

Yvain, ou le chevalier au lion

by **Chrétien de Troyes, c. 1180**

transl. A. S. KLINE

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ARTHUR of Britain, that true king
Whose worth declares: in everything
Be brave, and courteous, always,
Held royal court, on that feast-day
Of the descent of the Holy Ghost,
That is known to us as Pentecost.
The king was at Carduel in Wales;
After dinner, amid their wassails,
The noble knights took themselves
To wherever the fair damsels,
And fine ladies summoned them.
Some told stories to amuse them,
While others there spoke of Amor,
Of all the anguish and dolour,
And of the great joys, accorded
To the followers of his order,
To which, once rich and strong,
So few disciples now belong
That the order is nigh disgraced,
And Amor himself much abased.
For, once, those lovers among us
Deserved to be called courteous,
Brave, generous and honourable.
But now all that is turned to fable.
Those who know naught of it, say I,
Claim they love, but in that they lie;
True love seems fable to those I cite,
Who boast of love but lack the right.
Yet, to talk of those who once were,
Leave those to whom I now refer;
For worth more is dead courtesy,
To my mind, than live villainy.
Thus I take joy, now, in relating
Things indeed worth the hearing,
About that king of such great fame
That near and far they speak his name,
And, I concur here with the Bretons,
Shall do, as long as worth lives on;
And, through them, we remember,
His worthy knights who forever
Did labour in the court of love.

MY Lord Yvain mounts; his plan
To avenge the shame, if he but can
Ere he returns, his cousin garnered.
The squire runs to collect the armour,
The steed, and is mounted straight,
For his master will no longer wait;
Nor doth he lack spare shoes and nails.
Then he follows his master's trail,
Until he sees him about to descend,
And waiting for him, at the bend
Of a track, far from the road, apart.
His arms and armour he doth cart
To his master, and so equips him.
My Lord Yvain now dismissed him,
And, once armed, made no delay,
But swiftly journeyed on each day;
Among the hills and dales did ride,
Through the forests deep and wide,
Places savage and most strange,
Many a wilderness did range,
Past many a peril, many a narrow,
Till the true path he found to follow,
Full of briars, and many a shadow;
But, once assured of the way to go,
Knowing he'd not wander astray,
He forged ahead along the way,
Nor would he halt until he gained
The pine that shaded the fountain
And saw the stone, knew the gale,
With all its thunder rain and hail.
That night, as you might know,
He had good lodging, though.
And greater grace and honour,
In his host, did he discover
Than he'd garnered from the story,
And a hundred times more beauty
Sense and charm in the maid,
Than Calogrenant had conveyed;
For one cannot rehearse the sum
Of what man or maid may become,
When either is intent on virtue;
And I could ne'er express to you
Nor could the tongue e'er relate
All the honour their deeds create.
My Lord Yvain found, that night,
Good lodging, much to his delight.
Moreover when the next day came
He saw the bulls and the villain,
Who showed him the path to take.
The sign of the cross he did make
A hundred times, viewing that monster,
Marvelling how Nature ever

Had made so ugly a person.
Then made his way to the fountain,
And saw all he had wished to see.
Without resting for a moment, he
Poured the basinful of water
Over the stone; from every quarter
The wind blew, down fell the rain,
As that tempest was roused again.
And when God calmed what stirred,
All the pine was covered with birds,
And sang with joy full marvellous,
Above the fountain perilous.
Before their joyful song had ceased
The knight arrived through the trees,
Ablaze like a fiery log, with anger,
As if chasing a lusty stag, but louder.
Then they charged, and clashed together,
While the signs, as each struck the other,
Of mortal hatred, they betrayed.
Each gripped a lance, stoutly made,
And did with blows the other assail
Piercing both shield and mail,
While the lances no better did fare
Scattering splinters through the air.
Then each the other doth assault
Attacking fiercely with the sword,
As the blades, in their swordplay,
Cut both their shield-straps away,
Slicing the shields, as they defend
From side to side, and end to end,
Till in the pieces, hanging down,
No useful cover can be found,
For they are now so torn by all
The blows, the bright blades fall
Upon their arms, along their sides,
Across the hips, and more besides.
Perilous now seems their attack,
But neither of them draws back,
Unyielding as two blocks of stone.
Never was such a battle known,
Each intent on the other's death,
Seeking to waste nor blow nor breath,
But still strike out, as best they may.
On their helmets the blows they lay
Dent the metal, likewise their mail,
The hot blood's drawn without fail,
And while the mail coats grow hot,
The defence they offer them is not
Much more help to them than cloth.
A lunge at the face reveals their wrath.
Wondrous it was, so fierce and strong
Their blows, the fight could last so long.

But both men were of such great heart
That neither of them would, for aught,
To the other yield a foot of ground,
Till he had dealt him a mortal wound.
Yet both from this did honour obtain:
They did not try, nor would they deign
To harm their mounts, in any way,
Yet remained astride them alway;
Not attacking their horses ever,
With feet planted on earth never;
Which rendered their conflict finer.
At last, my Lord Yvain did hammer
At the knight's helmet so fiercely,
The blow stunned the knight wholly,
Such that he fainted right away,
He never having, until that day,
Felt such a blow; his skull split
With the tremendous force of it.
And now the outflow from it stains
His bright mail with blood and brains;
And he with such pain doth meet,
His heart almost neglects to beat.
He fled then, gasping for breath,
Being nigh wounded to death,
Such that he lacked all defence.
With that thought he rode hence,
Towards his castle, at full speed;
Its drawbridge is lowered at need,
Its entrance gate is opened wide.
Meanwhile my Lord Yvain doth ride,
Spurring his steed on, in his train;
As a gerfalcon stoops on a crane,
Seeing it afar, then drawing near,
Seeking to seize, yet forced to veer,
Thus doth Yvain his victim chase,
So near he has him in his embrace;
Yet cannot quite achieve his prey,
Though so close he hears him pray
And groan aloud in his distress,
Yet ever onwards seeks to press,
While Yvain pursues amain
Yet fears his effort will be in vain,
Unless he takes him alive or dead,
While the words run in his head
My Lord Kay spoke in mockery;
Of his pledge he is not yet free,
The promise made to his cousin,
Nor will they believe his win,
If no proof of it he can show.
The knight leads him onward though
From the drawbridge to the gate;
Both enter, neither dare hesitate;

