþ[er],
660 With-uten ende at any noke [a]i quere fynde,
Where-euer þe gomen bygan, or glod to an ende.
[E] Þer-fore on his schene schelde schapen wat3 þe knot,
þus alle wyth red golde vpon rede gowle3,
664 þat is þe pure pentaungel wyth þe peple called, [Fol. 100]
with lore.
Now grayþed is Gawan gay,
[F] & la3t his launce ry3t þore,
668 & gef hem alle goud day,
He wende for euer more.



Page 30

[Sidenote A: He was found faultless in his five wits.] [Sidenote B: His trust was in the five wounds.] [Sidenote C: The image of the Virgin was depicted upon his shield.] [Sidenote D: In cleanness and courtesy he was never found wanting.] [Sidenote E: therefore was the endless knot fastened on his shield.] [Sidenote F: Sir Gawayne seizes his lance and bids all “good day.”] [Footnote 1: *Ms* fyft.] [Footnote 2: for-bi (?).]

VIII.

[A] He sperred þe sted with þe spure³, & sprong on his way,
 So stif þat þe ston fyr stroke out þer-after;
 672 [B] Al þat se³ 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!
 676 [C] To fynde hys fere vpon folde, in fayth is not eþe;
 Warloker to haf wro³t had more wyt bene,
 & haf dy³t 3onder dere a duk to haue worþed;
 [D] A lowande leder of lede³ in londe hym wel seme³,
 680 & so had better haf ben þen britned to no³t,
 [E] 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!”
 684 [F] Wel much wat³ þe warme water þat waltered of y³en,
 When þat semly syre so³t fro þo wone³
 þat^[1] daye;
 He made non abode,
 688 Bot wy³tly went hys way,
 [G] Mony wylsum way he rode,
 Þe bok as I herde say.

[Sidenote A: He spurs his horse and goes on his way.] [Sidenote B: All that saw that seemly one mourned in their hearts.] [Sidenote C: They declared that his equal was not to be found upon earth.] [Sidenote D: It would have been better for him to have been a leader of
 men,]

[Sidenote E: than to die by the hands of “an elvish man.”] [Sidenote F: Much was the warm water that poured from eyes that day.] [Sidenote G: Meanwhile many a weary way goes Sir Gawayne.] [Footnote 1: *Ms*. þad.]

IX.

[A] Now ride³ þis renk þur³ þe ryalme of Logres,
 692 Sir Gauan on Gode³ halue, þa³ hym no gomen þo³t;
 Oft, leudle³ alone, he lenge³ on ny³te³,



þer he fonde no3t hym byfore þe fare þat he lyked;
[B] Hade he no fere bot his fole, bi frythe3 & doune3,
696 Ne no gome bot God, bi gate wyth to karp,
[C] Til þat he ne3ed ful noghe[1] in to þe Norþe Wale3;
Alle þe iles of Anglesay on lyft half he halde3,
& fare3 ouer þe forde3 by þe for-londe3,
700 [D] Ouer at þe Holy-Hede, til he hade eft bonk
In þe wyldrenesse of Wyrle; wonde þer bot lyte
[E] Þat auþer God oþer gome wyth goud hert louied. [Fol. 100b]
& ay he frayned, as he ferde, at freke3 þat he met,
704 [F] If þay hade herde any karp of a kny3t grene,
In any grounde þer-aboute, of þe grene chapel;[2]
& al nykked hym wyth nay, þat neuer in her lyue
[G] Þay se3e neuer no segge þat wat3 of suche hwe3
708 of grene.
þe kny3t tok gates straunge,
In mony a bonk vnbene,
[H] His cher ful oft con chaunge,
712 Þat chapel er he my3t sene.



Page 31

[Sidenote A: Now rides the knight through the realms of England.] [Sidenote B: He has no companion but his horse.] [Sidenote C: No men does he see till he approaches North Wales.] [Sidenote D: From Holyhead he passes into Wirral.] [Sidenote E: There he finds but few that loved God or man.] [Sidenote F: He enquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel,] [Sidenote G: but can gain no tidings of him.] [Sidenote H: His cheer oft changed before he found the Chapel.] [Footnote 1: nyghe (?).] [Footnote 2: *Ms. clapel.*]

X.

[A] Mony klyf he ouer-clambe in contraye³ straunge,
 Fer floten fro his frende³ fremedly he ryde³;
 [B] At vche warpe oper water þer þe wy^{3e} passed,
 716 He fonde a foo hym byfore, bot ferly hit were,
 & þat so foule & so felle, þat fe^{3t} hym by-hode;
 [C] So mony meruayl hi mount þer þe mon fynde³,
 Hit were to tore for to telle of þe tenþe dole.
 720 [D] Sumwhyle wyth worme³ he werre³, & with wolues als,
 Sumwhyle wyth wodwos, þat woned in þe knarre³,
 [E] Boþe wyth bulle³ & bere³, & bore³ oper-quyle,
 & etayne³, þat hym a-nelede, of þe he^{3e} felle;
 724 [F] Nade he ben du^{3ty} & dry^{3e}, & dry^{3tyn} had serued,
 Douteles he hade ben ded, & dreped ful ofte.
 [G] 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 my^{3t} to þe fale erþe;
 Ner slayn wyth þe slete he sleped in his yrnas,
 Mo ny^{3te} þen in-noghe in naked rokke³,
 Þer as claterande fro þe crest þe colde borne renne³,
 732 & hinged he^{3e} ouer his hede in hard ysse-ikkles.
 [H] Þus in peryl, & payne, & plytes ful harde,
 Bi contray carye³ þis kny^{3t}, tyl kryst-masse euen,
 al one;
 736 Þe kny^{3t} wel þat tyde,
 [I] To Mary made his mone.
 Þat ho hym red to ryde,
 & wysse hym to sum wone. [Fol. 101.]

[Sidenote A: Many a cliff he climbed over;] [Sidenote B: many a ford and stream he crossed, and everywhere he found a foe.]

[Sidenote C: It were too tedious to tell the tenth part of his adventures] [Sidenote D: with serpents, wolves, and wild men;] [Sidenote E: with bulls, bears, and boars.] [Sidenote F: Had he not been both brave and good, doubtless he had been



dead.]

[Sidenote G: The sharp winter was far worse than any war that ever troubled him.]

[Sidenote H: Thus in peril he travels till Christmas-eve.] [Sidenote I: To the Virgin Mary he prays to guide him to some abode.]

XI.

740 [A] Bi a mounthe on þe morne meryly he rydes,
Into a forest ful dep, þat ferly wat3 wylde,
Hi3e hille3 on vche a halue, & holt wode3 vnder,
[B] Of hore oke3 fill hoge a hundreth to-geder;
744 þe hasel & þe ha3-þorne were harled al samen,
With ro3e raged mosse rayled ay-where,
[C] With mony brydde3 vnblyþe vpon bare twyges,
þat pitosly þer piped for pyne of þe colde.



Page 32

748 þe gome vpon Gryngolet glyde3 hem vnder,
 [D] þur3 mony misy & myre, mon al hym one,
 Carande for his costes, lest he ne keuer schulde,
 To se þe seruy[1] of þat syre, þat on þat self ny3t
 752 Of a burde wat3 borne, oure baret to quelle;
 [E] & þefore 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,
 [F] He sayned hym in syþes sere,
 & sayde "cros Kryst me spede!"

[Sidenote A: On the morn Sir Gawayne finds himself in a deep forest.] [Sidenote B: where were old oaks many a hundred.] [Sidenote C: Many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold.] [Sidenote D: Through many a mire he goes, that he may celebrate the birth of Christ.]

[Sidenote E: He beseeches the Virgin Mary to direct him to some lodging where he may hear mass.]

[Sidenote F: Blessing himself, he says, "Cross of Christ, speed me!"] [Footnote 1: seruyce (?).]

XII.

[A] Nade he sayned hym-self, segge, bot þrye,
 764 Er he wat3 war in þe wod of a won in a mote.
 [B] Abof a launde, on a lawe, loken vnder bo3e3,
 Of mony borelych bole, aboute bi þe diches;
 [C] 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,
 772 [D] As hit schemered & schon þur3 þe schyre oke3;
 þenne hat3 he hendly of his helme, & he3ly he þonke3
 lesus & say[nt] Gilyan, þat gentyle ar boþe,



þat cortaysly hade hym kydde, & his cry herkened. [Fol. 101b.]
776 “Now bone hostel,” coþe þe burne, “I be-seche yow 3ette!”
þenne gedere3 he to Gryngolet with þe gilt hele3,
[E] & he ful chauncely hat3 chosen to þe chef gate,
þat bro3t bremly þe burne to þe bryge ende,
780 in haste;
[F] þe bryge wat3 breme vp-brayde,
þe 3ate3 wer stoken faste,
þe walle3 were wel arayed,
784 Hit dut no wynde3 blaste.

[Sidenote A: Scarcely had he blessed himself thrice] [Sidenote B: when he saw a dwelling in the wood, set on a hill,] [Sidenote C: the comeliest castle that knight ever owned.] [Sidenote D: It shone as the sun through the bright oaks.] [Sidenote E: Sir Gawayne goes to the chief gate,] [Sidenote F: and finds the draw-bridge raised, and the gates shut fast.]

XIII.

[A] 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,
788 [B] Ande eft a ful huge he3t hit haled vpon lofte,
Of harde hewen ston vp to þe table3,
[C] Enbaned vnder þe abataylment, in þe best lawe;
& syþen garyte3 ful gaye gered bi-twene,



Page 33

792 Wyth mony luflych loupe, þat louked ful clene;
 A better barbican þat burne blusched vpon neuer;
 & innermore he be-helde þat halle ful hy3e,
 [D] Towre telled bytwene trochet ful þik,
 796 Fayre flyyole3 þat fy3ed, & ferlyly long,
 [E] With coruon coprounes, craftyly sle3e;
 Chalk whyt chymnees þer ches he in-no3e,
 Vpon bastel roue3, þat blenked ful quyte;
 800 So mony pynakle payntet wat3 poudred ay quere,
 Among þe castel carnele3, clambred so þik,
 Þat pared out of papure purely hit semed.
 [F] þe fre freke on þe fole hit fayr in-n[o]ghe þo3t,
 804 If he my3t keuer to com þe cloyster wyth-inne,
 To herber in þat hostel, whyl halyday lested
 auinant;
 [G] He calde, & sone þer com
 808 A porter pure plesaunt,
 On þe wal his ernd he nome,
 & haylsed þe kny3t erraunt.

[Sidenote A: The knight abides on the bank,] [Sidenote B: and observes the “huge height,] [Sidenote C: with its battlements and watch towers.] [Sidenote D: Bright and long were its round towers,] [Sidenote E: with their well-made capitals.] [Sidenote F: He thinks it fair enough if he might only come within the cloister.]
 [Sidenote G: He calls, and soon there comes a porter to know the knight’s errand.]

XIV.

[A] “Gode sir,” quod Gawan, “wolde3 þou go myn ernde,
 812 To þe he3 lorde of þis hous, herber to craue?”
 “3e, Peter,” quod þe porter, “& purely I trowe,[1] [Fol. 102.]
 [B] 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;
 [C] Þay let down þe grete dra3t, & derely out 3eden,
 & kneled down on her knes vpon þe colde erþe,
 To welcum þis ilk wy3, as worþy hom þo3t;
 820 [D] Þay 3olden hym þe brode 3ate, 3arked vp wyde,



& he hem raysed rekenly, & rod ouer þe brygge;
Sere segge3 hym sesed by sadel, quel[2] he ly3t,
[E] & syþen stabeled his stede stif men in-no3e.
824 [F] Kny3te3 & swyere3 comen doun þenne,
For to bryng þis burne[3] wyth blys in-to halle;
[G] Quen he hef vp his helme, þer hi3ed in-noghe
For to hent hit at his honde, þe hende to seruen,
828 His bronde & his blasoun boþe þay token.
þen haylsed he ful hendly þo hapele3 vch one,
& mony proud mon þer presed, þat prynce to honour;
Alle hasped in his he3 wede to halle þay hym wonnen,
832 þer fayre fyre vpon flet fersly brenned.
[H] þenne þe lorde of þe lede loute3 fro his chambre,
For to mete wyth menske þe mon on þe flor;
He sayde, “3e ar welcum to welde as yow lyke3,
836 þat here is, al is yowre awen, to haue at yowre wylle
& welde.”
“Graunt mercy,” quod Gawayn,
“þer Kryst hit yow for-3elde,”
840 [I] As freke3 þat semed fayn,
Ayþer oþer in arme3 con felde.



Page 34

[Sidenote A: "Good sir," says Gawayne, "ask the high lord of this house to grant me a lodging."]

[Sidenote B: "You are welcome to dwell here as long as you like," replied the porter.]

[Sidenote C: The draw-bridge is let down,] [Sidenote D: and the gate is opened wide to receive him.] [Sidenote E: His horse is well stabled.] [Sidenote F: Knights and squires bring Gawayne into the hall.] [Sidenote G: Many a one hastens to take his helmet and sword.] [Sidenote H: The lord of the country bids him welcome,] [Sidenote I: and they embrace each other.] [Footnote 1: trowoe, *Ms.*] [Footnote 2: quyle (?) or quen (?).] [Footnote 3: buerne, *Ms.*]

XV.

[A] Gawayn gly3t on þe gome þat godly hym gret,

[B] & þu3t hit a bolde burne þat þe bur3 a3te,
844 A hoge hapel for þe none3, & of hyghe elde;[1]

[C] Brode bry3t wat3 his berde, & al beuer hwed,
Sturne stif on þe stryþþe on stal-worth schonke3,

[D] 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.

[E] Þe lorde hym charred to a chambre, & chefly cumaunde3[2] [Fol.]
To delyuer hym a leude, hym lo3ly to serue; [102b.]

852 & þere were boun at his bode burne3 in-no3e,

[F] þat bro3t hym to a bry3t boure, þer beddyng wat3 noble,
Of cortynes of clene sylk, wyth cler golde hemme3,

[G] & couertore3 ful curious, with comlych pane3,
856 Of bry3t blaunnier a-boue enbrawdred bisyde3,
Rudele3 rennande on rope3, red golde rynge3,

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

860 [I] Þer he wat3 dispoyled, wyth speche3 of myerþe,
þe burn of his bruny, & of his bry3t wede3;

[J] Ryche robes ful rad renkke3 hem[3] bro3ten,
For to charge, & to chaunge, & chose of þe best.

864 Sone as he on hent, & happed þer-inne,
þat sete on hym[4] semly, wyth saylande skyrte3,

[K] þe ver by his uisage verayly hit semed
Wel ne3 to vche hapel alle on hwes,

868 Lowande & lufly, alle his lymme3 vnder,

[L] þat a comloker kny3t neuer Kryst made,
hem þo3t;

Wheþen in worlde he were,

872 Hit semed as he my3t



Be prynce with-outen pere,
In felde þer felle men fy3t.

[Sidenote A: Gawayne looks on his host;] [Sidenote B: a big bold one he seemed.]
[Sidenote C: Beaver-hued was his broad beard,] [Sidenote D: and his face as "fell as
the fire."] [Sidenote E: The lord leads Gawayne to a chamber, and assigns him a page
to

wait upon him.]

[Sidenote F: In this bright bower was noble bedding;] [Sidenote G: the curtains were of
pure silk with golden hems;] [Sidenote H: Tarsic tapestries covered the walls and the
floor.] [Sidenote I: Here the knight doffed his armour,] [Sidenote J: and put on rich
robes,] [Sidenote K: which well became him.] [Sidenote L: A more comely knight Christ
never made.] [Footnote 1: eldee, Ms.] [Footnote 2: clesly, Ms.] [Footnote 3: hym (?).]
[Footnote 4: Ms. hyn.]



Page 35

XVI.

[A] A cheyer by-fore þe chemne, þer charcole brenned,
 876 Wat3 grayþed for sir Gawan, grayþely with cloþe3,
 Whyssynes vpon queldepoyntes, þa[t] koynt wer boþe;
 [B] & 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.
 884 [C] Sone wat3 telded vp a tapit, on treste3 ful fayre,
 [D] Clad wyth a clene cloþe, þat cler quyt schewed,
 Sanap, & salure, & syluer-in spone3;
 Þe wy3e wesche at his wylle, & went to his mete [Fol. 103.]
 888 Segge3 hym serued semly in-no3e,
 [E] Wyth sere sewes & sete,[2] sesounde of þe best,
 Double felde, as hit falle3, & fele kyn fische3;
 [F] Summe baken in bred, summe brad on þe glede3,
 892 [G] Summe sopen, summe in sewe, sauered with spyces,
 & ay sawes[3] so sle3e3, þat þe segge lyked.
 Þe freke calde hit a fest ful frely & ofte,
 [H] Ful hendely, quen alle þe hapeles re-hayted hym at one3
 896 as hende;
 "Þis penaunce now 3e take,
 & eft hit schal amende;"
 [I] Þat mon much merþe con make.
 900 For wyn in his hed þat wende.

