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with the kind regards of the
Thomas Wright



No. 6

ON THE
INFLUENCE OF MEDIÆVAL UPON
WELSH LITERATURE.

EXEMPLIFIED IN THE

Story of the Cort Mantel.

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INFLUENCE OF MEDIEVAL UPON WELSH LITERATURE.

THE STORY OF THE CORT MANTEL.

ALL who are well acquainted with the general literature of Western Europe during the middle ages, know how necessary that general knowledge is to enable us to judge correctly the literature of any one of its separate states or peoples. This is the case, to some degree, at all periods; but it is felt more especially after the tenth century. The establishment of feudalism had formed a centre of the new society which arose from it; and that centre was France, which remained through the medieval period the head and grand exemplar of the feudal system. France, from this moment, began to be the model of social fashions to the peoples of the West: she lent them her language, and with that she communicated to them her literature, and that literature soon began to exercise a very great influence over the literature of every country which came within its limits. Thus, in England, the older literature of the Anglo-Saxons was altogether either superseded, or greatly modified, by what we denominate Anglo-Norman—the literature of northern France, so named from the dialect in which it was written. This same French, or, if we like to keep the term, Anglo-Norman, literature had equally a powerful influence over that of the Celtic race, whether in Wales, in Scotland, or in Ireland; and it is extremely important that that influence should be investigated with more care, and with more knowledge of both sides of the question, than have hitherto been bestowed upon it. The cause of its influence is easily understood. Feudalism had great attractions to peoples who still lived in a state of clanship; and, once established, it drew constantly from its centre. The literature of the feudal minstrel, which addressed itself directly to feudal

feelings in every form, and was at the same time most frequently anonymous, and existed only orally, was carried incessantly from the centre to its most distant dependencies, and easily took root among people who soon began to look upon feudalism as a condition coeval with their own race. Its stories and legends, therefore, as well as its principles, were soon adopted as native by peoples to whom they were really foreign; and their true character can only be detected by a very large and deep study of the subject. This may be investigated, at least most popularly, by tracing particular branches of literature, or even particular sentiments or legends, from one country to another; and I venture on this occasion to take as an example one of these legends, which is in many respects curious and interesting, although it is, perhaps, in some respects, not quite the best which might have been chosen.

The morality of the middle ages was not of a very elevated character, and the frequent failings of the weaker sex appear in the popular literature rather as a subject of jocularly than of reprehension. It was in this spirit that people sought expedients for detecting female frailty, several of which are commemorated in medieval stories; and tests for this purpose are sometimes introduced even into the old manuscripts of domestic receipts. One of these tests best known in romance was an enchanted mantle, which, when placed on a lady who had sinned, drew up or contracted her dress so as to expose her person. The first shape in which we find this story in the existing literature, is a short French poem of the thirteenth century, of which the following is a brief outline.

Once King Arthur called his knights to hold a splendid feast at Pentecost, and he ordered each to bring with him his lady, whether wife or mistress. It was a crowded assembly, and many a bold knight and fair dame or damsel was present. Now it was Arthur's custom on these occasions never to sit down to table until news of some adventure arrived; and this time,

while the queen entertained all the ladies in her chambers, the king and his knights waited in the hall, long after the hour of dinner, until they all became impatient. Suddenly, to their relief, a "vallet" was seen approaching on horseback, who dismounted in haste, entered the hall, and courteously saluted the company. Arthur returned the salutation, and inquired his business. The "vallet" stated that a maiden had sent him from a distant country to present to King Arthur a mantle, which is afterwards stated to have been made by a fairy, and which possessed the property of discovering the falseness of the lady who wore it; for if she were not chaste, it would become instantly too long or too short. He drew the mantle from his *aumosniere* (the bag suspended to his girdle), and obtained from the king a promise that the queen and the other ladies present at court should immediately be put to the test; and the mantle was to be the prize of the first lady who underwent the trial without mishap, or, in other words, whom it should fit. The queen stepped forward, eager to gain the prize; but she had no sooner tried it on than it rumbled up, and put her to so great shame, that she rushed blushing from the hall to hide herself in her chamber. King Arthur, as may be supposed, was not well pleased; but he determined to continue the experiment, and one lady after another made the trial, and failed no less than the queen, amid the laughter and jeering of all the worthy knights who were spectators, though each winced a little when it became the turn of his own *chère amie*. The scornful knight, Sir Kay, exulted more than any over the shame of the other ladies, yet his own wife was exposed most disgracefully of all. At length it came to the gentle lady of Sir Caradoc, and she, though far less eager for the trial than her companions, carried off the prize triumphantly, to the great exultation of her husband, and to the admiration of the whole court,—or, at least, with the exception only of the ladies.