No man or woman do they meet
As they go swiftly down the street,
Till both together terminate
Their ride before the palace gate.
THIS palace gate was high and wide,
Yet the way proved so narrow inside
That two knights astride their steeds
Could not ride there, abreast, indeed
Without encumbrance and great ill,
Nor two men pass each other at will.
This entrance way so narrow it was
A crossbow bolt could scarcely pass.
The gateway could be closed tight
By a mechanism, upon the knight,
With a blade above ready to fall
If but a lever were touched at all;
Beneath the way two levers set
Connected with a portcullis let
Into the stone, its sharpened teeth
Ready to mangle a man beneath;
If he to the lever weight did lend,
Then the portcullis would descend,
And capture or crush with a blow
Whoever was present there below.
And within this narrowest compass,
Lay the path that they must pass,
As a man pursues the beaten trail.
Along this straight and narrow vale,
Rode the knight most knowingly,
And Lord Yvain, most foolishly,
Hurtled after him at full speed,
So closely on his heels indeed
At the gate he seized him behind,
And was most fortunate to find
That bent forward, thus extended,
When the portcullis descended,
He escaped being cut in two,
His horse's rear legs, on cue,
On the hidden levers treading,
While the iron spikes falling,
Hellish devils, in their course
Struck the saddle and the horse
Behind, severing them cleanly;
But scarce harming, God a mercy,
My Lord Yvain, grazed slightly
Where it touched his back lightly,
Though it severed both his spurs
Behind the heel, the tale avers.
As unhorsed, he fell, dismayed,
The other, wounded by his blade,
Escaped him in this manner;
Far ahead there was another

Gate, like the one left behind;
This gate the knight did find
Open for him, by this he fled,
After which it fell, like lead.
So my Lord Yvain was caught,
Greatly troubled and distraught,
Enclosed there, within this vale
Close studded with gilded nails,
Its stone walls all painted over
With fine work in precious colours.
But nothing gave him such pain
As not knowing where his bane,
The wounded knight, had gone.
The door of a chamber shone
In the wall of the narrow way,
As he stood there in dismay;
Through it, there came a maid,
Who beauty and charm displayed,
Closing it after her again.
When she saw my Lord Yvain
She was also dismayed at first:
'Surely, sir knight, this is the worst
Time' she said, 'to enter here.
If any other should appear
You will be done to death,
For my lord breathes his last breath,
And you it is that wrought the deed.
My lady is filled with grief, indeed
And all her people round her cry,
Of sorrow and anger like to die,
They know you are prisoned here
But their sorrow so great appears,
They cannot deal with you as yet.
If they'd hang you by the neck
They'll be scarcely like to fail,
When these narrows they assail.'
And my Lord Yvain replied,
'They could never if they tried
Take or kill me, if God so will.'
'No,' she cried, 'for I have still
The power to protect you here.
He's no man who shows his fear;
So I take you to be full brave
Seeing that you are not dismayed.
And rest assured that I will do
All I can to serve and honour you,
As you would do the same for me.
To the royal court, my lady
Sent me once to carry a message;
I suppose I was not of an age
To be as practised in courtesy
As a maiden at court should be;

But never a knight took the care
To say a single word to me there,
Except for one, now standing here;
But out of kindness to a mere
Maid, you did me honour and service;
And, for your fair honour, in this
Place you shall now win your reward.
I know the name that they accord
To you, for I recognise you again,
You are the son of King Urien,
And go by the name of Yvain,
And you may be sure and certain,
That if you listen to my advice
You'll ne'er be caught in their vice.
So take now this ring from me,
And return it later, if you please,
Once I shall have delivered you.'
She added further fair words too,
As she handed him the ring:
It would conceal him, this thing
As sapwood by the bark of a tree
Is hidden away, so none can see.
But the ring must be worn aright,
So the stone was hid from sight,
For if the stone was so turned
He need have no more concern.
Even among his enemies
He need not fear their enmity,
For with the ring on his finger
None there would see him linger
However sharp their eye might be,
Any more than the inner tree,
Hid by the bark, showed plain.
All this pleased my Lord Yvain.
When her advice was complete,
She led him to a niche, its seat
Covered with a quilt more fair
Than had the Duke of Austria;
There she said that if he wished
To dine, she'd bring him a dish
Or two, he accepting her offer.
She sped quickly to her chamber,
And returned as swift as thought,
And a roasted fowl she brought,
And a cake and a napkin appear,
And wine then of a vintage year,
A full jar, capped by a drinking cup,
And last she invited him to sup.
And he who was in need of food,
Ate and drank, and found it good.
BY the time he'd finished eating,
The people within were stirring,

Searching for the knight, for they
Wished to avenge their lord that day,
Whom they'd laid now on his bier.
The maid said to him: 'Do you hear,
My friend, all now come seeking you;
And a great noise and stir doth brew;
But no matter who comes and goes,
Move you not, nor the noise oppose,
For they will never find you, sir,
If from this seat you do not stir;
Soon you will see this place full
Of angry and ill-disposed people,
Who will expect to find you here.
This very way they'll bring the bier
To bury his body on this day;
And they will begin to assay
The paving, walls, and this seat.
Such will prove a joy complete
To a knight who lacks all fear,
Watching them, searching near,
Yet blindly and in vain away,
So discomfited, and all astray,
They'll be awash with anger.
But here I can stay no longer,
Thus I'll seek no more to say,
But thank God who, this very day
Has brought me to the only place
Where I might serve your grace,
As I so greatly wished to do.'
Then the maid vanished from view.
Even before she turned away,
The host were all making their way,
From beyond the gates, toward
The place, gripping club and sword;
Nearer and neared they pressed,
Hostile and angry in their quest,
And found the rear of his steed
Beyond the portcullis. Indeed
They also thought now to find
With the gate full open, confined
Within, the murderer they sought.
And so they lifted that iron port,
Which had brought a sudden end
To the lives of a vast host of men;
And as the levers were now unset,
There remained no obstacle as yet,
So they passed the gate two abreast.
There they discovered all the rest
Of Yvain's charger that had died,
But never a searching eye espied
My Lord Yvain, silent and still,
Whom they gladly sought to kill.