[Sidenote A: A chair is placed for Sir Gawayne before the fireplace.] [Sidenote B: A mantle of fine linen, richly embroidered, is thrown over him.]

[Sidenote C: A table is soon raised,] [Sidenote D: and the knight, having washed, proceeded to meat.] [Sidenote E: He is served with numerous dishes;] [Sidenote F: with fish baked and broiled,] [Sidenote G: or boiled and seasoned with spices.] [Sidenote H: He calls it a full noble feast,] [Sidenote I: and much mirth he makes, for the wine is in his head.] [Footnote 1: Ms. cefly.] [Footnote 2: swete (?).] [Footnote 3: sewes (?).]

XVII.

[A] 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,



904 [B] 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 lympeð.
908 [C] When þe lorde hade lerned þat he þe leude hade,
Loude la3ed he þerat, so lef hit hym þo3t,
[D] & 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.
[E] Vch segge ful softly sayde to his fere,
916 [F] “Now schal we semlych se sle3te3 of þewe3,
& þe teccheles termes of talkyng noble,
Wich speðe is in speche, vnspurd may we lerne,
[G] Syn we haf fonged þat fyne fader of nurture;
920 God hat3 geuen vus his grace godly for soþe,



Page 36

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,
þis burne now schal vus bryng, [Fol. 103b.]
[H] I hope þat may hym here,
Schal lerne of luf-talkyng.”

[Sidenote A: Sir Gawayne, in answer to questions put to him,] [Sidenote B: tells the prince that he is of Arthur’s court.] [Sidenote C: When this was made known,] [Sidenote D: great was the joy in the hall.] [Sidenote E: Each one said softly to his mate,] [Sidenote F: “Now we shall see courteous manners and hear noble speech,] [Sidenote G: for we have amongst us the ‘father of nurture.’] [Sidenote H: He that may him hear shall learn of love-talking.”]

XVIII.

928 [A] Bi þat þe diner wat³ done, & þe dere vp,
Hit wat³ ne³ at þe niy³t ne³ed þe tyme;
Chaplayne³[1] to þe chapeles chosen þe gate,
Rungen ful rychely, ry³t as þay schulden,
932 [B] 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,
& couþly hym knowe³, & calle³ hym his nome,
& sayde he wat³ þe welcomest wy³e of þe worlde;
[C] & he hym þonkked þroly, & ayþer halched oper.
940 & seten soberly samen þe seruise-quyle;
þenne lyst þe lady to loke on þe kny³t.
[D] 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,
[E] & wener þen Wenore, as þe wy³e þo³t.
He ches þur³ þe chaunsel, to cheryche þat hende;
[F] An oper lady hir lad bi þe lyft honde,
948 þat wat³ alder þen ho, an auncian hit semed,
& he³ly honowred with hapele³ aboute.
[G] Bot yn-lyke on to loke þo ladyes were,



[H] For if þe 3onge wat3 3ep, 3ol3e wat3 þat oþer;
952 Riche red on þat on rayled ay quere,
[I] Rugh ronkled cheke3 þat oþer on rolled;
Kerhofes of þat on wyth mony cler perle3
[J] Hir brest & hir bry3t þrote bare displayed,
956 Schon schyrer þen snawe, þat scheduler[2] on hille3;
þat oþer wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre,
Chymbled ouer hir blake chyn with mylk-quyte vayles,
[K] Hir frount folden in sylk, enfoubled ay quere,
960 Toret & treieted with tryfle3 aboute,
[L] þat no3t wat3 bare of þat burde bot þe blake bro3es. [Fol. 104.]
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;
[M] Hir body wat3 schort & þik.
[N] Hir buttoke3 bay & brode,
968 More lykker-wys on to lyk,
Wat3 þat scho hade on lode.



Page 37

[Sidenote A: After dinner the company go to the chapel,] [Sidenote B: to hear the evensong of the great season.] [Sidenote C: The lord of the castle and Sir Gawayne sit together during service.]

[Sidenote D: His wife, accompanied by her maids, leaves her seat.] [Sidenote E: She appeared even fairer than Guenever.] [Sidenote F: An older lady (an ancient one she seemed) led her by the hand.]

[Sidenote G: Very unlike were these two.] [Sidenote H: if the young one was fair the other was yellow,] [Sidenote I: and had rough and wrinkled cheeks.] [Sidenote J: The younger had breast and throat "bare displayed."] [Sidenote K: The ancient one exposed only her "black brows," her two eyes,] [Sidenote L: nose, and naked lips, all sour and bleared.] [Sidenote M: Her body was short and thick,] [Sidenote N: her buttocks broad and round.] [Footnote 1: Ms. [claplayne3.]] [Footnote 2: schedes (?).]

XIX.

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

972 [B] Þe alder he haylses, heldande ful lowe,
þe loueloker he lappe3 a lyttel in arme3,

[C] He kysses hir comlyly, & kny3tly he mele3;

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

976 [D] To be her seruaunt sothly, if hem-self lyked.

þay tan hym bytwene hem, wyth talkyng hym leden

[E] To chambre, to chemne, & chefly þay asken

[F] Spyce3, þat vn-sparely men speded hom to bryng,

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

þe lorde luflych aloft lepe3 ful ofte,

Mynned merthe to be made vpon mony sybe3.

[G] Hent he3ly of his hode, & on a spere hinged,

984 & wayned hom to wyne þe worchip þer-of,

[H] Þat most myrþe my3t mene[1] 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 tayt[2] make3,

[I] For to glade sir Gawayn with gomne3 in halle

þat ny3t;

Til þat hit wat3 tyme,

992 þe kyng comaundet ly3t,

[J] Sir Gawen his leue con nyme,

& to his bed hym di3t.



[Sidenote A: With permission of the lord,] [Sidenote B: Sir Gawayne salutes the elder,]
[Sidenote C: but the younger he kisses,] [Sidenote D: and begs to be her servant.]
[Sidenote E: To chamber all go,] [Sidenote F: where spices and wine are served.]
[Sidenote G: The lord takes off his hood and places it on a spear.] [Sidenote H: He who
makes most mirth is to win it.] [Sidenote I: Night approaches, and then] [Sidenote J: Sir
Gawayne takes his leave and retires to rest.] [Footnote 1: meue (?).] [Footnote 2: layt
(?).]

XX.

[A] On þe morne, as vch mon myne3 þat tyme,
996 [B] [P]at dry3tyn for oure destyne to de3e wat3 borne,
Wele waxe3 in vche a won in worlde, for his sake;
[C] So did hit þere on þat day, þur3 dayntes mony;
Boþe at mes & at mele, messes ful quaynt



Page 38

[Fol. 104b.]

1000 Derf men vpon dece drest of þe best.

[D] Þe olde auncian wyf he3est ho sytte3;

þe lorde lufly her by lent, as I trowe;

[E] 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,

[F] Bi vche grome at his degre grayþely wat3 serued.

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

1008 Þat for to telle þerof hit me tene were,

& to poynte hit 3et I pyned me parauenture;

[G] 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;

1016 [H] Trumpe3 & nakerys,

Much pypyng þer repayres,

Vche mon tented hys,

& þay two tented þayres.

[Sidenote A: On Christmas morn,] [Sidenote B: joy reigns in every dwelling in the world.] [Sidenote C: So did it in the castle where our knight abode.] [Sidenote D: The lord and "the old ancient wife" sit together.] [Sidenote E: Gawayne sits by the wife of his host.] [Sidenote F: It were too tedious to tell of the meat, the mirth, and the joy that abounded everywhere.]

[Sidenote G: Gawayne and his beautiful companion derive much comfort from each other's conversation.]

[Sidenote H: Trumpets and nakers give forth their sounds.]

XXI.

1020 [A] Much dut wat3 þer dryuen þat day & þat oper,
& þe þryd as þro þronge in þerafter;

[B] 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;

[C] 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] chymne bysyde,
[D] & þere he dra3e3 hym on-dry3e, & derely hym þonkke3,
1032 Of þe wynne worschip &[1] he hym wayned hade,
As to honour his hous on þat hy3e tyde,
& enbelyse his bur3 with his bele chere.
“I-wysse sir, quyl I leue, me worþe3 þe better,
1036 þat Gawayn hat3 ben my gest, at Godde3 awen fest.” [Fol. 105.]
“Grant merci[2] 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.”
[E] þe lorde fast can hym payne,
To holde lenger þe kny3t,
1044 To hym answe3 Gawayn,
Bi non way þat he my3t.



Page 39

[Sidenote A: Great was the joy for three days.] [Sidenote B: St. John's-day was the last of the Christmas festival.] [Sidenote C: On the morrow many of the guests took their departure from the castle.]

[Sidenote D: Sir Gawayne is thanked by his host for the honour and pleasure of his visit.]

[Sidenote E: He endeavours to keep the knight at his court.] [Footnote 1: þat (?).]

[Footnote 2: merci, in Ms.]

XXII.

[A] Then frayned þe freke ful fayre at him-seluen,
 Quat derne[1] dede had hym dryuen, at þat dere tyme,
 1048 So kenly fro þe kynge³ kourt to kayre al his one,
 Er þe halidaye³ holly were halet out of toun?

[B] "For soþe sir," quod þe segge, "3e sayn bot þe trawþe
 A he^{3e} ernde & a hasty me hade fro þo wone³,
 1052 For I am sumned my selfe to sech to a place,
 I wot[2] in worlde wheder warde to wende, hit to fynde;
 I nolde, bot if I hit negh my^{3t} on nw^{3eres} morne,
 For alle þe londe in-wyth Logres, so me oure lorde help!

1056 For-þy, sir, þis enquest I require yow here,
 [C] Þat 3e me telle with trawþe, if euer 3e tale herde
 Of þe grene chapel, quere hit on grounde stonde³,
 & of þe kny^{3t} þat hit kepes, of colour of grene?

1060 Þer wat³ stabled bi statut a steuen vus by-twene,
 [D] To mete þat mon at þat mere, 3if I my^{3t} last;
 & of þat ilk nw^{3ere} hot naked now wonte³,
 & I wolde loke on þat lede, if God me let wolde,

1064 Gladloker, bi Godde³ sun, þen any god welde!
 For-þi, I-wysse, bi 3owre wylle, wende me bi-houes,

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

1068 [F] 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,
 & cum to þat merk at mydmorn, to make quat yow like³ [Fol. 105b]
 in spenne;

Dowelle³ whyle new 3eres daye,
 1076 & rys, & rayke³ þenne,

[G] Mon schal yow sette in waye,
 Hit is not two myle henne."



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

[Sidenote B: The knight replies that "a high errand and a hasty one" had forced him to leave the court.]

[Sidenote C: He asks his host whether he has ever heard of the Green Chapel,]

[Sidenote D: for he has to be there on New Year's-day.] [Sidenote E: He would as lief die as fail in his errand.] [Sidenote F: The prince tells Sir Gawayne that he will teach him the way.] [Sidenote G: The Green chapel is not more than two miles from the castle.] [Footnote 1: derue (?).] [Footnote 2: not (?).]

XXIII.



Page 40

[A] Þenne wat3 Gawan ful glad, & gomenly he la3ed,—
1080 “Now I þonk yow þryuandely þur3 alle oper þynge,

[B] Now acheued is my chaunce, I schal at your wylle
Dowelle, & elle3 do quat 3e demen.”

Þenne sesed hym þe syre, & set hym bysyde,

1084 [C] Let þe ladie3 be fette, to lyke hem þe better;

Þer wat3 seme solace by hem-self stille;

Þe lorde let for luf lote3 so myry,

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

1088 Þenne he carped to þe kny3t, criande loude,

[D] “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 “Why! I byde in yowre bor3e, be bayn to 3ow[r]e hest.”

“For 3e haf trauayled,” quod þe tulk, “town fro ferre,

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

[E] Nauþer of sostnaunce ne of slepe, soþly I knowe;

1096 3e schal lenge in your lofte, & ly3e in your ese,

[F] 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.”

[G] Gauayn grante3 alle þyse,

1104 Hym heldande, as þe hende.

[Sidenote A: Then was Gawayne glad.] [Sidenote B: and consents to tarry awhile at the castle.] [Sidenote C: The ladies are brought in to solace him.] [Sidenote D: The lord of the castle asks the knight to grant him one request;]

[Sidenote E: That he will stay in his chamber during mass time,] [Sidenote F: and then go to meat with his hostess.] [Sidenote G: Gawayne accedes to his request.]

XXIV.

[A] “3et firre,” quod þe freke, “a forwarde we make;

Quat-so-euer I wyne in þe wod, hit worþe3 to youre3,

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

1108 Swete, swap we so, sware with trawþe,

Queþer, leude, so lymþ lere oper better.”

“Bi God,” quod Gawayn þe gode, “I grant þer-tylle,

& þat yow lyst forto layke, lef hit me þynkes. [Fol. 106.]

1112 [C] “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, & stylly speken,
Kysten ful comlyly, & ka3ten her leue.
[D] 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.

[Sidenote A: "Whatsoever," says the host, "I win in the wood shall be yours,]

[Sidenote B: and what check you achieve shall be mine."] [Sidenote C: A bargain is made between them.] [Sidenote D: Night approaches and each "to his bed was brought at the last."]

[Footnote 1: vntyl ny3te (?).] [Footnote 2: lede (?).]



Page 41

[FYTTE *the third.*]

I.

[A] Ful erly bifore þe day þe folk vp-rysen,
 Gestes þat go wolde, hor grome3 þay calden,
 1128 [B] & 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,
 1132 [C] Vche wy3e on his way, þer hym wel lyked.
 [D] Þe leue lorde of þe londe wat3 not þe last,
 A-rayed for þe rydyng, with renkke3 ful mony;
 [E] Ete a sop hastyly, when he hade herde masse,
 1136 With bugle to bent felde he buske3 by-lyue;
 [F] By þat þat any day-ly3t lemed vpon erþe,
 He with his hapeles on hy3e horsse3 weren.
 [G] Þenne þise cacheres þat coupe, cowpled hor hounde3,
 1140 Vnclosed þe kenel dore, & calde hem þer-oute,
 [H] Blwe bygly in bugle3 þre bare mote;
 Braches bayed þefore, & breme noyse maked,
 [I] & þay chastysed, & charred, on chasyng þat went;
 1144 A hundreth of hunteres, as I haf herde telle,
 of þe best;
 [J] To trystors vewters 3od,
 Couples huntet of kest,
 1148 Þer ros for blaste3 gode, [Fol. 106b.]
 [K] Gret rurd in þat forest.

[Sidenote A: Before day-break folks uprise.] [Sidenote B: saddle their horses, and truss their mails.] [Sidenote C: Each goes where it pleases him best.] [Sidenote D: The noble lord of the land arrays himself for riding.] [Sidenote E: He eats a sop hastily and goes to mass.] [Sidenote F: Before day-light he and his men are on their horses.] [Sidenote G: Then the hounds are called out and coupled.] [Sidenote H: Three short notes are blown by the bugles.] [Sidenote I: A hundred hunters join in the chase.] [Sidenote J: To the stations the "fewters" go,] [Sidenote K: and the dogs are cast off.]

II.

[A] At þe fyrst quethe of þe quest quaked þe wylde;
 Der drof in þe dale, doted for drede,
 1152 Hi3ed to þe hy3e, bot heterly þay were
 [B] Restayed with þe stablye, þat stoutly ascryed;
 [C] 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 mene^[1] to þe male dere.
[D] þe hinde³ were halden in, with hay & war,
þe does dryuen with gret dyn to þe depe slade³;
1160 þer my³t mon se, as þay slypte, slentyng of arwes,
[E] At vche [þat] wende vnder wande wapped a flone,
þat bigly bote on þe broun, with ful brode hede³,
[F] What! þay brayen, & bleden, bi bonkke³ þay de³en.
1164 & ay rachches in a res radly hem fol³es,
Huntere³ wyth hy³e horne hasted hem after,
[G] 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 watre³,
þe lede³ were so lerned at þe lo³e trysters,



Page 42

& þe gre-hounde3 so grete, þat geten hem bylyue,
1172 & hem to fylched, as fast as freke3 my3t loke,
þer ry3t.