We next meet with the story in what was intended

for a grave chronicle of historical events, intitled the *Scalachronica*; but, as it was compiled by a knight, Sir Thomas Gray of Heton in Northumberland, he has introduced in it stories of chivalrous romance instead of legends and miracles of saints, which were more suitable to the taste of the monkish chroniclers. This chronicle was compiled in the French then spoken in our island, and in the fourteenth century, and it contains a brief notice which gives us a rather curious account of the subsequent history of the famous mantle. The author has recorded how, at one of King Arthur's feasts of Pentecost, "the same night was sent into the court, by a beautiful damsel, the mantle of Karodès (Caradoc), which had such virtue that it would not fit properly her who would not let be known to her husband her act and thought; out of which there arose great laughter, for there was not a single woman in the court which the mantle would fit, because it was either too short, or too long, or too tight, beyond measure, except only the wife of Karodès; for which purpose, as was said, it was sent to the court by the father of the said Karodès, who was said to be an enchanter, to prove the goodness of his son's wife, who was one of the most virtuous of the court. Of the same mantle was made a chasuble afterwards, as is said, which is still preserved at the present day at Glastonbury."¹

We learn from this that there were different versions of the story of the mantle, and that it was popular in

¹ "Meisme le nuyt estoit envoyé en la court od un damoysele jolyve le mauntil Karodès, qe out tiel vertu qe il ne voroit estre de droit mesure à nul femme que [ne] vouloit lesser savoir à soun marry soun fet et pensé, de quoi en out grant risé, qar y n'y out femme nulle en la court à qui le mauntil estoit de mesure, ou q'il estoit trop court, ou trop long, ou trop estroit, outre mesure, fors soulement à l'espous Karodès, pur quoi, com fust dit, estoit envoyé à la court de par le pier le dit Karodès, qe fust dit un enchanteour, de prover la bounté la femme soun fitz, qe un dez plus mouer (?) estoit de la court. De meisme le mauntel fust fet un chesible pusedy, com est dit, qe unqor est à jour de huy à Glastenbery."—*Scalachronica*, MS. Corp. Chr. Camb., No. 133. The part subsequent to the Conquest was printed in a quarto volume by the Maitland Club. My extract is taken from the part which remains still inedited.

England as early as the fourteenth century. In the early French literature the mantle was known as the *cort mantel*, or short mantle, which is the title of the poem in the early manuscripts, and is a correct description of its quality; for it usually shrank, instead of stretching out, when worn by a sinner. But this name was subsequently changed for one which was by no means so correctly descriptive of it, that of the *mantel maltaillé*, or the ill-shaped mantle; under which title a paraphrase in prose of the poem was published in the sixteenth century.¹ This version, the language modernized, was given to the public again in a well known collection of stories by a popular French writer of the last century.² In England, too, the story evidently remained popular, and it probably formed the subject of an English poem or ballad in the fifteenth century. This, in the century following, had assumed the usual form of the old English ballad; and two texts of it in this form were published by Bishop Percy in his well known *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.³ This English ballad evidently represents the French poem of the thirteenth century, or perhaps rather a French poem of the same period which gave the story with some slight variations in detail.

It is not only clear that different versions of the story of the mantle existed, but in some of them the mantle was exchanged for other tests. Thus, in one, the "vallet" brings to King Arthur a horn (in some versions of this story a cup), out of which no man whose wife was not true could drink without spilling a part of the contents; and on the trial Cradoc (Caradoc) alone succeeded in proving his lady's innocence, and became the possessor

¹ This French version in prose was printed at Lyons, by Didier, in the latter half of the sixteenth century (Didier printed in 1577); and it was reprinted in a popular form, without date or name of place or printer, but apparently about the beginning of the last century.