Yet he could see them, in their rage,
Besides themselves, all engaged
In calling out: 'How can this be?
Not one opening can we see,
By which a living being might
Flee, larger than a bird in flight,
A squirrel, marmot or another
Kind of similar small creature.
The gate's a grid of iron bars,
And descended, where we are,
As soon as the master passed by.
Dead or alive, the man is nigh,
Since there's no sign of him outside.
More than half of his saddle lies
Here within, as we all can see,
But nothing of the man, yet he
Has left these mangled spurs behind,
Sheared at the heel, for us to find.
Come, all this talking is in vain,
Let us look everywhere again,
He must be here still, I believe,
Or we by enchantment deceived,
Or evil spirits whisked him away.'
Thus in a rage they make survey,
Seeking him all about the place.
About the stone walls they race,
Looking on and under the seats.
And yet my Lord Yvain's retreat
Remained free of all their blows,
Thus he remained unbeaten, though,
They thrashed around sufficiently,
And made as much noise as can be,
Laying about them with their clubs,
As a blind man pounds on his tub
Unable to see all the things inside.
As they were hunting, far and wide
And under the seats, uselessly
There entered the loveliest lady,
That any mortal man hath seen.
So fair a Christian dame, I mean,
Has ne'er been spoken of, although
She was nigh mad with sorrow,
As if seeking the means to die.
And suddenly she gave a cry,
So loud no cry could be louder,
Then fell forward with a shudder,
And when roused from her faint,
Like a madwoman made plaint,
Clawing her face in deep despair
And tearing fiercely at her hair;
She tore at her hair and her clothes,
And, at every step, fell then rose.

Nor was there any comfort here,
 Forced to view her husband's bier
 Carried before her, and him dead,
 She could no more be comforted;
 Thus she cried loudly for her loss.
 The holy water and the cross
 And the tapers before him went,
 Borne by nuns from the convent,
 And the missal and the censers,
 And the priests to mutter there
 The absolution of the dead,
 At the poor soul's feet and head.
 MY Lord Yvain heard the cries
 Of a sorrow none could realise
 In words nor could e'er describe
 To see penned by some scribe.
 Thus the sad procession passed,
 But a large crowd were massed
 In the space around the bier,
 For warm crimson blood appeared
 Trickling from the dead man's wounds;
 Thus the note of justice sounds,
 Declaring present, without fail,
 One whose actions had entailed
 The dead man's death and defeat.
 Thus, with their quest incomplete,
 They searched again and again,
 Till all of them were weary, drained
 By all of this trouble and toil
 Created by their fresh turmoil,
 On seeing the warm crimson blood,
 That from the corpse did flood.
 And my Lord Yvain, he too
 Was well-nigh beaten black and blue,
 Yet did not stir, while the crowd
 All took to wondering aloud
 As to why those drops were shed,
 That blood that trickled from the dead,
 For they'd found naught, and cried:
 'The murderer is still here, inside,
 And yet no sign of him we see,
 Here, then, is some strange devilry.'
 At this the lady felt such pain
 She fell in deathly faint again,
 Then, as if she'd lost her mind,
 Cried: God, why cannot they find
 My good lord's killer, that traitor,
 That vicious unknown murderer?
 Good? The best of all good men!
 I know none other I may blame,
 For God, yours will be the fault,
 If you let such escape this vault,

For you are hiding him from view.
 Aught so strange none ever knew,
 Nor such a wrong as you do me,
 In not permitting me to see
 One who must be lurking here.
 Well may I say, if he is near,
 That some phantom from hell,
 Among us, has cast its spell.
 A dire enemy of some kind.
 He's a coward, to my mind,
 And great cowardice he shows,
 For cowardice we must suppose
 In one so fearful of appearing.
 A phantom is a cowardly thing.
 Yet why so cowardly towards me,
 When with my lord you made free?
 A vain thing, and an empty thing,
 Why are you not a captive being?
 Why can I not grasp you now?
 And how could it be, I trow,
 That you could kill my lord
 Unless treachery were abroad?
 I doubt my lord would e'er have been
 Defeated, if your face he'd seen.
 Nor God nor man has met, I know,
 His like, or could his equal show,
 In this world now; if you indeed
 Were mortal, both in form and deed,
 With my lord you'd ne'er have dared
 To fight, for none with him compared.'
 Thus with herself she doth debate,
 Thus she struggles with her fate,
 Thus she exhausts herself anon,
 And the people with her move on,
 Showing the great grief felt by all,
 As they bear the corpse to its burial.
 After their efforts the crowd now rest,
 Exhausted by their fruitless quest,
 And leave off, in their weariness,
 A search that brought no success,
 In finding the miscreant, at least.
 And now the nuns and the priests,
 Having ended the funeral service,
 All leave the church, and with this
 Are on their way to the sepulchre.
 But to all this not a moment's care
 Doth the maid in the chamber give;
 My Lord Yvain her thoughts are with;
 And swiftly she runs to him now
 And says: 'Fair sir, all that crowd,
 Searching for you, are now at rest,
 Having raised no small tempest,

And nosed about in every corner,
More closely than a setter ever
Searched for a partridge or a quail;
Fear then was yours, without fail.'
'By my faith,' said he, 'you say true.
I never felt such fear; but a view,
Through some opening, would I
Willingly have as it goes by,
If such were possible of course,
Of the procession and the corpse.'
Yet he's no interest to mention
In the corpse or the procession,
He'd gladly see them go up in sparks,
And happily pay a thousand marks.
A thousand marks? By God, three!
He speaks of them, but tis the lady,
That's where his true interest lies.
The maiden lets him feast his eyes,
He, from a little window, gazing,
She, as best she can, repaying
Him for his display of honour.
From this window down upon her,
The lady that is, my Lord Yvain
Spies, as she cries aloud, in pain:
'On your soul may God have mercy,
My fair lord, for none did see
A knight there in the saddle who,
In any manner, equalled you.
My dear lord, there was no other
Who might rival you in honour,
In courtesy, or chivalry;
Your friend was generosity,
And courage your companion.
So may your soul now make one
Among the saints, my fair sire!'
And then she tore at her attire
And all she laid her hands upon.
A hard thing when said and done
It was then for my Lord Yvain
Not to run, and her hands restrain.
But the maiden at first requested,
Then begged and, finally, insisted,
Though courteously and with grace,
That he not, rashly, show his face;
'Here, all is well,' said the maiden,
'So move you not, for any reason,
Till all their sorrow has abated.
And all the turmoil they created,
For presently they will depart.
If you take my advice to heart,
And can restrain yourself, I say,
Good things may come your way.