[H] Þe lorde for blys abloy
Ful oft con launce & ly3t,
1176 [I] & drof þat day wyth loy
Thus to þe derk ny3t.

[Sidenote A: Roused by the clamour the deer rush to the heights,] [Sidenote B: but are soon driven back.] [Sidenote C: The harts and bucks are allowed to pass,] [Sidenote D: but the hinds and does are driven back to the shades.] [Sidenote E: As they fly they are shot by the bowmen.] [Sidenote F: The hounds and the hunters, with a loud cry, follow in pursuit.]

[Sidenote G: Those that escaped the arrows are killed by the hounds.] [Sidenote H: The lord waxes joyful in the chase,] [Sidenote I: which lasted till the approach of night.] [Footnote 1: meue (?).]

III.

[A] Þus layke3 þis lorde by lynde wode3 eue3,
& G. þe god mon, in gay bed lyge3,
1180 [B] Lurkke3 quyl þe day-ly3t lemed on þe wowes,
Vnder couertour ful clere, cortyned aboute;
& as in slomeryng he slode, sle3ly he herde
[C] A littel dyn at his dor, & derfly vpon;
1184 & he heue3 vp his hed out of þe clopes,
A corner of þe cortyn he ca3t vp a lyttel, [Fol. 107.]
& wayte3 warly þider-warde, quat hit be my3t.
[D] Hit wat3 þe ladi, loflyest to be-holde,
1188 Þat dro3 þe dor after hir ful dernly[1] & stulle,
[E] & bo3ed to-warde þe bed; & þe burne schamed.
& layde hym doun lystyly, & let as he slepte.
[F] & ho stepped stilly. & stel to his bedde,
1192 [G] 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,
1196 [H] 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."
1200 [I] þen he wakenede, & wroth, & to hir warde torned,
[J] & 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.

[Sidenote A: All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.] [Sidenote B: under "coverture full clear".] [Sidenote C: He hears a noise at his door.] [Sidenote D: A lady, the loveliest to behold, enters softly.] [Sidenote E: She approaches the bed.] [Sidenote F: Gawayne pretends to be asleep.] [Sidenote G: The lady casts up the curtain and sits on the bedside.] [Sidenote H: Gawayne has much wonder thereat.] [Sidenote I: He rouses himself up,] [Sidenote J: unlocks his eyes, and looks as if he were astonished.] [Footnote 1: deruly (?).]

IV.



Page 43

1208 [A] "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,
 [B] I schal bynde yow in your bedde, þat be 3e trayst:"
 1212 Al la3ande þe lady lanced þo bourde3.
 [C] "Goud moroun g[aye],"[1] quod Gawayn þe blype,
 "Me schal worþe at your wille, & þat me wel lyke3,
 For I 3elde me 3ederly, & 3e3e after grace,
 1216 & þat is þe best, be my dome, for me by-houe3 nede;"
 & þus he bourded a-3ayn with mony a blype la3ter.
 [D] "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."
 [E] "Nay, for soþe, beau sir," sayd þat swete, [Fol. 107b]
 "3e schal not rise of your bedde, I rych yow better,
 1224 [F] I schal happe yow here þat oþer half als,
 & syþen karp wyth my kny3t þat I ka3t haue;
 [G] For I wene wel, Iwysse, sir Wawen 3e are,
 þat alle þe worlde worchipe3, quere-so 3e ride;
 1228 Your honour, your hendelayk is hendely prayed
 [H] With lorde3, wyth ladyes, with alle þat lyf bere.
 & now 3e ar here, iwysse, & we bot oure one;
 [I] "My lorde & his lede3 ar on lenþe faren,
 1232 [J] Oþer burne3 in her bedde, & my burde3 als,
 [K] Þe dor drawen, & dit with a derf haspe;
 [L] & syþen I haue in þis hous hym þat al lyke3,
 I schal ware my whyle wel, quyl hit laste3,
 1236 with tale;
 [M] 3e ar welcum to my cors,
 Yowre awen won to wale,
 Me be-houe3 of fyne force,
 1240 [N] Your seruaunt be & schale."

[Sidenote A: "Good morrow", says the lady, "ye are a careless sleeper to let one enter thus.]

[Sidenote B: I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure."] [Sidenote C: "Good morrow," says the knight, "I am well pleased to be at your service;]

[Sidenote D: but permit me to rise and dress myself."] [Sidenote E: "Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one,] [Sidenote F: "I shall hold talk with you here.] [Sidenote G: I know well that you are Gawayne that all the world worships.] [Sidenote H: We are by ourselves;] [Sidenote I: My lord and his men are far off.] [Sidenote J: Other men are in



their beds, so are my maidens.] [Sidenote K: The door is safely closed.] [Sidenote L: Since I have him in house that every one likes, I shall use my time well while it lasts.]

[Sidenote M: Ye are welcome to my body.] [Sidenote N: I shall be your servant.”]

[Footnote 1: This word is illegible in the *Ms.*]

V.



Page 44

“In god fayth,” quod Gawayn, “gayn hit me þynkke3,
 [A] 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,
 [B] At sa3e oþer at seruyce þat I sette my3t
 To þe plesauce 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 daynte;
 [C] 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 daynte worde3,
 Keuer hem comfort, & colen her care3,
 [D] Þen much of þe garysourn oþer golde þat[1] þay hauen;
 1256 Bot I louue[2] 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,
 1260 Þat wat3 so fayr of face, [Fol. 108.]
 [E] Þe kny3t with speches skere,
 A[n]swared to vche a cace.

[Sidenote A: “I am unworthy,” says Sir Gawayne, “to reach to such reverence as ye rehearse.]

[Sidenote B: I shall be glad, however, to please you by word, or service.”] [Sidenote C: “There are ladies,” says his visitor, “who would prefer thy company]

[Sidenote D: to much of the gold that they possess.”] [Sidenote E: The knight answers the lady’s questions.] [Footnote 1: *Ms.* þat þat.] [Footnote 2: louie or loune (?).]

VI.

[A] “Madame,” quod þe myry mon, “Mary yow 3elde,
 1264 For I haf founden, in god fayth, yowre fraunchis nobele,
 & oþer ful much of oþer folk fongen hor dede3;
 Bot þe daynte þat þay delen for my disert nysen,
 Hit is þe worchyp of your-self, þat no3t hot wel conne3.”
 1268 [B] “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,
 [C] & I schulde chepen & chose, to cheue me a lorde,
 1272 For þe costes þat I haf knowen vpun þe kny3t here,
 Of bewte, & debonerte, & blyþe semblaunt,



[D] & 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,
[E] 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, a[1] hym loued mych;
[F] 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 schulde[2] hym deue,
& nede3 hit most be done;
1288 [G] Þe lady þenn spek of leue.
He granted hir ful sone.



Page 45

[Sidenote A: Gawayne tells her that he prefers her conversation before that of all others.]

[Sidenote B: The lady declares by Mary,] [Sidenote C: that were she about to choose her a lord,] [Sidenote D: she would select Gawayne before any man on earth.]

[Sidenote E: Gawayne tells her that he will become her own knight and faithful servant.]

[Sidenote F: The remembrance of his adventure prevents him from thinking of love.]

[Sidenote G: The lady takes leave of Sir Gawayne.] [Footnote 1: and (?)] [Footnote 2: sclulde, in Ms.]

VII.

[A] Þenne ho gef hym god-day, & wyth a glent la3ed.

& as ho stod, ho stonyed hym wyth ful stor worde3:

1292 [B] “Now he þat spede3 vche spech, þis disport 3elde yow!

Bot þat 3e be Gawan, hit got3 in mynde.”

“Quer-fore?” quod þe freke, & freschly he aske3,

Ferde lest he hade fayled in fourme of his castes;

1296 Bot þe burde hym blessed, & bi þis skyl sayde,

“So god as Gawayn gaynly is halden, [Fol. 108b.]

& cortaysye is closed so clene in hym-seluen,

[C] 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.”

[D] Þen quod Wowen, “I-wysse, worpe as yow lyke3,

I schal kysse at your comaundement, as a kny3t falle3,

1304 & fire[1] lest he displese yow, so[2] plede hit no more.”

[E] Ho comes nerre with þat, & cache3 hym in arme3,

Loute3 luflych adoun, & þe leude kysse3;

þay comly bykennen to Kryst ayþer oþer;

1308 Ho dos hir forth at þe dore, with-uten dyn more.

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

[F] Clepes to his chamberlayn, choses his wede,

Bo3e3 forth, quen he wat3 boun, blyþely to masse,

1312 & þenne he meued to his mete, þat menskly hym keped,

[G] & made myry al day til þe mone rysed,

with game;

With[3] neuer freke fayrer fonge,

1316 [H] Bitwene two so dyngne dame,

þe alder & þe 3onge,

Much solace set þay same.



[Sidenote A: With a laughing glance, she says,] [Sidenote B: “I am doubtful whether ye be Gawayne.] [Sidenote C: Were it he, surely, ere this, he would have craved a kiss.”] [Sidenote D: “I shall kiss,” says the knight, “at your commandment.”] [Sidenote E: With that the lady catches him in her arms and kisses him.] [Sidenote F: Gawayne then rises and goes to mass.] [Sidenote G: He makes mirth all day till the moon rises,] [Sidenote H: between the “two dames,” the older and the younger.] [Footnote 1: fere (?).] [Footnote 2: fo, in *Ms.*] [Footnote 3: Was (?) Nas (?).]

VIII.

[A] And ay þe lorde of þe londe is lent on his gamne³,
1320 To hunt in holte³ & heþe, at hynde³ barayne,
Such a sowme he þer slowe bi þat þe sunne heldet,
Of dos & of oper dere, to deme were wonder.
þenne fersly þay flokked in folk at þe laste,
1324 [B] & quykly of þe quelled dere a querre þay



Page 46

maked;

þe best bo3ed þerto, with burne3 in-noghe,

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

1328 [D] Serched hem at þe asay, summe þat þer were,
Two fyngeres þay fonde of þe fowlest of alle;

[E] Syþen þay slyt þe slot, sesed þe erber,

[F] Schauded wyth a scharp knyf, & þe schyre knitten;

1332 Syþen rytte þay þe foure lymmes, & rent of þe hyde,

[G] Þen brek þay þe bale, þe bale3 out token,

[H] Lystily forlancyng, & bere of þe knot; [Fol. 109.]

þay gryped to þe gargulun, & grayþely departed

1336 [I] Þe wesaunt fro þe wynt-hole, & walt out þe gutte3;

þen scher þay out þe schuldere3 with her scharp knyue3,

[J] 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,

[K] Ryue3 hit vp radly, ry3t to þe by3t,

Voyde3 out þe a-vanters, & verayly þerafter

Alle þe ryme3 by þe rybbe3 radly þay lance;

1344 So ryde þay of by resoun bi þe rygge bone3,

Euenden to þe haunche, þat 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;

[L] Bi þe by3t al of þe þy3es,

þe lappe3 þay lance bi-hynde,

[M] To hewe hit in two þay hy3es,

1352 Bi þe bak-bon to vnbynde.

[Sidenote A: Meanwhile the lord of the land and his men hunt in woods and heaths.]

[Sidenote B: Quickly of the killed a “quarry” they make.] [Sidenote C: Then they set about breaking the deer.] [Sidenote D: They take away the assay or fat.] [Sidenote E: then they slit the slot and remove the erber.] [Sidenote F: They afterwards rip the four limbs and rend off the hide.] [Sidenote G: They next open the belly] [Sidenote H: and take out the bowels.] [Sidenote I: They then separate the weasand from the windhole and throw out the guts.]

[Sidenote J: The shoulders are cut out, and the breast divided into halves.]



[Sidenote K: The numbles are next removed.] [Sidenote L: By the fork of the thighs,]
[Sidenote M: the flaps are hewn in two by the backbone.]

IX.

[A] 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,
1360 [B] Wyth þe lyuer & þe ly3te3, þe leþer of þe paunche3,
& bred baped in blod, blende þer amonge3;
Baldely þay blw prys, bayed þayr rachche3,
[C] 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,
[D] When Gawayn wyth hym mette,
þer wat3 bot wele at wylle.



Page 47

[Sidenote A: After this the head and neck are cut off, and the sides severed from the chine.]

[Sidenote B: With the liver, lights and paunches, they feed the hounds.] [Sidenote C: Then they make for home.] [Sidenote D: Gawayne goes out to meet his host.]

[Footnote 1: grene (?).]

X.

1372 [A] Thenne comaunded þe lorde in þat sale to samen alle þe meny,[Fol.]
Boþe þe ladyes on loghe to ly3t with her burdes, [109b.]

[B] Bi-fore alle þe folk on þe flette, freke3 he bedde3
Verayly his venysoun to fech hym byforne;

1376 [C] & 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.

[D] "How paye3 yow þis play? haf I prys wonnen?"

1380 Haue I þryuandely þonk þur3 my craft serued?"
"3e I-wysse," quod þat oþer wy3e, "here is wayth fayrest

[E] þat I se3 þis seuen 3ere in sesoun of wynter."

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

1384 "For by a-corde of couenaunt 3e craue hit as your awen."

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

&[1] I haf worthyly þis wone3 wyth-inne,

[F] I-wysse with as god wylle hit worþe3 to 3oure3."

1388 He hasppe3 his fayre hals his arme3 wyth-inne,

& kysses hym as comlyly as he[2] coupe awyse:

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

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

1392 "Hit is god," quod þe god mon, "grant mercy þerfore,

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

Where 3e wan þis ilk wele, biwytte of hor[3] seluen?"

[H] "Þat wat3 not forward," quod he, "frayst me no more,

1396 For 3e haftan þat yow tyde3, trawe3e non oþer
3e mowe."

Þay la3ed, & made hem blyþe,

[I] Wyth lote3 þat were to lowe,

1400 To soper þay 3ede asswype,

Wyth dayntes nwe in-nowe.

[Sidenote A: The lord commands all his household to assemble,] [Sidenote B: and the venison to be brought before him.] [Sidenote C: He calls Gawayne,] [Sidenote D: and asks him whether he does not deserve much praise for his success in the chase.]

[Sidenote E: On the knight expressing himself satisfied, he is told to take



the whole according to a former agreement between them.]
[Sidenote F: Gawayne gives the knight a comely kiss in return.] [Sidenote G: His host desires to know where he has gotten such weal.] [Sidenote H: As this does not enter into the covenant, he gets no answer to his question.]
[Sidenote I: They then proceed to supper, where were dainties new and enough.]
[Footnote 1: And = an.] [Footnote 2: ho, in *Ms.*] [Footnote 3: your (?).]

XI.



Page 48

[A] And syþen by þe chymne in chamber þay seten.
 [B] Wy3e3 þe walle wyn we3ed to hem oft,
 1404 & efte in her bourdyng þay bayþen in þe morn,
 To fylle þe same forwarde3 þat þay by-fore maden,
 [C] 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;
 Þe beuerage wat3 bro3t forth in bourde at þat tyme; [Fol. 110.]
 [D] Þenne þay louelych le3ten leue at þe last,
 Vche burne to his bedde busked bylyue.
 1412 [E] Bi þat þe coke hade crowe3[1] & cakled bot þryse,
 Þe lorde wat3 lopen of his bedde, [&] þe leude3 vch one,
 So þat þe mete & þe masse wat3 metely delyuered;
 Þe douthe dressed to þe wod, er any day sprenged,
 1416 to chace;
 [F] He3 with hunte & horne3,
 Þur3 playne3 þay passe in space,
 Vn-coupled among þo þorne3,
 1420 Rache3 þat ran on race.

[Sidenote A: By the hearth they sit.] [Sidenote B: Wine is carried round.] [Sidenote C: Again Sir Gawayne and his host renew their agreement.] [Sidenote D: Then they take leave of each other and hasten to bed.] [Sidenote E: Scarce had the cock cackled thrice when the lord was up.] [Sidenote F: With his hunters and horns they pursue the chase.] [Footnote 1: crowed (?).]

XII.

[A] Sone þay calle of a quest in aker syde,
 Þe hunt re-hayted þe hounde3, þat hit fyrst mynged,
 [B] Wylde worde3 hym warp wyth a wrast noyce;
 1424 Þe hownde3 þat hit herde, hastid þider swyþe,
 & fellen as fast to þe fuyt, forty at ones;
 Þenne such a glauerande glam of gedered rachche3
 Ros, þat þe rochere3 rungen aboute;
 1428 Hunttere3 hem hardened with horne & wyth muthe.
 [C] Þen al in a semble 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;
 [D] Þay vmbe-kesten þe knarre & þe knot boþe.
 Wy3e3, whyl þay wysten wel wyt inne hem hit were,
 1436 Þe best þat þer breued wat3 wyth þe blod hounde3.