² *Recueil de ces Messieurs,—Les Manteaux*; by the Comte de Caylus. It is reprinted by Legrand d'Aussi, *Fabliaux ou Contes*, tom. i, p. 126, ed. 1829.

³ Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, edition of 1823, vol. iii, p. 263, and vol. iv, p. 240.

of the wonderful horn. This story existed in medieval literature at a rather early date, for it is introduced into the romances of Tristan and Perceval, and it enters into an old English ballad¹ (probably of the fourteenth century) in which King Arthur, and not Cradoc, is the possessor of the wonderful horn. In another story, again, it was a boar's head which was placed on Arthur's table, and which no one whose wife had been untrue could carve; and again Cradoc's knife was the only one which could cut it, and he accordingly obtained the boar's head as his reward. In the romance of *Perceforest* a rose is introduced, which, if smelt by a lady, immediately betrays her. The earlier of the two English ballads introduces, at one festival, all the three first mentioned of these tests, and gives them all to Craddocke and his lady:

“Craddocke wan the horne,
 And the bores head;
 His ladie wan the mantle
 Unto her meede.
 Everye such a lovely ladye,
 God send her well to speede!”

Let us now turn to the literature of the other race which shared in the population of our islands. As far as I can learn, the story of the mantle is not at present known to exist in Welsh, but the Welsh bards were certainly well acquainted with it. The hero Caradoc Vreichvras, or Caradoc the brawny-armed, and his wife

¹ “Kyng Arthour had a bugylle horne,
 That evermour stod hym beforene,
 Wer so that ever he jede.

* *
 Iff any cokwold drynke of it,
 Spylle he schuld withouten lette;
 Therefore thei wer not glade.
 Gret dispyte thei had therby,
 Because it dyde them vilony,
 And made them oft tymes sade.”

This curious ballad was first published in Hartshorne's *Ancient Metrical Tales*, 1829, p. 209; but a more correct text was given in a little book published at Vienna in 1839, by Th. G. von Karajan, under the title of a *Frühlingsgabe für freunde älterer Literatur*.

Tegan Eurvron, or Tegan the golden-breasted, are personages well known to Welsh legend. One of the Welsh *Triads* tells us that the "three virtuous damsels of the isle of Britain" were "Trywyl, daughter of Llyngessawl the generous-handed; Gwenfroun, daughter of Tudwal Tudelud; and Tegan Eurvron, who was one of the three beautiful dames of Arthur's court." And another *Triad* enumerates as "the three beautiful dames of Arthur's court,—Dyfir, the golden-haired; Enid, the daughter of Earl Yniwl; and Tegan Eurvround"; while a third *Triad* names them as "the three splendid ladies of Arthur's court: Dyfyr, the golden-haired; Enid, the daughter of Earl Iniwl; and Tegen Eurfron." Tegan's mantle is enumerated among the thirteen rarities of the isle of Britain.¹ A more complete account of this lady and her attributes is given in Williams's *Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen*,—"Tegan Eurvron, the daughter of Nudd Hoel, and the wife of Caradoc Vreichvras, is celebrated in the ancient Welsh records for her chastity." [He here refers to the preceding *Triads*, and continues:] "In another *Triad* she is thus mentioned; 'There are three things of which no one knows their colour—the feathers of the peacock's tail when expanded, the mantle of Tegan Eurvron, and the miser's pence.' Her mantle formed one of the thirteen royal curiosities of the isle of Britain; for no one could wear it who had dishonoured marriage, nor a young damsel who had been guilty of incontinence, but it would cover a chaste woman to the ground. The bards of the middle ages make frequent allusions to the mantle of Tegan Eurvron, as well as to her golden goblet and her knife. The story of her mantle is copied from the Welsh by the English minstrels in the old English ballad of *The Boy and the Mantle*, as well as that of the knife and cup."² Percy was also informed by the Rev. Evan

¹ The list of these thirteen rarities is given in Jones's *Relics of the Welsh Bards*, vol. ii, p. 47. The Welsh *Triads* are, as is well known, printed in the *Myvyrian Archaeology*.

