

THE DEFENCE OF GUINEVERE.(L) The Meeting of Launcelot and Guenevere.

~~Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,
 Whatever may have happened through these years,
 God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie,~~

It chanced upon a day that Launcelot came
 To dwell at Arthur's court: at Christmas-time
 This happened; when the heralds sung his name

Son of King Ban of Benwick, seemed to chime
 Along with all the bells that rang that day,
 O'er the white roofs, with little change of rhyme.

Christmas and whitened winter passed away,
 And over me the April sunshine came,
 Made very awful with black hail clouds, yea

And in the Summer I grew white with flame,
~~And bowed my head down;~~ Autumn, and the sick
 Sure knowledge things would never be the same,

Do I not know now of a day in Spring?
 No minute of that wild day ever slips
 From out my memory; I hear thrushes sing,

And wheresoever I may be, straightway
 Thoughts of it all come up with most fresh sting;

I was half mad with beauty on that day,
 And went without my ladies all alone,
 In a quiet garden wall'd round every way,

----- In that garden fair

Part (1)

-2-

Came Launcelot walking; ~~this is true~~, The kiss
Wherewith we kissed in meeting that Spring day,
I scarce dare talk of the remember'd bliss,

When both our mouths went wandering in one way,
And aching sorely, met among the leaves;
Our hands being left behind strained far away.

Never within a yard of my bright sleeves
Had Launcelot come before; and now, so nigh!
After that day why is it Guenevere grieves?

Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie, *long*
Whatever may have happened ~~through~~ these years,
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie.

(2) The Fight between Launcelot and Mellyagraunce

----- Did you see Mellyagraunce
When Launcelot stood by him? what white fear

Curdled his blood, and how ~~his teeth did dance~~
His side sink in? as my knight cried ~~and said~~:

----- Rise you, sir, who are so fleet
At catching ladies, half-arm'd will I fight,
My left side all uncovered! then I weet,

Up sprang Sir Mellyagraunce with great delight
~~Upon~~ his knave's face;-----

The fight began, and to me they drew nigh;
Ever Sir Launcelot kept him on the right,
~~And traversed warily~~, and ever high

And fast leapt catiff's sword, until my knight
Sudden threw up his sword to his left hand
Caught it, and swung it;— that was all the fight,

-----Mellyagraunce was shent,
For Mellyagraunce had fought against the Lord;

(3) The Love of Launcelot and Guenevere

Oh true as steel come now and talk with me,
I love to see your step upon the ground

----- good friend so dear
To me in everything come here to-night
Or else the hours will pass most dull and drear;

If you come not, I fear this time I might
Get thinking overmuch of times gone by
When I was young, and green hope was in sight,

For no man cares now to know why I sigh;
And no man comes to sing me pleasant songs
Nor any brings me the sweet flowers that lie

So thick in the gardens; therefore one so longs
To see you, Launcelot; that we may be
Like children once again, free from all wrongs

Just for one night. Did he not come to me?
What thing could keep true Launcelot away
If I said, Come? There was one less than three

In my quiet room that night, and we were gay;
Till sudden I rose up, weak, pale, and sick,
Because a bawling broke our dream up, yea

I looked at launcelot's face and could not speak,
~~For he looked helpless too, for a little while;~~
Then I remember how I tried to shriek,

And could not, ~~but fell down;~~ from tile to tile
The stones they threw up rattled o'er my head
And made me dizzier, till within a while

Part (3)

-2-

~~My maids were all about me, and~~ my head
 On Launcelot's breast was being soothed away
 From its white chattering,

You know quite well the story of that fray,

4/2
 How Launcelot still'd their bawling, the mad fit
 That caught ^{up} Gauwaine: all, all, verily,
 But just that which would save me; these things flit.

Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,
 Whatever may have happen'd these long years,
 God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie!

All I have said is truth, by Christ's dear tears.

-HH---HHHHHHHHHH---HH-

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Tuesday