[E] Penne þay beten on þe buske3, & bede hym vp ryse,
& he vnsoundly out so3t segge3 ouer-þwert,
[F] On þe sellokest swyn swenged out þere,
1440 Long sythen for[1] þe sounder þat wi3t for-olde,
For he wat3 b[este &] bor alper grattest,
[And eue]re quen he gronyed, þenne greued mony,
[G] For [þre a]t þe fyrst þrast he þry3t to þe erþe,
1444 & [sped hym] forth good sped, boutte spyt more,
[Ande þay] halowed hyghe ful hy3e & hay! hay! cryed
Haden horne3 to mouþe heterly rechated; [Fol. 110b.]
[H] Mony wat3 þe myry mouthe of men & of hounde3,
1448 Þat buskke3 after þis bor, with bost & wyth noyse,
To quelle;
Ful oft he byde3 þe baye,
& mayme3 þe mute Inn-melle,
1452 [I] He hurte3 of þe hounde3, & þay
Ful 3omerly 3aule & 3elle.



Page 49

[Sidenote A: The hunters cheer on the hounds,] [Sidenote B: which fall to the scent forty at once.] [Sidenote C: All come together by the side of a cliff.] [Sidenote D: They look about on all sides,] [Sidenote E: and beat on the bushes.] [Sidenote F: Out there rushes a fierce wild boar,] [Sidenote G: At the first thrust he fells three to the ground.] [Sidenote H: Full quickly the hunters pursue him.] [Sidenote I: However, he attacks the hounds, causing them to yowl and yell.]

[Footnote 1: fro (?).]

XIII.

[A] Schalke3 to schote at hym schowen to þenne,
 Haled to hym of her arewe3, hitten hym oft;
 1456 Bot þe poynte3 payred at þe pyth þat py3t in his schelde3,
 & þe barbe3 of his browe bite non wolde,
 [B] Þa3 þe schauen schaft schyndered in pece3,
 þe hede hypped a3ayn, were-so-euer hit hitte;
 1460 [C] Bot quon þe dynte3 hym dered of her dry3e stroke3,
 Þen, brayn-wod for bate, on burne3 he rase3,
 [D] Hurte3 hem ful heterly þer he forþ hy3e3,
 & mony ar3ed þerat, & on-lyte dro3en.
 1464 Bot þe lorde on a ly3t horce launces hym after,
 [E] 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.
 1468 [F] Þis day wyth þis ilk dede þay dryuen on þis wyse,
 Whyle oure luflych lede lys in his bedde,
 [G] Gawayn graybely 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.

[Sidenote A: The bowmen send their arrows after this wild swine,] [Sidenote B: but they glide off shivered in pieces.] [Sidenote C: Enraged with the blows,] [Sidenote D: he attacks the hunters.] [Sidenote E: The lord of the land blows his bugle,] [Sidenote F: and pursues the boar.] [Sidenote G: All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.] [Footnote 1: The Ms. is here almost illegible.]

XIV.

1476 [A] Ho commes to þe cortyn, & at þe kny3t totes,
 Sir Wawen her welcumed worþy on fyrst,



& ho hym 3elde3 a3ayn, ful 3erne of hir worde3,
[B] Sette3 hir sof[t]ly by his syde, & swypely ho la3e3,
1480 & wyth a luflych loke ho layde[1] 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,
1484 & if mon kennes yow hom to knowe, 3e kest hom of your mynde;[Fol.]
[C] Þou hat3 for-3eten 3ederly þat 3isterday I ta3tte [111]
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.”
[D] “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.”



Page 50

- 1492 “Do way,” quod þat derf mon, “my dere, þat speche,
 [E] For þat durst I not do, lest I denyed were,
 If I were werned, I were wrang I-wysse, 3if I profered.”
 “Ma fay,” quod þe mere wyf, “3e may not be werned,
 1496 [F] 3e ar stif in-noghe to constrayne wyth strenkþe, 3if yow lyke3,
 3if any were so vilanous þat yow denye[2] wolde.”
 “3e, be God,” quod Gawayn, “good is your speche,
 Bot þrete is vn-þryuande in þede þer I lende,
 1500 [G] & 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.”
 1504 [H] þe lady loute3 a-down,
 & comlyly kysses his face,
 Much speche þay þer expoun,
 Of druryes greme & grace.

[Sidenote A: The lady of the castle again visits Sir Gawayne.] [Sidenote B: Softly she sits by his side.] [Sidenote C: and tells the knight that he has forgotten what she taught him

the day before.]

[Sidenote D: “I taught you of kissing,” she says, “that becomes every knight.”]

[Sidenote E: Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden.] [Sidenote F: He is told that he is strong enough to enforce it.] [Sidenote G: The knight replies that every gift is worthless that is not given willingly.]

[Sidenote H: The lady stoops down and kisses him.] [Footnote 1: sayde (?).] [Footnote 2: de vaye, in *Ms.*]

XV.

- 1508 [A] “I woled[1] 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,
 1512 [B] & of alle cheualry to chose, þe chef þyng a-losed,
 Is[2] 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,
[C] & bro3t blysse in-to boure, with bountees hor awen.
- 1520 & 3e ar kny3t com-lokest kyd of your elde,
Your worde & your worchip walke3 ay quere, [Fol. 111b.]
& I haf seten by your-self here sere twyes,
[D] 3et herde I neuer of your hed helde no worde3
- 1524 þat euer longed to luf, lasse ne more;
[E] & 3e, þat ar so cortays & coynt of your hetes,
Oghe to a 3onke þynk 3ern to schewe,
& teche sum tokene3 of trweluf craftes.
- 1528 Why ar 3e lewed, þat alle þe los welde3,
Oper elles 3e demen me to dille, your dalyaunce to herken?
for schame!
I com hider sengel, & sitte,
- 1532 To lerne at yow sum game,
[F] Dos, teche3 me of your wytte,
Whil my lorde is fro hame.”



Page 51

[Sidenote A: "I would learn," she says, "why you, who are so young and active,]

[Sidenote B: so skilled in the true sport of love,] [Sidenote C: and so renowned a knight,] [Sidenote D: have never talked to me of love.] [Sidenote E: You ought to show a young thing like me some token of 'true-love's crafts.']

[Sidenote F: So teach me of your 'wit' while my lord is from home.]" [Footnote 1: wolde (?).] [Footnote 2: In (?).]

XVI.

[A] "In goud faype," quod Gawayn, "God yow for3elde,
1536 Gret is þe gode gle, & gomen to me huge,
þat so worþy 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;
1540 [B] Bot to take þe toruayle[1] to my-self, to trwluf expoun,
& towche þe teme3 of tyxt, & tale3 of arme3,
To yow þat, I wot wel, welde3 more sly3t
Of þat art, bi þe half, or a hundreth of seche
1544 As I am, oper euer schal, in erde þer I leue,
Hit were a fole fele-folde, my fre, by my trawþe.
[C] I wolde yowre wylnyng worche at my my3t,
As I am hy3ly bihalden, & euer-more wylle
1548 [D] Be seruauent to your-seluen, so saue me dry3tyn!"
þus hym frayned þat fre, & fondet hym ofte,
Forto haf wonnen hym to wo3e, what-so scho þo3t elle3,
[E] Bot he de fended hym so fayr, þat no faut semed,
1552 Ne non euel on nawþer halue, nawþer þay wysten,
bot blysse;
þay la3ed & layked longe,
At þe last scho con hym kysse,
1556 [F] Hir leue fayre con scho fonge,
& went hir waye lwysse.

[Sidenote A: "It is a great pleasure to me," says Sir Gawayne, "to hear you talk,]

[Sidenote B: but I cannot undertake the task to expound true-love and tales of arms.]

[Sidenote C: I will, however, act according to your will,] [Sidenote D: and ever be your servant.]" [Sidenote E: Thus Gawayne defends himself.] [Sidenote F: The lady having kissed the knight, takes leave of him.] [Footnote 1: tornayle (?).]

XVII.



[A] Then ruþes hym þe renk, & ryses to þe masse,
& sipen hor diner wat3 dy3t & derely serued. [Fol. 112.]
1560 [B] 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,
[C] & bote þe best of his brache3 þe bakke3 in sunder;
1564 Þer he bode in his bay, tel[1] bawe-men hit breken,
& made[2] hym, maw-gref his bed, forto mwe vtter;
[D] So felle flone3 per flete, when þe folk gedered;
Bot 3et þe styffest to start bi stounde3 he made,
1568 Til at þe last he wat3 so mat, he my3t no more renne,
[E] 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,
1572 [F] Þe froþe femed[3] at his mouth vnfayre bi þe wyke3,
Whette3 his whyte tusche3; with hym þen irked
Alle þe burne3 so bolde, þat hym by stoden,
[G] To nye hym on-ferum, bot ne3e hym non durst
1576 for woþe;
He hade hurt so mony byforne,
þat al þu3t[4] þenne ful loþe,
[H] Be more wyth his tusche3 torne,
1580 þat breme wat3 [&] brayn-wod bothe.



Page 52

[Sidenote A: Gawayne rises, hears mass, and then dines.] [Sidenote B: Meanwhile the lord pursues the wild boar,] [Sidenote C: that bit the backs of his hounds asunder,] [Sidenote D: and caused the stiffest of the hunters to start.] [Sidenote E: The boar runs into a hole in a rock by the side of a brook.] [Sidenote F: The froth foams at his mouth.] [Sidenote G: None durst approach him,] [Sidenote H: so many had he torn with his tusks.] [Footnote 1: til (?).] [Footnote 2: madee, in Ms.] [Footnote 3: fomed (?).] [Footnote 4: þo3t (?).]

XVIII.

[A] Til þe kny3t com hym-self, kachande his blonk,
 Sy3 hym byde at þe bay, his burne3 bysyde,
 [B] He ly3tes luflych[1] adoun, leue3 his corsour,
 1584 Brayde3 out a bry3t bront, & bigly forth stryde3,
 Founde3 fast þur3 þe forth, þer þe felle byde3,
 [C] Þe wylde wat3 war of þe wy3e with weppen in honde,
 Hef hy3ly þe here, so hetterly he fnast,
 1588 þat fele ferde for þe freke3,[2] lest felle hym þe worre;
 [D] Þe swyn sette3 hym out on þe segge euen,
 Þat þe burne & þe bor were boþe vpon hepe3,
 In þe wy3t-est of þe water, þe worre hade þat oper;
 1592 [E] For þe mon merkke3 hym wel, as þay mette fyrst,
 Set sadly þe scharp in þe slot euen,
 [F] Hit hym vp to þe hult, þat þe hert schyndered,
 & he 3arrande hym 3elde, & 3edoun[3] þe water,
 1596 ful tyt;
 A hundreth hounde3 hym hent, [Fol. 112b.]
 [G] Þat bremely con hym bite,
 Burne3 him bro3t to bent,
 1600 & dogge3 to dethe endite.

[Sidenote A: The knight, seeing the boar at bay,] [Sidenote B: alights from his horse,] [Sidenote C: and seeks to attack him with his sword.] [Sidenote D: The “swine sets out” upon the man,] [Sidenote E: who, aiming well,] [Sidenote F: wounds him in the pit of the stomach.] [Sidenote G: The boar is soon bitten to death by a hundred hounds.] [Footnote 1: Ms. luslych.] [Footnote 2: freke (?).] [Footnote 3: 3ede doun (?).]

XIX.

[A] There wat3 blawyng of prys in mony breme home,
 He3e halowing on hi3e, with hapele3 þat my3t;
 [B] Brachetes bayed þat best, as bidden þe maystere3,
 1604 Of þat chargeaunt chace þat were chef huntres.
 [C] Penne a wy3e þat wat3 wys vpon wod crafte3,



To vnlace þis bor lufly bigynne3;
[D] Fyrst he hewes of his hed, & on hi3e sette3,
1608 & syþen rende3 him al roghe bi þe rygge after,
[E] 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,
1612 [F] & hat3 out þe hastlette3, as hi3tly biseme3;
[G] & 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;
1616 [H] 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,
[I] He calde, & he com gayn,
His fee3 þer for to fonge.



Page 53

[Sidenote A: Then was there blowing of horns] [Sidenote B: and baying of hounds.] [Sidenote C: One wise in woodcraft begins to unlace the boar.] [Sidenote D: First he hews off the head, then rends him by the back.] [Sidenote E: He next removes the bowels, broils them on the ashes, and therewith rewards his hounds.]

[Sidenote F: Then the hastlets are removed.] [Sidenote G: The two halves are next bound together and hung upon a pole.] [Sidenote H: The boar's head is borne before the knight, who hastens home.] [Sidenote I: Gawayne is called to receive the spoil.]

XX.

[A] 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,
[B] He schewe3 hem þe schelde3, & schapes hem þe tale,
Of þe largesse, & þe lenþe, þe liþerne3 also,
1628 Of þe were of þe wylde swyn, in wod þer he fled.

þat oþer kny3t ful comly comended his dede3,
& praysed hit as gret prys, þat he proued hade;
[C] 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,
& let lodly þerat þe lorde forte here: [Fol. 113.]

[D] "Now Gawayn," quod þe god mon, "þis gomen is your awen,
1636 Bi fyn for-warde & faste, faythely 3e knowe."

"Hit is sothe," quod þe segge, "& as siker trwe;
Alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe."

[E] He [hent] þe hapel aboute þe halse, & hendely hym kysses,
1640 & efter-sones of þe same he serued hym þere.

"Now ar we euen," quod þe hapel, "in þis euen-tide,
Of alle þe couenauntes þat we knyht, syþen I com hider,
bi lawe;"

1644 [F] Þe lorde sayde, "bi saynt Gile,
3e ar þe best þat I knowe,
3e ben ryche in a whyle,
Such chaffer & 3e drowe."

[Sidenote A: The lord of the land is well pleased when he sees Sir Gawayne,]

[Sidenote B: He shows him the shields of the wild boar, and tells him of its length and breadth.]

[Sidenote C: Such a "brawn of a beast," Sir Gawayne says, he never has seen.]



[Sidenote D: Gawayne takes possession of it according to covenant,] [Sidenote E: and in return kisses his host,] [Sidenote F: who declares his guest to be the best he knows.]

XXI.

1648 [A] Þenne þay teldet table3 [on] trestes alofte,

[B] Kesten cloþe3 vpon, clere ly3t þenne

[C] Wakned bi wo3e3, waxen torches

Segge3 sette, & serued in sale al aboute;

1652 [D] Much glam & gle glent vp þer-inne,

Aboute þe fyre vpon flet, & on fele wyse,

[E] At þe soper & after, mony apel songe3,

As coundutes of kryst-masse, & carole3 newe,

1656 With alle þe manerly merþe þat mon may of telle.

[F] & euer oure luflych kny3t þe lady bi-syde;

Such semblaunt to þat segge semly ho made,



Page 54

[G] 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;

1664 [H] Quen þay hade played in halle,
 As longe as hor wylle hom last,
 [I] To chambre he[1] con hym calle,
 & to þe chem-ne þay past.

[Sidenote A: Tables are raised aloft,] [Sidenote B: cloths cast upon them,] [Sidenote C: and torches are lighted.] [Sidenote D: With much mirth and glee,] [Sidenote E: supper is served in the hall,] [Sidenote F: and ever our lovely knight by the lady sits,] [Sidenote G: who does all she can to please her companion.] [Sidenote H: When they had long played in the hall,] [Sidenote I: they proceeded "to chamber."] [Footnote 1: ho (?).]

XXII.

1668 [A] Ande þer þay dronken, & dalten, & demed eft nwe,
 To norne on þe same note, on nwe3ere3 euen;

[B] Bot þe kny3t craued leue, to kayre on þe morn,
 For hit wat3 ne3 at þe terme, þat he to[1] schulde.

1672 þe lorde hym letted of þat, to lenge hym resteyed, [Fol. 113b.]

[C] & sayde, "as I am trwe segge, I siker my trawþe,
 [D] 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 þrid tyme þrowe best þenk on þe morne,
 Make we mery quyl we may, & mynne vpon loye,
 For þe lur may mon lach, when so mon lyke3."

þis wat3 grayþely graunted, & Gawayn is lenged,

1684 [E] Bliþe bro3t wat3 hym drynk, & þay to bedde 3eden,
 with li3t;

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

1688 [G] þe lorde þat his crafte3 kepes,
 Ful erly he wat3 di3t.