² The knife, of course, was that with which the boar's head was carved.

Evans, a Welsh antiquary of the last century, that the English ballad was taken from the Welsh; but it appears to have been a mere assertion without any foundation, for none of those who made it ever produced the original from which the English ballad was taken.

If we turn to the other great branch of the Celtic language peculiar to our islands, I am not aware if the story of the mantle is found in Irish literature; but curiously enough we meet with it in Gaelic. In the recently published selection of ancient Gaelic poetry from the Dean of Lismore's book, the editor gives and translates a short poem as "a curious episode in Fenian history": in fact, it is supposed to be one of the fragments of the early Ossianic poetry. One day, according to this poem, Finn went to drink on the banks of the river Alve with a small party: they were in all six men and six women. The men were Finn himself, Diarmad, Cailte and Ossian, Oscar and Conan; the ladies, Maighinis, Finn's wife, and five others. The women became inebriated, and then they began to vaunt their good qualities, and boasted especially that there were no six women in the world so true as they. One only spoke more modestly, and reproved the vanity of the others. While they were thus engaged, a maiden approached bearing a seamless robe, and seated herself by the side of the king (Finn). "Maid of the seamless robe," said Finn, "what virtue has this spotless vest?" She replied that her robe had the quality "that women who were not true could find no shelter in its folds,—it shielded only the spotless wife." Conan then stepped forward, and demanded that his wife should make the first trial. She did so, and the robe "shrank into folds," and left all her breast uncovered. The Fenian heroes appear to have been less tolerant than Arthur's knights, for Conan grasped his spear, and slew his wife. Diarmad's wife fared no better; and when Oscar's spouse put it on, it left her bare to her middle. The fair Queen Maighinis was no better than the others, or even worse, for the robe "creased and folded up to her ears." The

latter part of the poem is, in the translation at least, rather obscure; but it would appear that the daughter of Dearg, who seems to be here considered as the wife of Mac Rea,—though she is elsewhere spoken of as the mother of Ossian, and therefore a wife or mistress of Finn,—occupies the place of the wife of Caradoc in the other legends. When the robe was put on her, “her body was covered, feet and hands, none of it all was left exposed.” As Ossian is pretended to be the composer of this poem, it was but fair that he should give credit to his own mother. But Mac Cumhail, who was not so fortunate, is made to utter a curse against all woman-kind.

Here, then, is a Celtic poem, professing to be of a much more remote antiquity than the age of King Arthur, for Ossian is supposed to have lived in the third century, and the authenticity of which is very strongly vouched; for the poetic son of Finn not only gives his own name among the six heroes present on this occasion, but speaks in the first person of his wife,—“the fair-bosomed maid, my own dear wife,” as one of the ladies of the party. She appears to have escaped the trial. If this poem, therefore, were authentic, the Welsh history of the story would be entirely overthrown. But, unfortunately for its authenticity, the manuscript known as the Dean of Lismore’s Book is itself only of the beginning of the sixteenth century; and a little careful examination will convince us that the poem I refer to was derived from perhaps an earlier form than those now remaining of the English ballad,—very probably through a Lowland Scottish version of it. In fact, the order in which the different incidents occur, and many of the expressions, lead us to believe that this Gaelic poem and the two English ballads were derived from the same earlier English original. It is curious to observe how, in the literature of each of these branches of the Celtic race, foreign legends and literary compositions are at a late period dragged in and transmitted back, so to say, to the Celtic heroic period. It is my

belief that the Gaelic version of the story of the mantle was derived from English ballads of the fifteenth century; while the legend came into Welsh literature through English or French poems in the fourteenth, if not at a later period.¹ This, of course, is a question of some importance, as it bears upon the antiquity of the Welsh *Triads*.