Tis best if you are seated here,
And watch those who may appear,
As they pass, whom you can view,
While they can see naught of you,
In that there is great advantage.
But take care to commit no outrage,
For he who fails in self-restraint,
And gives good reason for complaint,
When tis neither the time nor place,
Folly, not courage, doth embrace.
Take care that your foolish thought
To foolish deeds doth ne'er resort.
The wise their foolish thoughts do hide,
And see their wiser thoughts applied.
So take care not to risk your head,
But dwell among the wise instead.
Your head will ne'er win a ransom;
Let self be your consideration,
And from all my good counsel learn;
Rest quietly here, till I return,
For I must now join the throng,
I have lingered here too long,
And I fear they must suspect me
If they now should fail to see me
Mingling there with all the rest,
And it would harm me, I confess.'
SHE then departs, while he remains
With naught to show for all his pains.
He's loath to see the corpse interred,
When he has naught but his own word
As evidence to prove aright
That he subdued and slew the knight,
Lacking a witness or guarantor
He can present on reaching court.
'I'll meet with scorn and mockery,
For Kay is spiteful, and fell is he,
Full of quips, scattered at whim;
I shall ne'er have peace from him.
He'll be forever laughing at me,
With his taunts and his mockery,
Just as he did the other day.'
For the taunts from my Lord Kay
Still have power to wound his heart.
But Love a fresh quarry doth start;
Wild in the chase, Love hunts anew,
Stirring Yvain through and through,
And seizes on the prey wholly,
His heart snatched by his enemy.
He loves her who hates him most.
And the lady has avenged the loss
Of her lord, though unknowingly,
A vengeance far greater than she

Could ever have wrought unless
Love helped her to her success,
Who took him softly, by surprise,
The heart struck through the eyes,
A wound that longer doth endure
Than any dealt by lance or sword.
A sword-cut is soon made sound
Once a physician treats the wound,
But love's wound is worse I fear
Whene'er the physician is near.
Such the wound of my Lord Yvain,
Of which he'll ne'er be healed again,
For Love now is ensconced within.
All those places he once dwelt in,
Love abandons, and lives there,
Nor lodging nor host doth prefer
Above this one, and is most wise
To leave the hovel where he lies,
And not some other lodging seek,
Who often haunts dire hostelries.
Shame it is that Love doth such,
And seeks vile places overmuch,
Conducts himself in so ill a manner
Choosing places lacking honour,
Ever the lowliest ones, to rest,
Just as readily as the best.
But here he is most welcome, for
He will be shown great honour;
In such a place tis well to stay.
Love should always act this way,
Who is of so noble a nature
That it is strange such a creature
Will lie where shame is, and harm.
He is like one who spreads his balm
Over the embers, amongst the ash,
Hates honour, and loves the brash,
Blending sugar with agrimony,
Mixing acrid soot with honey.
Yet this time he hath not done so
But lodged nobly, here where no
Man can reproach him, instead.
When they have buried the dead,
The crowd of people go their way.
And not a clerk or sergeant stays
Nor any lady, but only she,
Who doth not hide her misery.
But she alone remains behind,
Wrings her hands, un-resigned,
Clutches her throat, beats her palms,
Or from her psalter reads a psalm,
A psalter illumined in gold.
All the while Yvain doth hold

His position, and gazes at her,
And the more that he regards her
The more he loves her, in delight.
He only wishes that she might
Cease her weeping, leave her book,
And yield him but a word or look.
Love has brought about this longing
There, at the window, Love found him.
Yet of his wish he now despairs,
For he neither thinks, nor dares
To hope, it can be realised,
And says: 'A fool I am, unwise
To wish for that which cannot be;
Her lord met his death through me,
And yet I'd see us reconciled!
By God, I know less than a child,
If I know not she hates me now
More than anything; yet, I trow,
That I say 'now' shows wisdom,
For though she has good reason
A woman is of more than one mind,
And her mood now I hope to find
Altered, and alter it will, I'll dare
To say, so I'd be mad to despair;
And may God grant it alters soon,
Since to be her slave I'm doomed
Always, for such is Love's desire.
Whoever's heart does not beat higher
When Love appears to him, then he
Commits a treason and felony.
I say to him, and let all men hear,
That he deserves no joy or cheer.
And yet of that say naught to me,
Since I must love my enemy,
As indeed I must hate her not
Or to betray Love were my lot;
I must love as he doth intend.
Should she then call me friend?
Yes, truly, for her love I'd claim.
And I thus call myself the same,
Though she hate me, as of right,
Since I killed her beloved knight.
Must I then prove her enemy?
No, her friend, of a certainty,
For I ne'er wished so for love, I own;
At her lovely tresses, I make moan;
Brighter than gold shines each tress;
I fill with anguish and distress,
Seeing her at those tresses tear;
And none can staunch the tears there;
The tears that from her eyes do flow.
And all these things distress me so!

Although they are filled with tears,
 Of which an endless stream appears,
 Never were eyes so beautiful,
 And her tears render my eyes full;
 Nor aught causes me such distress
 As her face, that her nails address;
 Such treatment it has not merited;
 I ne'er saw a face so finely tinted,
 So fresh, or so delicately formed.
 It pierces my heart to see it harmed.
 And how she clutches at her throat!
 Surely she does to herself the most
 Hurt that any poor woman could do,
 And yet no crystal or glass, tis true,
 Is as smooth, or e'er as lovely,
 As her throat, in all its beauty.
 God! Why must she wound herself so?
 Wring her hands, and deal fresh blows
 To her breast thus, and scar her body?
 Would she not be a wonder to see,
 If she was filled with happiness,
 When she is so lovely in distress?
 Yes, in truth, for I would swear,
 That never has Nature anywhere
 So outdone her own art, for she
 Has passed beyond the boundary
 Of aught, I think, she ever wrought.
 How could such beauty be sought?
 Its presence here, how understand?
 God made her, with His naked hand,
 That Nature might look on amazed.
 For all her effort she would waste,
 Wishing to forge her likeness here,
 Since she could ne'er create her peer.
 Not God Himself, were he to try,
 Could know, tis my belief say I,
 How to create her likeness again,
 Whatever heights He might attain.'
THUS my Lord Yvain spied upon
 She whom grief had nigh undone;
 Nor may it ever again occur
 That some man held prisoner,
 Should love in so strange a manner,
 That he is unable to speak to her
 On his own behalf or another do so.
 So he watched there, at the window,
 Until he saw the lady depart,
 While the others, for their part,
 Lowered the twin portcullises.
 Another might have felt distress,
 One who preferred deliverance,
 To long imprisonment, perchance,