[Sidenote A: There they drank and discoursed.] [Sidenote B: Gawayne begs leave to depart on the morrow.] [Sidenote C: His host swears to him,] [Sidenote D: that he shall come to the Green Chapel on New Year's morn long before prime.]

[Sidenote E: Our knight consents to remain for another night.] [Sidenote F: Full still and softly he sleeps all night.] [Sidenote G: Early in the morning the lord is up.] [Footnote 1: te (?).]

XXIII.

[A] After messe a morsel^[1] he & his men token,
Miry wat³ þe mornyng, his mounture he askes;
1692 [B] Alle þe hapeles þat on horse schulde helden hym after,
Were boun busked on hor blonkke³, bi-fore^[2] þe halle 3ate³;
[C] Ferly fayre wat³ þe folde, for þe forst clenged,



Page 55

In rede rudede vpon rak rises þe sunne,
 1696 [D] & ful clere coste3[3] þe clowdes of þe welkyn.
 Hunteres vnhardeled bi a holt syde,
 Rocheres rounge bi rys, for rurde of her hornes;
 [E] Summe fel in þe fute, þer þe fox bade,
 1700 Trayle3 ofte a trayteres[4], bi traunt of her wyles;
 A kenet kryes þerof, þe hunt on hym calles,
 His fela3es fallen hym to, þat fnasted ful þike,
 [F] Runnen forth in a rabel, in his ry3t fare;
 1704 & he fyske3 hem by-fore, þay founden hym sone,
 [G] & quen þay seghe hym with sy3t, þay sued hym fast,
 Wre3ande h[ym] ful [w]eterly with a wroth noyse;
 [H] & he trantes & tornayee3 þur3 mony tene greue;
 1708 Hamloune3, & herkene3, bi hegge3 ful ofte;
 [I] At þe last bi a littel dich he lepe3 ouer a spenne, [Fol. 114.]
 Stele3 out ful stilly bi a strothe rande,
 [J] Went haf wylt of þe wode, with wyle3 fro þe houndes,
 1712 Þenne wat3 he went, er he wyst, to[5] a wale tryster,
 [K] þer þre þro at a þrich þrat hym at ones,
 al graye;
 [L] He blenched a3ayn bilyue,
 1716 & stifly start onstray,
 With alle þe wo on lyue,
 [M] To þe wod he went away.

[Sidenote A: After mass, a morsel he take with his men.] [Sidenote B: Then were all on their horses before the hall-gates.] [Sidenote C: It was a clear frosty morning.] [Sidenote D: The hunters, dispersed by a wood's side,] [Sidenote E: come upon the track of a fox,] [Sidenote F: which is followed up by the hounds.] [Sidenote G: They soon get sight of the game,] [Sidenote H: and pursue him through many a rough grove.] [Sidenote I: The fox at last leaps over a spinny,] [Sidenote J: and by a rugged path seeks to get clear from the hounds.] [Sidenote K: He comes upon one of the hunting stations, where he is attacked by the dogs.] [Sidenote L: However, he slips them,] [Sidenote M: and makes again for the wood.] [Footnote 1: Ms. nnorsel.] [Footnote 2: bi-forere, in Ms.] [Footnote 3: caste3 (?).] [Footnote 4: trayveres (?).] [Footnote 5: to to, in Ms.]

XXIV.



[A] Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list to lyphen 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;
[B] Here he wat3 halawed, when hapele3 hym metten,
1724 Loude he wat3 3ayned, with 3arande speche;
[C] 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,
1728 [D] & ofte reled in a3ayn, so reniarde wat3 wyle.
[E] & 3e he lad hem bi lag, mon, þe lorde & his meyny;
On þis maner bi þe mountes, quyle myd, ouer, vnder,
[F] 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,



Page 56

Bot ros hir vp radly, rayked hir þeder,
 1736 [G] In a mery mantyle, mete to þe erþe,
 þat wat3 furred ful fyne with felle3, wel pured,
 No hwe3 goud on hir hede, bot þe ha3er stones
 Trased aboute hir tressour, be twenty in clusteres;
 1740 [H] Hir þryuen face & hir þrote þrowen al naked,
 Hir brest bare bifore, & bihinde eke.
 [I] Ho come3 with-inne þe chambre dore, & closes hit hir after,
 [J] Wayne3[1] vp a wyndow, & on þe wy3e calle3,
 1744 & radly þus re-hayted hym, with hir riche worde3,
 with[2] chere;
 [K] "A! mon, how may þou slepe,
 [L] þis morning is so clere?" [Fol. 114b.]
 1748 He wat3 in drowping depe,
 Bot þenne he con hir here.

[Sidenote A: Then was it fine sport to listen to the hounds,] [Sidenote B: and the halloing of the hunters.] [Sidenote C: There the fox was threatened and called a thief.] [Sidenote D: But Reynard was wily,] [Sidenote E: and led them astray over mounts.] [Sidenote F: Meanwhile the knight at home soundly sleeps within his comely curtains.]

[Sidenote G: The lady of the castle, clothed in a rich mantle,] [Sidenote H: her throat and bosom all bare,] [Sidenote I: comes to Gawayne's chamber,] [Sidenote J: opens a window, and says,] [Sidenote K: "Ah! man, how canst thou sleep,] [Sidenote L: this morning is so clear?"] [Footnote 1: wayue3(?).] [Footnote 2: bi, a sec. manu.]

XXV.

[A] In dre3 droupyng of dreme draueled þat noble,
 As mon þat wat3 in mornyng of mony þro þo3tes,
 1752 How þat destine schulde þat day [dy3t] his wyrde,
 At þe grene chapel, when he þe þe gome metes,
 & bi-houes his buffet abide, with-oute debate more;
 [B] Bot quen þat comly he keuered his wyttes,
 1756 Swenges out of þe sweuenes, & sware3 with hast.
 þe lady luflych com la3ande swete,
 [C] 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,



[D] 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,
& wynne,
þay lanced wordes gode,
Much wele þen wat3 þer-inne,
1768 [E] Gret perile bi-twene hem stod,
Nif mare of hir kny3t mynne.

[Sidenote A: The knight was then dreaming of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel.]

[Sidenote B: He awakes and speaks to his fair visitor,] [Sidenote C: who sweetly kisses him.] [Sidenote D: Great joy warms the heart of Sir Gawayne,] [Sidenote E: and “great peril between them stood.”]

XXVI.

[A] For þat prynce of pris de-presed hym so pikke.
Nurned hym so ne3e þe þred, þat nede hym bi-houed,
1772 Oper lach þer hir luf, oper lodly re-fuse;
He cared for his cortaysye, lest crapayn he were,
[B] & more for his meschef, 3if he schulde make



Page 57

synne,

& be traytor to þat tolke, þat þat telde a3t.

1776 "God schylde," quod þe schalk, "þat schal not be-falle!"

With luf-la3yng a lyt, he layd hym by-syde

Alle þe speche3 of specialte 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,

[C] Bot if 3e haf a lemman, a leuer, þat yow lyke3 better,

& folden fayth to þat fre, festned so harde,

1784 þat yow lausen ne lyst, & þat I leue nouþe; [Fol. 115.]

And þat 3e telle me þat, now trwly I pray yow,

For alle þe lufe3 vpon lyue, layne not þe soþe,

for gile."

1788 [D] þe kny3t sayde, "be sayn Ion,"

& smepely con he smyle,

"In fayth I welde ri3t non,

Ne non wil welde þe quile."

[Sidenote A: The knight is sorely pressed.] [Sidenote B: He fears lest he should become a traitor to his host.] [Sidenote C: The lady inquire whether he has a mistress that he loves

better than her.]

[Sidenote D: Sir Gawayne swears by St. John that he neither has nor desires one.]

XXVII.

1792 "Þat is a worde," quod þat wy3t, "þat worst is of alle,

Bot I am swared for soþe, þat sore me þinkke3;

[A] Kysse me now coraly, & I schal cach heþen,

I may bot mourne vpon molde, as may þat much louyes."

1796 Sykande ho swe3e doun, & semly hym kyssed,

& sipen ho seueres hym fro, & says as ho stondes,

"Now, dere, at þis de-partyng, do me þis ese,

[B] Gif me sumquat of þy gifte, þi gloue if[1] hit were,

1800 [C] þat I may mynne on þe mon, my mournyng to lassen."

"Now lwysse," quod þat wy3e, "I wolde I hade here

þe leuest þing for þy luf, þat I in londe welde,

[D] 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 neked;



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,
[E] & haue no men wyth no male³, with menskful þinge³;
þat mislyke³ me, lade, for luf at þis tyme,[²
Iche tolke mon do as he is tan, tas to non ille,
1812 ne pine.”
[F] “Nay, hende of hy^{3e} honours,”
Quod þat lufsum vnder lyne,
[G] “Þa³ I hade o^{3t}[³] of youre³,
1816 3et schulde 3e haue of myne.”

[Sidenote A: She then kisses him, sighing for sorrow.] [Sidenote B: She desires some gift,] [Sidenote C: by which to remember him.] [Sidenote D: Gawayne tells her that she is worthy of a better gift than he can bestow.]

[Sidenote E: He has no men with mails containing precious things.] [Sidenote F: Then says that lovesome,] [Sidenote G: “Though I had nought of yours, yet should ye have of mine.”] [Footnote 1: of, in *Ms.*] [Footnote 2: tyme, in *Ms.*] [Footnote 3: no^{3t} (?).]



Page 58

XXVIII.

[A] Ho ra3t hym a riche rynk[1] of red golde werke3,
 Wyth a starande ston, stondande alofte,
 Pat bere blusschande beme3 as þe bry3t sunne;
 1820 Wyt 3e wel, hit wat3 worth wele ful hoge.
 [B] Bot þe renk hit renayed, & redyly he sayde,
 "I wil no gifte3 for gode, my gay, at þis tyme; [Fol. 115b.]
 [C] I haf none yow to norne, ne no3t wyl I take."
 1824 Ho bede hit hym ful bysily, & he hir bode wernes,
 & swere swyftel[y] his sothe, þat he hit sese nolde;
 [D] & ho sore þat he forsoke, & sayde þer-after,
 "If 3e renay my rynk, to ryche for hit seme3,
 1828 3e wolde not so hy3ly halden be to me,
 I schal gif yow my girdel, þat gaynes yow lasse."
 Ho la3t a lace ly3tly, þat[2] leke vmbe hir syde3,
 [E] Knit vpon hir kyrtel, vnder þe clere mantyle,
 1832 Gered hit wat3 with grene sylke, & with golde schaped,
 No3t bot arounde brayden, beten with fyngre3;
 & þat ho bede to þe burne, & blypely bi-so3t
 [F] Þa3 hit vn-worþi were, þat he hit take wolde.
 1836 & he nay þat he nolde neghe in no wyse,
 [G] Nauper golde ne garysoun, er God hym grace sende,
 To acheue to þe chaunce þat he hade chosen þere.
 "& þefore, I pray yow, displese yow no3t,
 1840 & lette3 be your businesse, for I bayþe hit yow neuer
 to graunte;
 I am derely to yow biholde,
 Bi-cause of your sembelaunt,
 1844 [H] & euer in hot & colde
 To be your trwe seruaunt.

[Sidenote A: She offers him a gold ring,] [Sidenote B: but he refuses to accept it,]
 [Sidenote C: as he has none to give in return.] [Sidenote D: Very sorrowful was that fair
 one on account of his refusal.] [Sidenote E: She takes off her "girdle,"] [Sidenote F:
 and beseeches him to take it.] [Sidenote G: Gawayne again refuses to accept
 anything,] [Sidenote H: but promises, "ever in hot and in cold, to be her true
 servant."]

[Footnote 1: ryng (?).] [Footnote 2: þat þat, in Ms.]

XXIX.

[A] "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;
[B] Bot who-so knew þe costes þat knit ar þer-inne,
He wolde hit prayse at more prys, paraventure;
[C] 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;
[D] For he my3t not he slayn, for sly3t vpon erþe.”
þen kest þe kny3t, & hit come to his hert,
1856 [E] Hit were a luel for þe loparde, þat hym iugged were,
When he acheued to þe chapel, his chek forto fech;
[F] My3[1] he haf slypped to þe vn-slayn, þe sle3t were noble.
þenne ho þulged with hir þrepe, & þoled hir to speke, [Fol. 116.]
1860 & ho bere on hym þe belt, & bede hit hym swyþe,
[G] & he granted, & [ho] hym gafe with a goud wylle,
& biso3t hym, for hir sake, disceuer hit



Page 59

neuer,

Bot to lelly layne for^[2] hir lorde; þe leude hym acorde³.

1864 Þat neuer wy^{3e} schulde hit wyt, lwysse, bot þay twayne,
for no^{3te};

He þonkked hir oft ful swyþe,

Ful þro with hert & þo^{3t}.

1868 [H] Bi þat on þrynne syþe,

He hat³ kyst þe kny^{3t} so to^{3t}.

[Sidenote A: "Do you refuse it," says the lady, because it is simple?] [Sidenote B: Whoso knew the virtues that it possesses, would highly prize it.]

[Sidenote C: For he who is girded with this green lace,] [Sidenote D: cannot be wounded or slain."] [Sidenote E: The knight thinks of his adventure at the Green Chapel.] [Sidenote F: The lady presses him to accept the lace.] [Sidenote G: He consents not only to take the girdle, but to keep the possession of it a secret.]

[Sidenote H: By that time the lady has kissed him thrice.] [Footnote 1: my^{3t} (?).]

[Footnote 2: fro (?).]

XXX.

[A] Thenne lachche³ ho hir leue, & leue³ hym þere,

For more myrþe of þat mon mo^{3t} ho not gete;

1872 [B] When ho^[1] wat³ gon, sir G. gere³ hym sone,

Rises, & riches hym in araye noble,

[C] Lays vp þe luf-lace, þe lady hym ra^{3t},

Hid hit ful holdely, þer he hit eft fonde;

1876 Syþen cheuely to þe chapel choses he þe waye,

[D] Preuely aproched to a prest, & prayed hym þere

þat he wolde lyfte^[2] his lyf, & lern hym better,

How his sawle schulde be saued, when he schuld seye hepen.

1880 [E] Þere he schrof hym schyrly, & schewed his mysdede³,

Of þe more & þe mynne, & merci beseche³,

[F] & of absolucioun he on þe segge calles;

& he asoyled hym surely, & sette hym so clene,

1884 [G] As dome³-day schulde haf ben di^{3t} on þe morn.

& syþen he mace hym as mery among þe fre ladyes,

[H] With comlych caroles, & alle kynnes ioie,

As neuer he did bot þat daye, to þe derk ny^{3t},

1888 with blys;

Vche mon hade daynte þare,



[I] Of hym, & sayde lwysse,
[J] þus myry he wat3 neuer are,
1892 Syn he com hider, er þis.

[Sidenote A: Then she takes her leave.] [Sidenote B: Gawayne then dresses himself,
[Sidenote C: and conceals the love-lace about his person.] [Sidenote D: He then hies
to mass,] [Sidenote E: and shrives him of his misdeeds.] [Sidenote F: and prays for
absolution.] [Sidenote G: He returns to the hall, and makes himself so merry among the
ladies,]

[Sidenote H: with comely carols,] [Sidenote I: that they said,] [Sidenote J: “Thus merry
was he never before since hither he came.”] [Footnote 1: he, in *Ms.*] [Footnote 2: lyste
(?).]

XXXI.

[A] Now hym lenge in þat lee, þer luf hym bi-tyde;
3et is þe lorde on þe launde, ledande his gomnes,
[B] He hat3 forfaren þis fox, þat he fol3ed longe;
1896 As he sprent ouer a spenne, to spye þe schrewe,
þer as he herd þe howndes, þat hasted hym swyþe, [Fol. 116b.]
[C] Renaud com richchande þur3 a ro3e greue,



Page 60

& alle þe rabel in a res, ry3t at his hele3.
 1900 [D] 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,
 [E] A rach rapes hym to, ry3t er he my3t,
 1904 & ry3t bifore þe hors fete þay fel on hym alle,
 & worried me þis wyly wyth a wroth noyse.
 [F] Þe lorde ly3te3 bilyue, & cache3 by[1] sone,
 Rased hym ful radly out of þe rach mouþes,
 1908 Halde3 he3e ouer his hede, halowe3 faste,
 & þer bayen hym mony bray[2] hounde3;
 [G] Hunttes 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,
 [H] & 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;
 [I] Hor hounde3 þay þer rewarde,
 Her[3] hede3 þay fawne & frote,
 1920 [J] & syþen þay tan reynarde,
 & tyrnen of his cote.