We thus fall back upon France, and find there the centre from which this legend spread itself into the literatures of the various peoples of Western Europe. We will not seek for it in Germany, or in any other countries which are known to have derived the mass of their medieval literature from this central source. But we may ask, from whence did France derive the legend?

There are facts tending to throw some light even upon this new question,—facts which lead our researches towards the east. Morality at Constantinople, under the later empire, was at a lower ebb even than in Western Europe in the middle ages; and we find there the same curiosity for means of detecting individual female weakness, arising out of the same love of scandal. It is recorded in more than one of the Byzantine chroniclers and historians, that in the year 536, under the Emperor Justinian, a man named Andreas went through the provinces of the empire carrying with him a dog which had the power of pointing out faithless wives and unchaste damsels.² The critic Nicolaus Alemannus, in his notes on the *Arcana* of Procopius, speaking of the great corruption of morals at this period, quotes from the Byzantine writer an account of a statue of Venus at Constantinople, which had the singular property that, when suspected maidens were brought to it, if they were innocent they went away unharmed; but if guilty, they no sooner approached it than their robes shrank up and exposed their persons; and the same thing happened in

¹ I learn from Mr. Stephens that the earliest allusions in Welsh to the wife of Caradoc as a character in romantic literature, occur in the poems of Goronwy Ddu, who is said to have lived from A.D. 1320 to 1370, and Davydd ap Gwilym, from A.D. 1350 to 1400.

² See the Byzantine historian, Theophanes, sub an. 536.

the case of married women who were not faithful to their husbands. The truth of this, it is added, was proved in the case of the sister-in-law of the Emperor Justin II (the nephew of Justinian), who, passing accidentally near the statue, was suddenly exposed to public shame and derision by the treachery of her garments.¹ In revenge she caused the statue to be broken to pieces. There can be little doubt that we have here the real origin of the medieval story of the *Cort Mantel*; for if this singular legend were not itself the foundation of it, it no doubt indicates the existence in Greece of a story similar to that of the mantle, out of which the legend of the statue of Venus was formed; and I shall not be surprised if some day the identical story of the mantle be found among the innumerable tales of the Arabian and Turkish story-tellers. It is evident from the examples I have already given, that there were several forms of the story in the western literature of the middle ages; and a comparison of these examples will shew that the original idea embodied in it was that of disgraceful exposure of the person, which is expressed more crudely by the Byzantine writer.

¹ I give the note of Alemannus as it stands in the original: "*Hac tempestate omnium fere mulierum mores corrupti. Ita ut soror Sophiæ Augustæ Justini uxoris et Theodoræ neptis adulterii manifesta publice facta est. Nam ut in πατρίοις CP. observavimus, erat Byzantii inde a Constantini temporibus Veneris statua, ad quam παρθένοι ἐν ὑποφρία ὄσαι ὅτε ἐπλησίαζον, εἰ μὲν ἀμεμπτοὶ, διήρχοντο ἀβλαβεῖς, τῶν δὲ διεφθαρμένων ἀθρόα ἐσηκοῦντο τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐδείκνυον τὸ αἰδοῖον. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ αἱ ἔχουσαι ἄνδρας, ἐὰν λαθραίως ἐμοιχεύοντο, τοῦτο ἐγίνετο. ἐκείναι γὰρ εὐθὺς ὠμολόγουν· ἡ δὲ γυναικαδελφὴ Ἰουστίνου τοῦ ἀπὸ Κουροπαλατῶν συνέτριψε τὴν στήλην, διὰ τὸ καὶ αὐτῆς φανῆναι τὸ αἰδοῖον μοιχευθείσης ἐκεῖθεν διερχομένης ἐφ' ἵππῳ ἐν τῷ λούσματι τῶν Βλαχερνῶν. Virgines vitii suspectæ cum accederent, siquidem illibatæ essent, secure discedebant, at vero corruptarum statim vestis reducebatur patefactis pudendis. Nuptis etiam fæminis, quæ clandestinis adulterii se fædasent, idem plane accidit, ipsæque statim rem fassæ sunt. Cæterum soror uxoris Justini, qui post curam palatii imperium cepit, eam Veneris statuam comminui jussit; quod et ejus, post adulterium, pudenda detecta sint, cum inde præteriret et equo vecta ad balneas Blanchernianas proficisceretur. Sic etiam adulteras vitiatasque virgines deprehensas Justiniani temporibus canis indicio, quem ex Italia Andreas quidam per provincias circumduceret, narrant Theophanes, Anastasius, Cedrenus, Historia Miscella, et Paulus Diac."*