But he was otherwise disposed,
 Careless of gates, open or closed.
 He'd not have departed, certainly,
 If the passage had been left free,
 Unless she'd granted him leave,
 And her pardon he'd received,
 Freely, for the death of her lord;
 Then indeed he might go abroad,
 Whom Honour and Shame detain,
 On either hand him to arraign.
 For he would be ashamed to leave,
 Since none at court would believe
 All the outcome of his adventure.
 And in addition there was the lure
 Of a further sighting of the lady.
 If that were granted, and that only!
 So captivity gives him scant concern.
 He would rather die there than return.
 But now the maiden doth reappear,
 Wishing to offer him good cheer,
 And company, and provide solace,
 And fetch and carry to that place
 Whatever was needful he desired.
 But she found him pensive, tired
 By a longing that caused him pain,
 And said to him: 'My Lord Yvain,
 How has it gone with you this day?'
 'I spent the time in a pleasant way.'
 'Pleasant? How can that be true?'
 How may one hunted, such as you,
 Spend his time thus, pleasantly,
 Unless his death he desires to see?'
 'Surely,' he said, 'my sweet friend,
 I have no desire to meet my end,
 What I saw has pleased me though,
 And, God's my witness, still does so,
 And will please me, I know, forever.'
 'Now you may leave all that bother,'
 She said: 'For indeed I know well
 Where such words lead; let me tell
 You now, I'm no foolish innocent,
 Ignorant of what those words meant.
 But you come along now, with me,
 For I shall find a way, presently,
 To release you from this prison.
 You shall soon have your freedom.'
 And he replied: 'Be certain I
 Will not depart, though here I die,
 Like a vile thief and in secret.
 When all the people are met,
 In the narrow way outside,
 Then I can go, and need not hide,

Rather than leave here secretly.
 After these words then doth he
 Follow her to the little chamber.
 And the maiden, kindly as ever,
 Seeking to serve, doth dispense
 All there, for his convenience,
 Everything that he might need.
 And, as she does, reflects indeed,
 On all that he had told her before,
 All his delight with what he saw,
 When they sought for him outside,
 Intent on ensuring that he died.
THE maid was in such good standing
 With the lady that there was nothing
 She could not say to her, without
 Regard to how it might turn out,
 For she was her close companion.
 Why then not give of her opinion,
 In order to bring comfort to her,
 If it might redound to her honour?
 At first she says to her, privately:
 'My lady, it is a wonder to me
 To see you so wild with grief.
 Tis surely not, lady, your belief
 You'll recover your lord by sighs?'
 'No, I wished rather,' she replies,
 'To die thus, of grief and sorrow '
 'But why?' 'So that I might follow.'
 'Follow? Why may God defend you,
 And as fine a lord yet send you
 As is consistent with His might.'
 'What mischief is this you cite?
 He could not send me one so fine.'
 'A finer, if you'll make him thine,
 He shall send you, as I will prove.'
 'Be gone, there is none so, to love.'
 'Such there is, if you wish, today.
 For tell me now, if you can say,
 Who it is will defend your land
 When King Arthur is at hand,
 Who in a week we'll see riding
 To the stone beside the spring
 You have warning of his intent,
 For the Demoiselle Sauvage sent
 Letters to you, to that effect;
 Firm action now will you reject!
 You should be taking counsel how
 You might defend your fountain now.
 And yet your tears you will not stay!
 Now you ought not to delay,
 For all the knights you can show
 Are worth less, as well you know,

Than a solitary chambermaid:
 If it please you, my lady,' says the maid,
 'The best of them will never wield
 To any purpose a lance or shield.
 Of cowards you have many here,
 Who are scarce brave enough I fear
 Even to dare to mount a horse;
 And the king comes in such force
 He will seize all, and none defend.'
 The lady knows it, and doth attend,
 Aware that this counsel is sincere,
 But to a foolishness doth adhere,
 That is present in other women,
 And seen in almost all of them,
 Who of folly themselves accuse,
 And what they truly wish, refuse.
 'Be gone,' she said, 'Spare me pain!
 If I hear you speak of this again,
 You will suffer, except you flee,
 So greatly your words weary me.'
 'Well, God be praised, then, Madame,
 Tis plain that you are a woman;
 Who is angered if she hears
 Good advice, when such appears.'
THEN the maiden went her way,
 With the lady, having had her say,
 Thinking she might be in error:
 Wishing she could know moreover,
 How, in truth, the maiden might
 Show there lived a better knight
 Than her lord had proved to be.
 She'd listen now, and willingly,
 But had forbidden her to speak,
 No more advice could she seek,
 Until the maid appeared again,
 Whom no stricture could contain,
 For she ran on in like manner:
 'Oh my lady must you rather
 Choose then to die of grief?
 From modesty, tis my belief
 And shame you should desist,
 For tis not seemly, in the least,
 To lament your lord so long.
 Remember to whom you belong,
 Your people and your noble birth,
 Think you all virtue and all worth
 Have died together with your lord?
 There are a hundred knights abroad,
 As good or better, this day, say I.'
 'God confound you, if you lie!
 Come name me but a single one
 Thought to be as fine a man,

As my lord was all his days.
 'If I were to sound the praise
 Of such a one, you'd be angry,
 And in less esteem hold me.'
 'I assure you, truly, I will not.'
 'Then may it brighten your lot,
 And good come to you always,
 That you let me sound his praise;
 May God incline to your wish!
 I see no reason to hide all this,
 For not a soul's listening to us.
 Doubtless I may appear audacious,
 But I will say how it seems to me:
 Now when two knights, in chivalry,
 Meet together, armed for the fight,
 Whom do you think the better knight,
 Should the one defeat the other?
 As for me, I'd honour the victor
 With the prize. Whom would you?'
 'It seems what you have in view
 Is to entrap me with your words.'
 'By my faith, truth will be heard,
 And my words shall prove true,
 For, indeed, I shall prove to you
 That much the better man is he
 Who slew your lord than was he:
 He undid your lord, then pursued
 Him furiously, and what ensued
 Was that he was then imprisoned.'
 'Now, hear the word of unreason,'
 Cried the lady, 'the wildest ever.
 Be gone, ill spirit, and forever.
 Be gone, you foolish, tiresome girl.
 Never such vain invective hurl,
 Nor show yourself here, again,
 Or speak out in defence of him.'
 'Indeed, my lady, I well knew
 I should earn no thanks from you.
 And I said as much ere I began.
 Yet you declared, for so it ran,
 That you would reveal no anger,
 Nor think the less of me, ever.
 Badly your promise you keep;
 For your anger I surely reap,
 And all your ire on me is spent,
 Who lose, in failing to be silent.'
THEN she returns to that chamber
 Where my Lord Yvain awaits her,
 Which has concealed him with ease.
 But to him naught now doth please,
 For the lady he can no longer see.
 He hears not, and pays no heed,