[Sidenote A: Gawayne's host is still in the field.] [Sidenote B: He has destroyed the fox.] [Sidenote C: He spied Reynard coming through a "rough grove,"] [Sidenote D: and tried to hit him with his sword.] [Sidenote E: The fox "shunts," and is seized by one of the dogs.] [Sidenote F: The lord takes him out of the hound's mouth.] [Sidenote G: Hunters hasten thither with horns full many.] [Sidenote H: It was the merriest meet that ever was heard.] [Sidenote I: The hounds are rewarded,] [Sidenote J: and then they take Reynard and "turn off his coat."] [Footnote 1: hym (?).] [Footnote 2: brap (?).] [Footnote 3: Her her, in *Ms.*]

XXXII.

[A] & þenne þay helden to home, for hit wat3 nie3 ny3t,
 Strakande ful stoutly in hor store horne3;
 1924 [B] 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,



[C] Among þe ladies for luf he ladde much ioye,
1928 He were a bleaunt of blwe, þat bradde to þe erþe,
His surkot semed hym wel, þat softe wat3 forred,
& his hode of þat ilke hinged on his schulder,
[D] Blande al of blaunner were boþe al aboute.
1932 He mete3 me þis god mon in mydde3 þe flore,
& al with gomen he hym gret, & goudly he sayde,
“I schal fylle vpon fyrst oure forwarde3 nouþe,
þat we spedly han spoken, þer spared wat3 no drynk;” [Fol. 117.]
1936 [E] Þen acoles he [þe] kny3t, & kysses hym þryes,
[F] As sauerly & sadly as he hem sette coupe.
[G] “Bi Kryst,” quod þat oþer kny3t, “3e cach much sele,
In cheuisaunce of þis chaffer, 3if 3e hade goud chepe3.”
1940 “3e of þe chepe no charg,” quod chefly þat oþer,
“As is pertly payed þe chepe3 þat I a3te.”
“Mary,” quod þat oþer mon, “myn is bi-hynde,
[H] For I haf hunted al þis day, & no3t haf I geten,
1944 [I] Bot þis foule fox felle, þe fende haf þe



Page 61

gode3,
[J] & þat is ful pore, for to pay for suche prys þinges,
As 3e haf þry3t me here, þro suche þre cosses,
so gode.”

1948 “I-no3,” quod sir Gawayn,
“I þonk yow, bi þe rode;”
[K] & how þe fox wat3 slayn,
He tolde hym, as þay stode.

[Sidenote A: The hunters then hasten home.] [Sidenote B: The lord at last alights at his dear home,] [Sidenote C: where he finds Gawayne amusing the ladies.] [Sidenote D: The knight comes forward and welcomes his host,] [Sidenote E: and according to covenant kisses him thrice.] [Sidenote F: (See l. 1868.)] [Sidenote G: “By Christ,” says the other, “ye have had much bliss!”] [Sidenote H: I have hunted all day and have gotten nothing,] [Sidenote I: but the skin of this foul fox,] [Sidenote J: a poor reward for three such kisses.”] [Sidenote K: He then tells him how the fox was slain.]

XXXIII.

1952 [A] With merþe & mynstralsye, wyth mete3 at hor wylle,
þay maden as mery as any men mo3ten,
With la3yng of ladies, with lote3 of bordes;
Gawayn & þe gode mon so glad were þay boþe,

1956 Bot if þe douthe had doted, oþer dronken ben oþer,
Boþe þe mon & þe meyny maden mony iape3,
[B] Til þe sesoun wat3 se3en, þat þay seuer moste;
Burne3 to hor bedde be-houed at þe laste.

1960 [C] Þenne lo3ly his leue at þe lorde fyrst
Fochche3 þis fre mon, & fayre he hym þonkke3;
[D] “Of such a sellyly[1] soiorne, as I haf hade here,
Your honour, at þis hy3e fest, þe hy3e kyng yow 3elde!

1964 I 3ef yow me for on of youre3, if yowre-self lyke3,
For I mot nedes, as 3e wot, meue to morne;
[E] & 3e me take sum tolke, to teche, as 3e hy3t,

þe gate to þe grene chapel, as god wyl me suffer
1968 To dele, on nw3ere3 day, þe dome of my wyrdes.”
“In god fayþe,” quod þe god mon. “wyth a goud wylle;
Al þat euer I yow hy3t, halde schal I rede.”

[F] Þer asyngnes he a seruauant, to sett hym in þe waye,
1972 & coundue hym by þe downe3, þat he no drechch had, [Fol. 117b.]
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;
[G] þen at þo ladye3 wlonk.
þe kny3t hat3 tan his leue.

[Sidenote A: With much mirth and minstrelsy they made merry,] [Sidenote B: until the time came for them to part.] [Sidenote C: Gawayne takes leave of his host.] [Sidenote D: and thanks him for his happy “sojourn.”] [Sidenote E: He asks for a man to teach him the way to the Green Chapel.] [Sidenote F: A servant is assigned to him,] [Sidenote G: and then he takes leave of the ladies,] [Footnote 1: selly (?).]

XXXIV.



Page 62

[A] 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;
 [B] Þay bikende hym to Kryst, with ful colde sykyng3.
 [C] Syþen fro þe meyny he menskly de-partes;
 1984 Vche mon þat he mette, he made hem a þonke,
 For his seruyse, & his solace, & his sere pyne,
 Þat þay wyth busynes had ben, aboute hym to serue;
 & vche segge as sore, to seuer with hym þere,
 1988 As þay hade wonde worþyly with þat wlonk euer.
 [D] 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,
 1992 [E] For he hade mucche on þe morn to mynne, 3if he wolde,
 in þo3t;
 [F] Let hym ly3e þere stille,
 He hat3[1] nere þat he so3t,
 1996 [G] & 3e wyl a whyle be stille,
 I schal telle yow how þay wro3t.

[Sidenote A: kissing them sorrowfully.] [Sidenote B: They commend him to Christ.]
 [Sidenote C: He then departs, thanking each one he meets “for his service
 and solace.”]
 [Sidenote D: He retires to rest but sleeps but little.] [Sidenote E: for much has he to
 think of on the morrow.] [Sidenote F: Let him there lie still.] [Sidenote G: Be still awhile,
 and I shall tell how they wrought.] [Footnote 1: wat3 (?).]

[FYTTE *the fourth.*]

I.

[A] Now ne3e3 þe nw3ere, & þe ny3t passe3,
 þe day dryue3 to þe derk, as dry3tyn bidde3;
 2000 [B] Bot wylde wedere3 of þe worlde wakned þeroute,
 Clowdes kesten kenly þe colde to þe erþe,
 Wyth ny3e[1] in-noghe of þe norþe, þe naked to tene;
 [C] Þe snawe snitered ful snart, þat snayped þe wylde;
 2004 Þe werbelande wynde wapped fro þe hy3e,
 [D] & drof vche dale ful of dryftes ful grete.
 Þe leude lystened ful wel, þat le3 in his bedde,
 [E] Þa3 he lowke3 his lidde3, ful lyttel he slepes;
 2008 Bi vch kok þat crue, he knwe wel þe steuen.
 De-liuerly he dressed vp, er þe day sprenged, [Fol. 118.]
 For þere wat3 ly3t of a lau[m]pe, þat lemed in his chambre;



[F] 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,
& grayþe3 me sir Gawayn vpon a grett wyse.
Fyrst he clad hym in his cloþe3, þe colde for to were;
2016 & syþen his oper harnays, þat holdely wat3 keped,
Boþe his paunce, & his plate3, piked ful clene,
[G] Þe rynge3[2] 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;
[H] Þe gayest in to Grece,
2024 þe burne bede bryng his blonk.

[Sidenote A: New Year's Day approaches.] [Sidenote B: The weather is stormy.]
[Sidenote C: Snow falls.] [Sidenote D: The dales are full of drift.] [Sidenote E:
Gawayne in his bed hears each cock that crows.] [Sidenote F: He calls for his
chamberlain, and bids him bring him his
armour.]

[Sidenote G: Men knock off the rust from his rich habergeon.] [Sidenote H: The knight
then calls for his steed.] [Footnote 1: nywe (?).] [Footnote 2: rynke3 (?).]



Page 63

II.

[A] Whyle þe wlonkest wedes he warp on hym-seluen;
 His cote, wyth be conysaunce of þe clere werke3,
 Ennurned vpon veluet vertuuus[1] stone3,
 2028 Aboute beten, & bounden, enbrauded seme3,
 & fayre furred with-inne wyth fayre pelures.
 [B] 3et laft he not þe lace, þe ladie3 gifte,
 Þat for-gat not Gawayn, for gode of hym-seluen;
 2032 Bi he hade belted þe bronde vpon his bal3e haunche3,
 [C] Penn dressed he his drurye double hym aboute;
 Swyþe sweþled vmbe his swange swetely, þat kny3t,
 þe gordel of þe grene silke, þat gay wel bisemed,
 2036 Vpon þat ryol red cloþe, þat ryche wat3 to schewe.
 [D] Bot wered not þis ilk wy3e for wele þis gordel,
 For pryde of þe pendaunte3, þa3 polyst þay were,
 & þa3 þe glyterande golde glent vpon ende3,
 2040 [E] Bot forto sauēn hym-self, when suffer hym by-houed,
 To byde bale with-oute dabate, of bronde hym to were,
 oþer knyffe;
 Bi þat þe bolde mon boun,
 2044 Wynne3 þeroute bilyue,
 [F] Alle þe meyny of renoun,
 He þonkke3 ofte ful ryue.

[Sidenote A: While he clothed himself in his rich weeds,] [Sidenote B: he forgot not the “lace,” the lady’s gift,] [Sidenote C: but with it doubly girded his loins.] [Sidenote D: He wore it not for its rich ornaments,] [Sidenote E: “but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer.”] [Sidenote F: All the renowned assembly he thanks full oft.] [Footnote 1: vertuous (?).]

III.

[A] Thenne wat3 Gryngolet grayþe, þat gret wat3 & huge, [Fol. 118b.]
 2048 & hade ben sojourned sauerly, & in a siker wyse,
 [B] 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,
 [C] þe mon hem maynteines, ioy mot þay haue;
 þe leue lady, on lyue luf hir bityde;
 3if þay for charyte cherysen a gest,
 2056 & halden honour in her honde, þe haþel 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."
2060 [D] 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,
[E] & he starte3 on þe ston, stod he no lenger,
2064 to prounce;
His hapel on hors wat3 þenne,
þat bere his spere & launce.
[F] "Þis kastel to Kryst I kenne,
2068 He gef hit ay god chaunce!"

[Sidenote A: Then was Gringolet arrayed,] [Sidenote B: full ready to prick on.]
[Sidenote C: Gawayne returns thanks for the honour and kindness shown to
him by all.]
[Sidenote D: He then steps into his saddle,] [Sidenote E: and "starts on the stone"
without more delay.] [Sidenote F: "This castle to Christ I commend; may he give it ever
good
chance!"]



Page 64

IV.

[A] The brygge wat3 brayde doun, & þe brode 3ate3
 Vnbarred, & born open, vpon boþe halue;
 [B] 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;
 [C] & went on his way, with his wy3e one,
 Þat schulde teche hym to tourne to þat tene place,
 2076 Þer þe ruful race he schulde re-sayue.
 Þay bo3en bi bonkke3, þer bo3e3 ar bare,
 [D] 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,
 [E] Vch hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge;
 Broke3 byled, & breke, bi bonkke3 aboute,
 Schyre schaterande on schore3, þer þay doun schowued.
 2084 Welawylle wat3 þe way, þer þay bi wod schulden, [Fol. 119.]
 [F] Til hit wat3 sone sesoun, þat þe sunne ryses,
 þat tyde;
 [G] Þay were on a hille ful hy3e,
 2088 Þe quyte snaw lay bisyde;
 [H] Þe burne þat rod hym by
 Bede his mayster abide.

[Sidenote A: The gates are soon opened.] [Sidenote B: The knight passes thereout,]
 [Sidenote C: and goes on his way accompanied by his guide.] [Sidenote D: They climb
 by cliffs,] [Sidenote E: where each "hill had a hat and a mist-cloak,"] [Sidenote F: until
 daylight.] [Sidenote G: They were then on a "hill full high."] [Sidenote H: The servant
 bade his master abide, saying,]

V.

[A] "For I haf wonnen yow hider, wy3e, at þis tyme,
 2092 & now nar 3e not fer fro þat note place,
 [B] 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 worþed þe better.
 [C] Þe place þat 3e prece to, ful perelous is halden;
 [D] 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,
 [E] & his body bigger þen þe best fowre.



þat ar in Arþure3 hous, Hestor[1] oþer oþer.
He cheue3 þat chaunce at þe chapel grene;
2104 [F] þer passes non bi þat place, so proude in his armes,
þat he ne dynne3 hym to deþe, with dynt of his honde;
For he is a mon methles, & mercy non vses,
[G] For be hit chorle, oþer chaplayn, þat bi þe chapel rydes,
2108 Monk, oþer masse-prest, oþer any mon elles,
Hym þynk as queme hym to quelle, as quyk go hym seluen.
For-þy I say þe as soþe as 3e in sadel sitte,
Com 3e þere, 3e be kyllid, [I] may þe kny3t rede,
2112 Trawe 3e me þat trwely, þa3 3e had twenty lyues
to spende;
[H] He hat3 wonyd here ful 3ore,
On bent much baret bende,
2116 [I] A3ayn his dynte3 sore,
3e may not yow defende.”



Page 65

[Sidenote A: "I have brought you hither,] [Sidenote B: ye are not now far from the noted place.] [Sidenote C: Full perilous is it esteemed.] [Sidenote D: The lord of that 'waste' is stiff and stern.] [Sidenote E: His body is bigger 'than the best four in Arthur's house.'] [Sidenote F: None passes by the Green Chapel, 'that he does not ding to death with dint of his hand.']

[Sidenote G: For be it churl or chaplain, monk, mass-priest, 'or any man else,' he kills them all.]

[Sidenote H: He has lived there full long.] [Sidenote I: Against his dints sore ye may not defend you.] [Footnote 1: Hector (?).]

VI.

[A] "For-þy, goude sir Gawayn, let þe gome one,
 & got3 a-way sum oþer gate; vpon Godde3 halue;
 2120 [B] Cayre3 bi sum oþer kyth, þer Kryst mot yow spede;
 & I schal hy3 me hom a3ayn, & hete yow fyrre,
 [C] þat I schal swere bi God, & alle his gode hal3e3, [Fol. 119b.]
 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!
 [D] Bot helde þou hit neuer so holde, & I here passed,
 Founded for ferde for to fle, in fourme þat þou telle3,
 I were a kny3t kowarde, I my3t not[1] be excused.
 2132 [E] Bot I wy1 to þe chape1, for chaunce þat may falle,
 & talk wyth þat ilk tulk þe tale þat me lyste,
 Worpe hit wele, oþer wo, as þe wyrde lyke3
 hit hafe;
 2136 [F] þa3e he be a sturn knape,
 To sti3tel, &[2] stad with staue,
 [G] Ful wel con dry3tyn schape,
 His seruaunte3 forto saue."

[Sidenote A: Wherefore, good Sir Gawayne, let this man alone.] [Sidenote B: Go by some other region,] [Sidenote C: I swear by God and all His saints, that I will never say that

ever ye attempted to flee from any man."]

[Sidenote D: Gawayne replies that to shun this danger would mark him as a "coward knight."]

[Sidenote E: To the Chapel, therefore, he will go,] [Sidenote F: though the owner thereof were a stern knave.] [Sidenote G: "Full well can God devise his servants for to save."] [Footnote 1: mot, in *Ms.*] [Footnote 2: & &, in *Ms.*]



VII.

2140 [A] "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;

[B] Haf here þi helme on þy hede, þi spere in þi honde,
2144 & ryde me doun þis ilk rake, bi 3on rokke syde,

[C] Til þou be bro3t to þe boþem of þe brem valay;

[D] Þenne loke a littel on þe launde, on þi lyfte honde,

[E] & 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,



Page 66

For alle þe golde vpon grounde I nolde go with þe,
Ne bere þe fela3schip þur3 þis fryth on fote fyrre.”

2152 [F] 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.

2156 [G] “Bi Godde3 self,” quod Gawayn,
“I wyl nauþer grete ne grone,
[H] To Godde3 wylle I am ful bayn,
& to hym I haf me tone.”

[Sidenote A: “Mary!” quoth the other, “since it pleases thee to lose thy
life,]

[Sidenote B: take thy helmet on thy head, and thy spear in thy hand, and
ride down this path by yon rock-side,]

[Sidenote C: till thou come to the bottom of the valley;] [Sidenote D: look a little to the
left,] [Sidenote E: and thou shalt see the Chapel itself and the man that guards
it.”]

[Sidenote F: Having thus spoken the guide takes leave of the knight.] [Sidenote G: “By
God’s self,” says Sir Gawayne, “I will neither weep nor
groan.]

[Sidenote H: To God’s will I am full ready.”]

VIII.

2160 [A] Thenne gyrde3 he to Gryngolet, & gedere3 þe rake, [Fol. 120.]
Schowue3 in bi a schore, at a scha3e syde,

[B] Ride3 þur3 þe ro3e bonk, ry3t to þe dale;
& þenne he wayted hym aboute, & wylde hit hym þo3t,

2164 [C] & 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 skayued[1] hym þo3t.

2168 Þenne he houed, & wyth-hylde his hors at þat tyde,
& ofte chaunged his cher, þe chapel to seche;

[D] He se3 non suche in no syde, & selly hym þo3t,
Sone a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit we[re];

2172 [E] 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.



[F] þe kny3t kache3 his caple, & com to þe lawe,
2176 [G] Li3te3 doun luflyly, & at a lynde tache3
 þe rayne, & his riche, with a ro3e braunche;
[H] 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-growen with gresse in glodes ay where,
 & al wat3 hol3 in-with, nobot an olde caue,
[I] 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;
[J] He my3t aboute myd-ny3t,
2188 [P]e dele his matynnes telle!”



Page 67

[Sidenote A: Then he pursues his journey,] [Sidenote B: rides through the dale, and looks about.] [Sidenote C: He sees no sign of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks.]

[Sidenote D: No chapel could he discern.] [Sidenote E: At last he sees a hill by the side of a stream;] [Sidenote F: thither he goes,] [Sidenote G: alights and fastens his horse to a branch of a tree.] [Sidenote H: He walks around the hill, debating with himself what it might be,]

[Sidenote I: and at last finds an old cave in the crag.] [Sidenote J: He prays that about midnight he may tell his matins.] [Footnote 1: skayned (?).] [Footnote 2: wel (?).]

IX.

[A] "Now i-wysse," quod Wowayn, "wysty is here;

Pis oritore is vgly, with erbe³ ouer-grown;

[B] Wel biseme³ þe wy^{3e} 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;

[C] Þis is a chapel of meschaunce, þat chekke hit by-tyde,

2196 Hit is þe cortedest kyrk, þat euer i com inne!"

With he^{3e} helme on his hede, his launce in his honde, [Fol. 120b.]

[D] He rome³ vp to þe rokke of þo ro³ wone³;

þene herde he of þat hy^{3e} hil, in a harde roche,

2200 [E] Bi³onde þe broke, in a bonk, a wonder breme noyse,

[F] Quat! hit clatered in þe clyff, as hit cleue schulde,

As one vpon a gryndelston hade grounden a syþe;

[G] What! hit wharred, & whette, as water at a mulne,

2204 What! hit rusched, & ronge, rawþe to here.

Þenne "bi Godde," quod Gawayn, "þat gere as[1] I trowe,

Is ryched at þe reuerence, me renk to mete,

bi rote;

2208 Let God worche we loo,

[H] Hit helppe³ me not a mote,

My lif þa³ I for-goo,

Drede dot³ me no lote."

[Sidenote A: "Truly," says Sir Gawayne, "a desert is here,] [Sidenote B: a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions in devil fashion.']

[Sidenote C: It is most cursed kirk that ever I entered.]" [Sidenote D: Roaming about he hears a loud noise,] [Sidenote E: from beyond the brook.] [Sidenote F: It clattered like the grinding of a scythe on a grindstone.] [Sidenote G: It whirred like a mill-stream.]

[Sidenote H: "Though my life I forgo," says the knight, "no noise shall



terrify me.”]
[Footnote 1: at, in *Ms.*]

X.

2212 [A] Thenne þe kny3t con calle ful hy3e,
[B] “Who sti3tle3 in þis sted, me steuen to holde?
[C] For now is gode Gawayn goande ry3t here,
If any wy3e o3t wyl wynne hider fast,
2216 Oper now, oper neuer, his nede3 to spede.”
[D] “Abyde,” quod on on þe bonke, abouen ouer his hede,
“& þou schal haf al in hast, þat I þe hy3t ones.”
3et he rusched on þat rurde, rapely a þrowe,
2220 & wyth quettyng a-wharf, er he wolde ly3t;
[E] & syben he keuere3 bi a cragge, & come3 of a hole,



Page 68

Whyrlande out of a wro, wyth a felle weppen,
 [F] A dene³ ax nwe dy³t, þe dynt with [t]o 3elde
 2224 With a borelych bytte, bende by þe halme,
 Fyled in a fylor, fowre fote large,
 Hit wat³ no lasse, bi þat lace þat lemed ful bry³t.

[G] & þe gome in þe erene gered as fyrst,
 2228 Boþe þe lyre & þe legge³, lokke³, & berde,
 Saue þat fayre on his fote he founde³ on þe erþe,
 Sette þe stele to þe stone, & stalked bysyde.

[H] When he wan to þe watter, þer he wade nolde,
 2232 He hypped ouer on hys ax, & orpedly stryde³,
 Bremly brope on a bent, þat brode wat³ a-boute,
 on snawe.

[I] Sir Gawayn þe kny³t con mete. [Fol. 121.]
 2236 He ne lutte hym no þyng lowe,

[J] Þat oþer sayde, “now, sir swete,
 Of steuen mon may þe trowe.”

[Sidenote A: Then cried he aloud,] [Sidenote B: “Who dwells here discourse with me to hold?”] [Sidenote C: Now is the good Gawayne going aright] [Sidenote D: He hears a voice commanding him to abide where he is.] [Sidenote E: Soon there comes out of a hole, with a fell weapon,] [Sidenote F: a Danish axe, quite new,] [Sidenote G: the “knight in green,” clothed as before.] [Sidenote H: When he reaches the stream, he hops over and strides about.] [Sidenote I: He meets Sir Gawayne without obeisance.] [Sidenote J: The other tells him that he is now ready for conversation]

XI.

[A] “Gawayn,” quod þat grene gome, “God þe mot loke!
 2240 I-wysse þou art welcom,[1] wy³e, to my place,
 [B] & þou hat³ tyled þi trauayl as true[2] mon schulde;
 [C] & þou knowe³ þe couenaunte³ kest vus by-twene,
 At þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat þe falled,
 2244 [D] & I schulde at þis nwe 3ere 3eþly þe quyte.
 [E] & we ar in þis valay, verayly oure one,
 Here ar no renkes vs to rydde, rele as vus like³;
 [F] Haf þy[3] 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.”
 [G] “Nay, bi God,” quod Gawayn, “þat me gost lante,



I schal gruch þe no grwe, for grem þat falle3;
2252 Botsty3tel þe vpon on strok, & I schal stonde styлле,
& warp þe no wernyng, to worch as þe lyke3,
no whare.”

[H] He lened with þe nek, & lutte,
2256 & schewed þat schyre al bare,
& lette as he no3t dutte,

[I] For drede he wolde not dare.

[Sidenote A: “God preserve thee!” says the Green Knight,] [Sidenote B: “as a true knight ‘thou hast timed thy travel’] [Sidenote C: Thou knowest the covenant between us,] [Sidenote D: that on New Year’s day I should return thy blow] [Sidenote E: Here we are alone,] [Sidenote F: Have off thy helmet and take thy pay at once.”] [Sidenote G: “By God,” quoth Sir Gawayne, “I shall not begrudge thee thy will.”]

[Sidenote H: Then he shows his bare neck,] [Sidenote I: and appears undaunted.]

[Footnote 1: welcon, in *Ms.*] [Footnote 2: truee in *Ms.*] [Footnote 3: *Ms.* þy þy.]



Page 69

XII.

[A] Then þe gome in þe grene graybed hym swyþe,
 2260 Gedere3 yp hys grymme tole, Gawayn to smyte;
 [B] With alle þe bur in his body he ber hit on lofte,
 Munt as ma3tyly, as marre hym he wolde;
 Hade hit dryuen adoun, as dre3 as he atled,
 2264 Þer hade ben ded of his dynt, þat do3ty wat3 euer.
 Bot Gawayn on þat giserne glyfte hym bysyde,
 [C] As hit com glydande adoun, on glode hym to schende,
 [D] & schranke a lytel with þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrne.
 2268 Þat oper schalk wyth a schunt þe schene wythhalde3,
 [E] & þenne repreued he þe prynce with mony prowde worde3:
 [F] "Þou art not Gawayn," quod þe gome, "þat is so goud halden,
 Þat neuer ar3ed for no here, by hylle ne be vale,
 2272 [G] & now þou fles for ferde, er þou fele harme3; [Fol. 121b.]
 Such cowardise of þat kny3t cowþe I neuer here.
 [H] Nawþer fyked I, ne fla3e, freke, quen þou myntest,
 Ne kest no kaelacion, in kynges hous Arthor,
 2276 [I] My hede fla3 to my fote, & 3et fla3 I neuer;
 & þou, er any harme hent, ar3e3 in hert,
 [J] Wherefore þe better burne me burde be called
 þer-fore."
 2280 [K] Quod G:, "I schunt one3,
 & so wyl I no more,
 Bot þa3 my hede falle on þe stone3,
 I con not hit restore.

[Sidenote A: Then the man in green seizes his grim tool.] [Sidenote B: With all his force he raises it aloft.] [Sidenote C: As it came gliding down,] [Sidenote D: Sir Gawayne shrank a little with his shoulders.] [Sidenote E: The other reproved him, saying,] [Sidenote F: "Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed,] [Sidenote G: for thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm.] [Sidenote H: I never flinched when thou struckest.] [Sidenote I: My head flew to my foot, yet I never fled,] [Sidenote J: wherefore I ought to be called the better man.]" [Sidenote K: "I shunted once," says Gawayne, "but will no more.]

XIII.

2284 [A] Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, & bryng me to þe poynt,
 Dele to me my destine, & 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."
 2288 [B] "Haf at þe þenne," quod þat oper, & heue3 hit alofte,



& wayte3 as wropely, as he wode were;

[C] He mynte3 at hym ma3tyly, bot not þe mon ryue3,[1]
With-helde heterly h[i]s honde, er hit hurt my3t.

2292 [D] Gawayn graybely hit byde3, & glent with no membre,
Bot stode styлле as þe ston, oper a stubbe auþer,
þat rafeled is in roche grounde, with rote3 a hundreth.
þen muryly efte con he mele, þe mon in þe grene,

2296 [E] “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,
2300 [F] “Wy þresch on, þou þro mon, þou þrete3



Page 70

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.”

[G] Þenne tas he[2] hym stryþe to stryke,

& frounses boþe lyppe & browe,

No meruayle þa3 hym myslyke,

2308 þat hoped of no rescowe.

[Sidenote A: Bring me to the point; deal me my destiny at once.] [Sidenote B: “Have at thee, then,” says the other.] [Sidenote C: With that he aims at him a blow.] [Sidenote D: Gawayne never flinches, but stands as still as a stone.] [Sidenote E: “Now,” says the Green Knight, “I must hit thee, since thy heart is whole.”]

[Sidenote F: “Thrash on,” says the other.] [Sidenote G: Then the Green Knight makes ready to strike.] [Footnote 1: ? ryne3 = touches.] [Footnote 2: he he, in *Ms.*]

XIV.

[A] He lyftes ly3tly his lome, & let hit doun fayre,

[B] With þe barbe of þe bitte bi þe bare nek [Fol. 122.]

þa3 he homered heterly, hurt hym no more,

2312 Bot snyrt hym on þat on syde, þat seuered þe hyde;

[C] Þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þur3 þe schyre grece,

þat þe schene blod over his schulderes schot to þe erpe.

[D] & 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,

[E] 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:—

[F] “Blynne, burne, of þy bur, bede me no mo;

I haf a stroke in þis sted with-oute stryf hent,

2324 [G] & if þow reche3 me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,

& 3elde 3ederly a3ayn, & þer to 3e tryst,

& foo;

[H] Bot on stroke here me falle3,

2328 þe couenaunt schop ry3t so,

[Sikered][1] in Arpure3 halle3,

& þer-fore, hende, now hoo!”



[Sidenote A: He let fall his loom on the bare] [Sidenote B: neck of Sir Gawayne.]
[Sidenote C: The sharp weapon pierced the flesh so that the blood flowed.] [Sidenote
D: When the knight saw the blood on the snow,] [Sidenote E: he unsheathed his
sword, and thus spake:] [Sidenote F: "Cease, man, of thy blow.] [Sidenote G: If thou
givest me any more, readily shall I requite thee.] [Sidenote H: Our agreement stipulates
only one stroke."] [Footnote 1: Illegible.]

XV.

[A] The hæl heldet hym fro, & on his ax rested,
2332 Sette þe schaft vpon schore, & to be scharp lened,
[B] & loked to þe leude, þat on þe launde 3ede,
How þat do3ty dredles deruely þer stonde3,
Armed ful a3le3; in hert hit hym lyke3.
2336 þenn he mele3 muryly, wyth a much steuen,
[C] & wyth a r[a]ykande rurde he to þe renk sayde,
"Bolde burne, on þis bent be not so



Page 71

gryndel;

No mon here vn-manerly þe mys-boden habbe,
2340 Ne kyd, bot as couenaunde, at kynges kort schaped;

[D] I hy3t þe a strok, & þou hit hat3, halde þe wel payed,
I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ry3tes alle oþer;

3iff[1] I deliuer had bene, a boffet, paraunter,

2344 [E] I coupe wroþeloker haf waret, [&] to þe haf wro3t anger.[2]

Fyrst I mansed þe muryly, with a mynt one,

[F] & roue þe wyth no rof, sore with ry3t I þe profered,

For þe forwarde that we fest in þe fyrst ny3t, [Fol. 122b.]

2348 & þou trystyly þe trawþe & trwly me halde3,

Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon shulde;

[G] Þat oþer munt for þe morne, mon, I þe profered,

þou kyssedes my clere wyf, þe cosse3 me ra3te3,

2352 For boþe two here I þe bede bot two bare myntes,
boute scape;

[H] Trwe mon trwe restore,

þenne þar mon drede no wape;

2356 [I] At þe þrid þou fayled þore,

& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.

[Sidenote A: The Green Knight rested on his axe,] [Sidenote B: looked on Sir Gawayne, who appeared bold and fearless,] [Sidenote C: and addressed him as follows: "Bold knight, be not so wroth,] [Sidenote D: I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it, be satisfied.] [Sidenote E: I could have dealt worse with thee.] [Sidenote F: I menaced thee with one blow for the covenant between us on the first night.]

[Sidenote G: Another I aimed at thee because thou kissedst my wife.] [Sidenote H: A true man should restore truly, and then he need fear no harm.]

[Sidenote I: Thou failedst at the third time, and therefore take thee that tap. (See l. 1861.)]

[Footnote 1: uf, in *Ms.*] [Footnote 2: This word is doubtful.]

XVI.

[A] For hit is my wede þat þou were3, þat ilke wouen girdel,
Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel forsoþe;

2360 [B] Now know I wel þy cosses, & þy costes als,

& þe wowyng of my wyf, I wro3t hit myseluen;

[C] 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.
[D] Bot here you lakked a lyttel, sir, & lewte yow wanted,
Bot þat wat3 for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
2368 [E] 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,
[F] 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,—
[G] “Corsed worth cowarddyse & couetyse boþe!
In yow is vylany & vyse, þat vertue disstrye3.”
2376 [H] 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!
[I] For care of þy knokke cowardyse me ta3t
2380 To a-corde me with couetyse, my kynde to



Page 72

for-sake,
 þat is larges & lewte, þat longe3 to kny3te3.
 [J] Now am I fawty, & falce, & ferde haf ben euer;
 Of trecherye & vn-trawþe boþe bityde sor3e
 2384 & care!
 [K] I bi-knowe yow, kny3t, here styлле, [Fol. 123.]
 Al fawty is my fare,
 Lete3 me ouer-take your wylle,
 2388 & efle I schal be ware.”

[Sidenote A: For my weed (woven by my wife) thou wearest.] [Sidenote B: I know thy kisses and my wife's wooing.] [Sidenote C: I sent her to try thee, and faultless I found thee.] [Sidenote D: But yet thou sinnedst a little,] [Sidenote E: for love of thy life.”] [Sidenote F: Gawayne stands confounded.] [Sidenote G: “Cursed,” he says, “be cowardice and covetousness both!”] [Sidenote H: Then he takes off the girdle and throws it to the knight.] [Sidenote I: He curses his cowardice,] [Sidenote J: and confesses himself to have been guilty of untruth.] [Sidenote K:]

XVII.