To the news that the maiden tells.
 And, all night, the lady as well
 Is in a like state of distress,
 Thinking, in her unhappiness,
 Of how to defend the fountain,
 And repenting of her action
 In blaming the maiden who
 She had treated harshly too,
 For she is now perfectly sure
 That never, for any reward
 Nor for any love she bore him,
 Would the maid have spoken of him;
 And that she loves her lady more,
 Nor would bring her shame, or
 Annoy, or ill advice intend.
 For she is too much her friend.
 Thus the lady is quite altered,
 And as for her she has insulted,
 She fears the maid will never
 With a true devotion love her;
 And he whom she denied, she
 Now pardons, and most sincerely,
 And with right, and with reason,
 For he has done her no wrong.
 Thus she argues as if he were
 Now standing there before her;
 Yet with herself debates, say I:
 'Come,' she says, 'can you deny,
 That tis through you my lord died?'
 'That,' says he, 'I've ne'er denied,
 And yes, I slew him.' 'Why? Tell me,
 Was this thing done to injure me,
 Out of hatred perhaps, or spite?'
 'May death hound me without respite,
 If I've done aught to injure you.'
 'Then you've done me no wrong, tis true,
 Nor him, for to slay you he would
 Have sought, and done so if he could.
 As regards this, it seems, sir knight,
 I judged well, and have judged aright.'
 So she proves that her own opinion
 Shows sense, and justice, and reason:
 And to hate him would not be wise;
 Thus what she wishes she justifies,
 And lights a fire within by the same
 Means which, like a bush when flame
 Is set beneath it, smokes on and on
 Till stirred a little or breathed upon.
 If the maiden came to her now,
 She'd win the argument, I trow,
 For which reproach she'd earned,
 And by it had been badly burned.

And return she did, with the day,
 Commencing again, in a like way,
 From the point she had reached;
 Again, to the lady, she preached,
 Who knew she had acted wrongly
 In attacking the maid so strongly.
 Now she wished to make amends
 And asked, now they were friends,
 His name, nature, and ancestry,
 Wise now in her humility,
 Saying: 'I would cry you mercy,
 In that I spoke so foolishly,
 And hurt you, scorning, in my pride,
 Advice that must not be denied.
 But tell me now, all you know
 Of the knight whom you have so
 Praised to me, for I beg of thee,
 What man is he, of what family?
 If he is of such who might attain
 Me, then the lord of my domain
 I shall make him, I promise you,
 If he, that is, will wed me too.
 But he must act in such a way
 None can reproach me and say:
 'There, is a lady who has wed
 One by whom her lord is dead.'
 'In God's name, lady, so will he;
 This knight is of high nobility,
 More so than any, in the bible,
 That issued from the line of Abel.
 'How is he named?' 'My Lord Yvain.'
 'By my faith, he is no mere thane,
 But, as I know, is of noblemen,
 If he's the son of King Urien.'
 'Indeed, my lady, you speak true.'
 'And when shall we see him too?'
 'In five days' time.' 'Tis too long,
 I wish he were already among
 Us, say tomorrow, or tonight.'
 'Lady, not even a bird in flight
 Could fly so far in a single day,
 But I'll send a squire without delay,
 One who shall travel right swiftly,
 And by tomorrow night may be
 Arrived at King Arthur's court;
 At least, my lady, tis my thought
 That is the place where he will be.'
 'This is too slow, it seems to me.
 The days are long; tell him that he
 Must be back by tomorrow eve,
 And that he must brook no delay
 But swiftly hasten on his way,

Swifter than he has ever done.
 Two days journey he'll make in one,
 If he tries his hardest, and then
 The moon shines bright again,
 So let him turn night into day,
 And when he returns I'll repay
 Him with whatever he might wish.'
 'Leave me then to take care of this,
 And you will find Yvain is here,
 As soon as ever he can appear.
 Meanwhile your people command,
 And of them counsel demand
 Regarding the coming of the king.
 To maintain that customary thing,
 The sole defence of your fountain,
 You must seek their counsel again;
 Yet none will show himself so bold
 As to boast he will there uphold
 Its sole defence; then you may say
 That you must wed, straight away;
 A certain knight doth seek your hand,
 Most suitable; they must understand
 That you'll not wed if they disagree.
 And then the outcome you will see.
 I know they are such cowards all,
 That if on another man should fall
 A burden far too heavy for them,
 At your feet they will fall again,
 And offer up their thanks to you,
 For what's beyond their power to do.
 For the man who fears his shadow,
 Will, gladly, if he can, forego
 Any encounter with lance or spear,
 For that's a game that cowards fear.'
 'By my faith,' the lady replied,
 'Such is my wish; I so decide.
 Indeed, I had already thought
 Of this plan that you have wrought,
 And so that is what we will do.
 Why linger here? Be off with you,
 Whilst my people I'm gathering.'
 And when they finished speaking,
 The maid feigned to send a man
 To seek Yvain in his own land.
 Meanwhile, each day she sees that he
 Bathes and grooms himself, while she
 Prepares for him robes of crimson,
 Of good cloth, fine as any person's,
 New, and lined throughout with vair.
 There is nothing that he needs there
 She fails to bring, his body to deck.
 For a gold clasp gleams, at his neck,

Ornamented with precious stones,
 Such lend grace to a man, I own,
 And a belt and a wallet made
 Of some kind of rich brocade.
 She fits him out handsomely,
 And then goes to tell her lady
 That the messenger has returned,
 And his reward has truly earned.
 'So,' she cries, 'when doth he appear,
 Your Lord Yvain? 'He's already here.'
 'Already here!' Bring him to me,
 Secretly, then, and in privacy,
 For on me now no others attend;
 And let no other this way wend,
 There is no need here for a fourth.'
 At this the maiden doth go forth,
 And returns to her guest, apace,
 But doth not reveal, in her face,
 The joy that in her heart arose.
 But feigns that her lady knows
 She has concealed him somewhere.
 And says to him: 'By God, fair sir,
 There is no point in hiding now.
 The thing's so widely known, I trow
 That even my lady has heard.
 She reproaches me, with every word,
 And doubtless will blame me more;
 And yet this she says, to reassure,
 That I may still bring you before her,
 Without harm, or risk, or danger.
 No harm will come to you, I feel,
 Except one thing I must reveal,
 Or I'd commit an act of treason,
 She'll wish to keep you in prison.'
 'That,' he said, 'indeed, I'd wish,
 Nor will it harm me in the least,
 For in such a prison I long to be.'
 'And, by this right hand you see,
 So you shall! But, swiftly, come,
 And my advice is this, in sum,
 You must act humbly before her;
 Thus captivity will prove easier.
 And as for that, feel no dismay,
 I think perhaps that prison may
 Not seem too tiresome to you.'
 Thus the maid leads him on anew,
 Now alarming, now reassuring,
 Speaking, as onward they are stealing,
 Of the prison to which he goes;
 For love is a prison, God knows,
 And they are right who so claim,
 For all who love do seek the same.

TAKING him by the hand again,
 The maiden leads my Lord Yvain
 To where he will be dearly loved,
 Yet thinks he will be disapproved,
 And that he thinks so is no wonder.
 They came upon the lady yonder
 Seated upon a crimson cushion.
 Great fear was his first emotion,
 When our Yvain made his entry
 To the room, and saw the lady,
 While she to him said not a word.
 Thus he felt more deeply stirred,
 And by fear was much dismayed,
 Thinking he had been betrayed.
 He stood mute so long before her
 That the maiden cried, in anger:
 'A thousand curses on this woman
 Who leads a knight here, by the hand,
 To a lovely lady's room, one who
 Is motionless, and speechless too,
 Without the sense to say his name!'

Then by the arm she seized the same,
 Saying: 'Step forward now, sir knight,
 Forget your fear that she may bite,
 Though tis you that killed her lord,
 And seek for peace now and accord.
 And I will join with you in prayer
 That she pardons you for that affair,
 In which you slew Esclados the Red,
 Who was her lord.' Yvain now said,
 Like a true lover clasping his hands
 While on his knees you understand:
 'Lady, I will not ask for mercy,
 But rather I must thank you humbly
 For aught you would inflict on me.
 Naught you do can me displease.'
 'Truly? And if I have you killed?'
 'Lady, my thanks, if tis your will,
 For from me you'll hear naught else.'
 'Never,' said she, 'have I heard tell
 Of aught like this; this very hour
 You place yourself in my power,
 Without my exercising force.'
 'Lady, there doth exist no force,
 In truth, as strong as that, I say,
 Which commands me to obey
 All your pleasure, and wholly.
 I'll not hesitate to apply me
 To aught you are pleased to order.
 And if there were any way to alter
 The fact of your lord's death, I vow,
 Though not to blame, I'd do so now.'

'What,' said she, 'do you address
 Me, thinking now to win forgiveness,
 And feign you were not in any way
 To blame for my lord's death that day!'

'Lady' he said, 'pray you mercy,
 When your fair lord attacked me
 Was I wrong to offer stout defence?
 How does he commit an offence
 Who is at risk of capture or death,
 Should he deny the other breath?
 'He doth not, if we judge aright,
 What good would be served, sir knight,
 If your death were my sole concern?
 Yet now I would, willingly, learn
 From whence that great force may
 Arise, that compels you to obey
 My every wish, unquestioningly.
 Of all accusations you are free;
 But sit, so you may now explain
 What force renders you so tame.'
 'Lady,' he said, 'the force doth rise
 From my heart; for you it sighs,
 And the heart prompts my desire.'
 'And what prompts the heart, fair sire?'
 'The eyes, lady.' 'And the eyes?'
 'The beauty that in you they spy.'
 'And that beauty, how doth it err?'
 'Lady, it leads love to despair.'
 'Love? Of whom?' 'Of you, my dear.'
 'I?' 'Truly.' 'Of what character?'
 'A love that could ne'er be deeper,
 One that seeks joy of you forever,
 Joy it could never find elsewhere;
 Such that no other thought I share;
 Such that I wholly yield myself;
 Such that I love you more than self;
 Such that for your protection, I
 As it please you, will live or die.'
 'And would you dare to undertake
 To defend the fountain for my sake?'
 'Yes, truly, lady, 'gainst any lord.'
 'Well then, we are truly in accord.'
THUS they are fully reconciled,
 And the lady, who hath beguiled
 Her barons already, as we know,
 Says: 'From here, now we will go,
 And seek my people in the hall,
 Who do advise, and counsel, all,
 Because of the need that they see,
 That I take a husband to me,
 And, because of that need, so I do,
 For here I give myself to you.

Nor should I refuse such a one,
 A valiant knight and a king's son.'
NOW has the maiden achieved
 All that she'd wished, I believe,
 And my Lord Yvain's mastery's
 More than he'd dared hope to see;
 For the lady, taking his hand,
 Leads him to the hall, where stand
 All her knights and all her people,
 And my Lord Yvain seems so noble
 That all gaze on him with wonder,
 And rising to their feet they render
 A bow, and thus all welcome, now,
 My Lord Yvain, and all avow:
 'This is he whom my lady fair
 Would wed, cursed be those who dare
 Object to such rare nobility.
 The Empress of Rome would be
 Nobly wed to this best of men.
 Well, if he has already spoken,
 And she him, with naked hand,
 Tomorrow takes and weds the man.'
 Thus they all murmured together.
 There, where they could see her;
 At the very top of the hall,
 She was seated before them all.
 And my Lord Yvain made as if
 To sit at her feet, against her wish,
 For she raised him, and did call,
 At once, upon her Seneschal
 To speak out, both loud and clear,
 So that all her folk might hear.
 No slow or ineloquent man,
 Thus, the Seneschal began:
 'My lords,' he said, 'war is coming.
 Not a day goes past but the king
 Prepares fresh forces to gather,
 With all the speed he can muster.
 Before this fortnight is over
 All to ruin he will deliver,
 Unless some champion appears.
 When my lady, not seven years
 Ago was wed, she did so freely
 On your advice, and now that he
 Her lord is dead, doth weep and moan.
 Six feet of earth is all he owns,
 Who was the lord of this country,
 And glory of our nobility.
 Tis a pity he his life did yield;
 A woman cannot bear a shield,
 Nor can she battle with a lance.
 Marriage her role would enhance,