[A] Thenne lo3e þat oþer leude, & luflyly sayde,
 “I halde hit hardily[1] hole, þe harme þat I hade;
 [B] Þou art confessed so clene, be-knowen of þy mysses,
 2392 & hat3 þe penaunce apert, of þe poynt of myn egge,
 [C] I halde þe polysed of þat ply3t, & pured as clene,
 As þou hade3 neuer forfeþed, syþen þou wat3 fyrst borne.
 [D] & 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
 [E] Of þe chaunce of þe grene chapel, at cheualrous kny3te3;
 2400 [F] & 3e schal in þis nwe 3er a3ayn to my wone3,
 & we schyn reuel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest,
 ful bene.”
 Þer laþed hym fast þe lorde,
 2404 & sayde, “with my wyf, I wene,
 We schal yow wel acorde,
 þat wat3 your enmy kene.”

[Sidenote A: Then the other, laughing, thus spoke:] [Sidenote B: “Thou art confessed so clean,] [Sidenote C: that I hold thee as pure as if thou hadst never been guilty.] [Sidenote D: I give thee, sir, the gold-hemmed girdle,] [Sidenote E: as a token of thy



adventure at the Green Chapel.] [Sidenote F: Come again to my abode, and abide there for the remainder of the festival.”]

[Footnote 1: hardilyly, in *Ms.*]

XVIII.

[A] “Nay, for soþe,” quod þe segge, & sesed hys helme,
2408 & hat3 hit of hendely, & þe habel þonkke3,

[B] “I haf soiornd sadly, sele yow bytyde,
& he 3elde hit yow 3are, þat 3arkke3 al menskes!

[C] & 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.

[D] Bot hit is no ferly, þa3 a fole madde,
& þur3 wyles of wymmen be wonen to sor3e;

2416 [E] 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



Page 73

poled.

2420 Now þese were wrathed wyth her wyles, hit were a wynne huge,
[F] To luf hom wel, & leue hem not, a leude þat coupe,
For þes wer forne[1] þe freest þat fol3ed alle þe sele, [Fol.]
Ex-ellently of alle þyse oper, vnder heuen-ryche, [123b.]

2424 þat mused;
& alle þay were bi-wyled,
With[2] wymmen þat þay vsed,
[G] Þa3 I be now bigyled,
2428 Me þink me burde be excused.”

[Sidenote A: “Nay, forsooth,” says Gawayne,] [Sidenote B: “I have sojourned sadly, but bliss betide thee!] [Sidenote C: Commend me to your comely wife and that other lady who have
beguiled me.]

[Sidenote D: But it is no marvel for a man to be brought to grief through a
woman’s wiles.]

[Sidenote E: Adam, Solomon, Samson, and David were beguiled by women.] [Sidenote F: How could a man love them and believe them not?] [Sidenote G: Though I be now beguiled, methinks I should be excused.] [Footnote 1: forme (?)] [Footnote 2: with wyth, in Ms.]

XIX.

[A] “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,
[B] 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;
[C] & þus, quen pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
[D] 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,—
[E] How norne 3e yowre ry3t nome, & þenne no more?”
2444 “Þat schal I telle þe trwly,” quod þat oper þenne,
[F] “Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat in þis londe,
Þur3 my3t of Morgne la Faye, þat in my hous lenges,



&[1] koyntyse of clergye, bi craftes wel lerned,
2448 þe maystres of Merlyn, mony ho[2] 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;
[G] Welde3 non so hy3e hawtesse,
þat ho ne con make ful tame.

[Sidenote A: But God reward you for your girdle.] [Sidenote B: I will wear it in remembrance of my fault.] [Sidenote C: And when pride shall prick me,] [Sidenote D: a look to this lace shall abate it.] [Sidenote E: But tell me your right name and I shall have done."] [Sidenote F: The Green Knight replies, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert, through might of Morgain la Fey, the pupil of Merlin.] [Sidenote G: She can tame even the haughtiest.] [Footnote 1: in (?).] [Footnote 2: ho hat3 (?).]

XX.



Page 74

- 2456 [A] Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to your wynne halle,
 For to assay þe surquidre, 3if hit soth were,
 þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table;
 Ho wayned me þis wonder, your wytte³ to reue,
- 2460 [B] For to haf greued Gaynour, & gart hir to dy³e. [Fol. 124.]
 With gopnyng^[1] of þat ilke gomen, þat gostlych speked,
 With his hede in his honde, bifore þe hy³e table.
 Þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian lady;
- 2464 [C] Ho is euen þyn aunt, Arpure³ half suster,
 þe duches do³ter of Tyntagelle, þat dere Vter after
 [D] Hade Arpur vpon, þat apel is nowþe.
 þerfore I eþe þe, hapel, to com to þy naunt,
- 2468 Make myry in my hous, my meny þe louies,
 & I wol þe as wel, wy³e, bi my faythe,
 As any gome vnder God, for þy grete traupe.”
 [E] & he nikked hym naye, he nolde bi no wayes;
- 2472 Þay acolen & kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer
 To þe prynce of paradise, & parten ry³t þere,
 on coolde;
- [F] Gawayn on blonk ful bene,
 2476 To þe kynge³ bur³ buske³ bolde,
 & þe kny³t in þe enker grene,
 Whider-warde so euer he wolde.

[Sidenote A: It was she who caused me to test the renown of the Round Table,]

[Sidenote B: hoping to grieve Guenever and cause her death through fear.] [Sidenote C: She is even thine aunt.] [Sidenote D: Therefore come to her and make merry in my house.”] [Sidenote E: Gawayne refuses to return with the Green Knight.] [Sidenote F: On horse full fair he bends to Arthur’s hall.] [Footnote 1: glopnyng (?).]

XXI.

- [A] Wylde waye³ in þe worlde Wowen now ryde³,
 2480 On Gryngolet, þat þe grace hade geten of his lyue;
 [B] Ofte he herbered in house, & ofte al þeroute,
 & mony a-venture in vale, & venquyst ofte,
 þat I ne ty³t, at þis tyme, in tale to remene.
- 2484 [C] þe hurt wat³ hole, þat he hade hent in his nek,
 [D] & þe blykkande belt he bere þeraboute,
 A belef as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde,
 Loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace, with a knot,
- 2488 [E] In tokenyng he wat³ tane in tech of a faute;
 [F] & þus he commes to þe court, kny³t al in sounde.



[G] Þer wakned wele in þat wone, when wýst þe grete,
Þat gode G: wat3 comen, gayn hit hym þo3t;
2492 [H] Þe kyng kysse3 þe kny3t, & þe whene alce,
& syþen mony syker kny3t, þat so3t hym to haylce,
[I] 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,
[J] Þe luf of þe ladi, þe lace at þe last. [Fol. 124b.]
Þe nirt in þe nek he naked hem schewed,
[K] Þat he la3t for his vnleute at þe leudes hondes,
2500 for blame;
He tened quen he schulde telle,
[L] He goned for gref & grame;
Þe blod in his face con melle,
2504 When he hit schulde schewe, for schame.



Page 75

[Sidenote A: Wild ways now Gawayne rides.] [Sidenote B: Oft he harboured in house and oft thereout.] [Sidenote C: The wound in his neck became whole.] [Sidenote D: He still carried about him the belt,] [Sidenote E: in token of his fault.] [Sidenote F: Thus he comes to the Court of King Arthur.] [Sidenote G: Great then was the joy of all.] [Sidenote H: The king and his knights ask him concerning his journey.] [Sidenote I: Gawayne tells them of his adventures,] [Sidenote J: the love of the lady, and lastly of the lace.] [Sidenote K: He showed them the cut in his neck.] [Sidenote L: He groaned for grief and shame, and the blood rushed into his face.]

XXII.

[A] “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 la3t haue,
 2508 [B] Of couardise & couetyse, þat I haf ca3t þare,
 þis is þe token of vn-trawþe, þat I am tan inne,
 [C] & I mot nede3 hit were, wyle I may last;
 For non may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit,
 2512 For þer hit one3 is tachched, twynne wil hit neuer.”
 [D] þe kyng comforte3 þe kny3t, & alle þe court als,
 La3en loude þer-at, & luflyly acorden,
 þat lordes & ladis, þat longed to þe Table,
 2516 [E] Vche burne of þe broþer-hede a bauderyk schulde haue,
 A bende, a belef hym aboute, of a bry3t grene,
 [F] & þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.
 For þat wat3 acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table,
 2520 [G] & he honoured þat hit hade, euer-more after,
 As hit is breued in þe best boke of romaunce.
 [H] Þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,
 þe Brutus bokees þer-of beres wyttensesse;
 2524 Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, bo3ed hider fyrst,
 After þe segge & þe asaute wat3 sesed at Troye,
 I-wysse;
 Mony auntere3 here bi-forne,
 2528 Haf fallen suche er þis:
 [I] Now þat bere þe croun of þorne,
 He bryng vus to his blysse! *Amen*.

[Sidenote A: “Lo!” says he, handling the lace, “this is the band of blame,] [Sidenote B: a token of my cowardice and covetousness,] [Sidenote C: I must needs wear it as long as I live.”] [Sidenote D: The king comforts the knight, and all the court too.] [Sidenote E: Each knight of the brotherhood agrees to wear a bright green belt,]



[Sidenote F: for Gawayne's sake,] [Sidenote G: who ever more honoured it.] [Sidenote H: Thus in Arthur's day this adventure befell.] [Sidenote I: He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to His bliss!]

* * * * *

Notes.

Line 8 Ricchis turns, goes,

The king ...

Ricchis his reynys and the Renke metys:

Girden to gedur with þere grete speires.—T.B. I. 1232.

37 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 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).



Page 76

65 Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte.

Christmas celebrated anew, mentioned full often.

Sir F. Madden leaves the word nayted unexplained in his Glossary to "Syr Gawayne."

124 syluener = sylueren, *i.e.* silver dishes.

139 lyndes = lendes, loins.

142 in his muckel, in his greatness.

184 Wat³ euesed al umbe-torne—? was trimmed, all cut evenly around; umbe-torne may be an error for vmbe-corue = cut round.

216 in gracios werkes. Sir F. Madden reads gracons for gracios, and suggests Greek as the meaning of it.

244-5 As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor lote³
in hy³e.

As all were fallen asleep so ceased their words
in haste (suddenly).

Sir F. Madden reads slaked horlote³, instead of slaked hor lote³, which, according to his glossary, signifies drunken vagabonds.

He evidently takes horlote³ to be another (and a very uncommon) form of harlote³ = harlots. But harlot, or vagabond, would be a very inappropriate term to apply to the noble Knights of the Round Table.

Moreover, slaked never, I think, means drunken. The general sense of the verb slake is to let loose, lessen, cease. Cf. lines 411-2, where sloke, another form of slake, occurs with a similar meaning:

— layt no fyrre;
bot slokes.

— seek no further,
but stop (cease).

Sir F. Madden suggests blows as the explanation of slokes. It is, however, a verb in the imperative mood.

286 Brayn. Maetzner suggests brayn-wod.

296 barlay = par loi. This word is exceedingly common in the T. Book (see l. 3391).

I bid you now, barlay, with besines at all

Pat ye set you most soverainly my suster to gete.—T.B. l. 2780.

394 siker. Sir F. Madden reads swer.



440 bluk. Sir F. Madden suggests blunk (horse). I am inclined to keep to the reading of the *Ms.*, and explain bluk as = bulk = trunk. Cf. the use of the word Blok in "Early English Alliterative Poems," p. 100, l. 272.

558 derue doel, *etc.* = great grief. Sir F. Madden reads derne, *i.e.* secret, instead of derue (= derf). Cf. line 564.

577 knaged, fastened.

The braunches were borly, sum of bright gold,
With leuys full luffly, light of the same;
With burions aboue bright to beholde;
And fruit on yt fourmyt of fairest of shap,
Of mony kynd that was knyht, knaged aboue.—T.B. l. 4973.

629 & ay quere hit is endele3, *etc.*

And everywhere it is endless, *etc.*
Sir F. Madden reads emdele3, *i.e.* with equal sides.



Page 77

652 for-be = for-bi = surpassing, beyond.

681 for Hadet read Halet = haled = exiled (?). See line 1049.

806 auinant = auenaunt, pleasantly. Sir F. Madden reads amnant.

954 of. Should we not read on (?).

957 þat oþer wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre.

The gorger or wimple is stated first to have appeared in Edward the First's reign, and an example is found on the monument of Aveline, Countess of Lancaster, who died in 1269. From the poem, however, it would seem that the gorger was confined to elderly ladies (Sir F. Madden).

968 More lykker-wys on to lyk,
Wat3 þat scho had on lode.

A more pleasant one to like,
Was that (one) she had under her control.

988 tayt = lively, and hence pleasant, agreeable.

1015 in vayres, in purity.

1020 dut = dunt (?) = dint (?), referring to sword-sports.

1022 sayn[t] 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).

1047 derne dede = secret deed. I would prefer to read derue dede = great deed. Cf. lines 558, 564.

1053 I wot in worlde, *etc.* = I not (I know not) in worlde, *etc.*

1054 I nolde, bot if I hit negh my3t on nw3eres morne,
For alle þe londe in-wyth Logres, *etc.*

I would not [delay to set out], unless I might approach it on New Year's morn, for all the lands within England, *etc.*

1074 in spenne = in space = in the interval = meanwhile. See line 1503.

1160 slentyng of arwes. Sir F. Madden reads sleutyng.
"Of drawyn swordis sclentyng to and fra,



The brycht mettale, and othir armouris seir,
Quharon the sonnys blenkis betis cleir,
Glitteris and schane, and vnder bemys brycht,
Castis ane new twynklyng or a lemand lycht.”
(G. Douglas' AENEID, Vol. i, p. 421.)

1281 let lyk = appeared pleased.

1283 þa3 I were burde bry3test, þe burde in mynde hade, *etc.*

The sense requires us to read:

þa3 ho were burde bry3test, þe burne in mynde hade, *etc.*

i.e., Though she were lady fairest, the knight in mind had, *etc.*

1440 Long sythen [seuered] for þe sounder þat wi3t for-olde
Long since separated from the sounder or herd that fierce (one)
for-aged (grew very old).

“Now to speke of the boore, the fyrste year he is
A pygge of the sounder callyd, as haue I blys;
The secounde yere an hogge, and soo shall he be,
And an hoggistere, 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.)



Page 78

1476 totes = looks, toots.

Sho went up wightly by a walle syde.

To the toppe of a toure and tot ouer the water.—T.B. l. 862.

1623 A verb [? laledede = cried] seems wanting after lorde.

1702 fnasted, breathed.

These balfull bestes were, as the boke tellus,

Full flaumond of fyre with fnastyng of logh.—T.B. l. 168.

1710 a strothe rande = a rugged path. Cf. the phrases tene greue, l. 1707; ro3e greue, l. 1898.

1719 Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list, *etc.*

Should we not read:

Thenne wat3 hit list vpon lif, *etc.*

i.e., Then was there joy in life, *etc.*

1729 bi lag = be-lagh(?) = below (?).

1780 lyf = lef(?), beloved (one).

1869 Ho hat3 kyst þe kny3t so to3t.

She has kissed the knight so courteous.

Sir F. Madden explains to3t, promptly. To3t seems to be the same as the Northumbrian taght in the following extract from the “Morte Arthure”:

“There come in at the fyrste course, before the kyng seluene,

Bare hevedys that ware bryghte, burnyste with sylver,

Alle with taghte mene and towne in togers fulle ryche.”—(p. 15.)

The word towne (well-behaved) still exists in wan-ton, the original meaning of which was ill-mannered, ill-bred.

1909 bray hounde3 = braþ hounde3, *i.e.* fierce hounds.

1995 He hat3 nere þat he so3t = He wat3 nere þat he so3t = He was near to that which he sought.

2160 gedere3 þe rake = takes the path or way.

2167 þe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued hym þo3t.

The shadows of the hills appeared wild (desolate) to him. Sir F.

Madden reads skayned, of which he gives no explanation.

Skayued = skayfed, seems to be the N. Prov. English scafe, wild.

Scotch schaiwie, wild, mad. O.N. skeifr. Sw. skef, awry, distorted.



2204 ronge = clattered.

2211 Drede dot3 me no lote =
No noise shall cause me to dread (fear).

2357 & þer-for þat tappe ta þe.
And therefore take thee that tap.
ta þe = take thee. Sir F. Madden reads tappe = 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.