Marriage with some worthy lord.
Never was greater need or more
Pressing; advise that she wed again,
So that the custom might remain,
That which this castle has seen
For more than sixty years, I mean.’
At this the gathering proclaimed
That it was right she wed again.
And bowed to her accordingly,
Strengthening her desire indeed.
Yet as if despite herself, she lent
Her ear to them, and gave consent,
Speaking of her wishes, indeed,
As she would have if they’d not agreed:
‘My lords, since it is your wish,
Of the knight by me, I say this:
He has sought and won my hand,
He undertakes to defend the land,
In my service and for my honour,
For which I thank him, on your
Behalf. True, I did not know him,
Yet I had heard much talk of him.
Know, he is of high lineage then
The son of famed King Urien.
Besides his noble parentage,
He displays such great courage,
Such wisdom, and such courtesy,
That he is full worthy of me.
Of a certain Lord Yvain, I know,
You have heard all men speak so.
And this is he, who seeks my hand,
And I shall have, you understand,
A nobler husband than I deserve,
On the day this marriage occurs.’
‘Today,’ they reply, ‘if you are wise
Your marriage shall be solemnised,
For it would be folly to delay
So fair a thing for e’en a day.’
They so beg her she doth consent
To that which was ever her intent,
For Love himself doth her command,
To do as the council doth demand;
Yet more honour doth accrue
If her people request it too;
And their urging is no grief,
Rather it strengthens her belief
That her heart should win the day.
The horse that’s already on its way,
Goes faster still for being spurred.
Before them all she speaks the word,
And gives herself to my Lord Yvain.
And from the hand of her chaplain,

He received the Lady of Landuc,
(*Laudine, heir to Laudunet, the Duke*)
And thus, without the least delay
The two were wed, that very day;
And the marriage, then celebrated,
With mitres and croziers was sated,
For the lady had in no way forgot
To summon each bishop and abbot.
Many were there, and great richness,
And all folk full of happiness,
More so than I’d know how to tell
Though I thought long and well;
Better be silent than court disaster.
Now is my Lord Yvain the master,
And the dead man is quite forgot;
He who slew him his wife has got,
And they have commerce together;
And all men love their new master,
More than they ever loved the dead.
He is now their liege lord instead.
They feasted till the eve of the day
When King Arthur came to assay
The wondrous fountain and the stone,
And did not venture there alone,
But brought with him his company,
His whole household, to that country,
Such that not one remained behind.
And Lord Kay now spoke his mind:
‘Ay! What has become of Yvain
Who at our dinner did maintain
That he would avenge his cousin;
For with us now he should be seen?
Clearly twas the wine that spoke!
He has fled, like a puff of smoke,
Not daring to maintain it now.
He was foolish to boast, I trow.
He’s bold who boasts of his prowess
With none to praise, and no witness,
To testify to his great deeds
Except some flatterer, indeed.
Take the cowardly and the brave,
How differently the two behave;
For the coward before the fire
Boasts of himself, like any liar,
And thinks us fools who know him not.
While the brave are distressed by what
Some other man has said of them
Praising the courage seen in them.
And yet the coward, I maintain,
Is not so wrong if he proclaims
His own prowess himself always;
No other will lie and sing his praise.

If he doth sing it not, who will?
 Even the heralds keep silence still,
 Who yet proclaim the brave aloud,
 But lose the coward in the crowd.'
 Thus did my Lord Kay men deride,
 But then my Lord Gawain replied:
 'Mercy, my Lord Kay, show mercy!
 If Lord Yvain's absent, as I see,
 You know not what duties he has,
 Never so low has he stooped as
 To accuse you of villainy,
 But speaks of you with courtesy.'
 'Sir,' said Kay, I'll hold my peace.
 Today, I shall not dare to speak,
 For I see that it gives you pain.'
 And now the king, to view the rain,
 That basin of water did assign
 To the stone beneath the pine,
 And rain poured down from the sky.
 They waited there and, by and by,
 Fully armed, my Lord Yvain
 Entering the forest once again,
 Came at a mighty gallop indeed,
 Riding a fine and handsome steed,
 Strong and bold, on battle intent.
 And now my Lord Kay was bent
 On demanding the first assay;
 For he always, come what may,
 Wished to begin every melee,
 Every joust, or was out of temper.
 To the king he made his prayer,
 That this first battle might be his.
 'Kay,' said the king, 'if you so wish,
 And since you ask before the rest,
 Not to deny you, pleases me best.'
 'Kay thanks him, and takes the saddle.
 If he can now shame Kay a little,
 My Lord Yvain will be pleased,
 And gladly Kay's defeat he'd see.
 He knows it is Kay from his shield.
 Grasping his own, he takes the field
 As does Kay, and they meet together,
 Horses spur, and their lances lower,
 Holding them gripped in their hand.
 Then extend the lances a little and
 Grasp the butt, wrapped in leather,
 So that as they now clash together
 They deal each other such a blow
 That both the lances splinter so
 They are split down to the handle.
 Kay is knocked from the saddle
 By the force of Lord Yvain's blow,

Turns a somersault then, to follow,
 And strikes the ground helmet first.
 To harm him in some manner worse,
 Is not my Lord Yvain's intent.
 From his steed he makes descent,
 And takes Kay's horse, pleasing many,
 Who cannot help but say, gladly:
 'Behold, behold where he now lies
 He who others doth so despise!
 Nevertheless it behoves us all
 Rightly to pardon his downfall
 For such ne'er befell him before.'
 And approaching now they saw,
 Before the king, my Lord Yvain,
 Leading the war-horse by the rein.
 Which to Arthur he would render.
 'Sire, this steed I here surrender,
 For I'd commit a wrong, I'm sure,
 Should I withhold aught that's yours.'
 'But who are you?' the king replied,
 'I should not know you, except I
 Heard your name freely uttered
 Or saw you without your armour.'
 'Yvain, am I, the very same.'
 Then was Kay filled with shame,
 Mortified, and discomfited,
 For saying that Yvain had fled;
 But the rest shared their delight,
 At Kay's discomfort and the fight.
 Even the king was quietly pleased,
 And Lord Gawain, whole-heartedly,
 Nay, a hundred times more than all,
 That to Yvain doth the victory fall,
 For he loved his company too,
 More than any knight he knew.
 And the king then asked Yvain,
 If it so pleased him, to explain;
 For Arthur had a great desire
 To know all that had transpired,
 What adventure Yvain was on,
 And what honour he had won.
 And so Yvain now tells the tale
 Of how the maiden without fail
 Hath done him loyal service;
 Not passing over aught of this,
 Nor forgetting a single thing.