We are thus enabled to trace, in this particular instance, the history of a story which, originating in all appearance in the east, made its way to the west, where it appeared in the French literature as early at least as the thirteenth century. It probably travelled westward in the form of an Arabian or Greek story then current in the East, as we know that multitudes of such stories did so travel westward; when, to give it a western shape, the personages of the story were changed, the new heroes were adopted from the then popular romance cycle of King Arthur,—just as when, at a later period, the Gaelic minstrel took up the story, he changed these personages of the Arthurian romance for others taken among the heroes who attended upon Finn. From the medieval form it had thus assumed in France, it was again taken by the medieval Celtic bards,—those of Wales who had adopted the whole cycle of the romances of King Arthur, placed this story among them, and soon believed that it belonged to their own oldest literature; while the Gaelic minstrels also believed that it belonged to their earliest literature, and gave its authorship to no less a personage than Ossian. It is only by thus tracing its history in detail that we shall obtain gradually a correct appreciation of the real character of Celtic literature as it now exists. I believe that the great mass of it will be found to have been adopted, at a late period, from the popular literature of medieval Europe.

It remains to say a few words on the sources from which I have taken the following texts of the various versions of the popular story, the history of which has been the subject of the preceding essay.

I. Of the *FABLIAU DU CORT MANTEL* three copies are known to exist,—the first in a manuscript in the Imperial Library in Paris, No. 7218, fol. 27, of the thirteenth century;¹ the second in another manuscript

¹ A full description of this interesting manuscript is given by M. Paulin Paris in his valuable work, *Les Manuscrits François de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, tom. vi, p. 404.

in the same great collection, No. 6973, of the fourteenth century;¹ and the third in a well known manuscript of early French poetry, in the library of Berne in Switzerland, No. 354, fol. 93, of the thirteenth century.² It is here printed from the first of these manuscripts, and I have to thank my good friend, M. Paulin Paris, for his kindness in carefully collating my text with the original. The other manuscripts, as is always the case with different mediæval manuscripts of the same poem, contain a great number of various readings; none of which, however, have appeared to me of sufficient importance to be given here, with the exception of those at the conclusion of the poem. The *Fabliau du Cort Mantel* was printed by another old friend, Dr. Ferdinand Wolf of Vienna, in the appendix to a very learned work, but which is now not easily to be met with, *Über die Laus* (p. 342, Vienna, 1837); and there the various readings of the other Parisian manuscript are given. It may be added that this early French poem has not previously to the present edition been translated into English.

II. The two English ballads of THE BOY AND THE MANTLE were printed, as already stated, by Percy in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. The first, like so many other pieces of old English poetry published by Percy, was taken from a manuscript in his own possession. He has not informed us of the source from which he derived the other, but it was most probably furnished by a black-letter ballad. It is evidently of the sixteenth century, or at least not older; and a comparison will shew that it was either a later copy considerably altered from the first, or that both versions were derived from one original. To shew this more effectively, I print them side by side. The different manner in which the boar's head is introduced in these two ballads seems to mark the difference of the age in which they were written. It was an old English custom to bring with great cere-

¹ See Paulin Paris, *ib.*, tom. iii, p. 53.

² See the *brochure* of M. Achille Jubinal, *Lettre au Directeur de l'Artiste*, Paris, 1838, p. 40.

mony the boar's head into hall at the festival of Christmas; and the writer of the later of the two ballads seems to have thought that this circumstance would have been more fitted to the understanding of his contemporaries, than that of boars running wild about the country. He has, therefore, changed the time at which King Arthur held his court from May to Christmas. In 1839 I contributed an edition of these two ballads, with a few notes, to a little collection of early poetry and legend printed at Vienna,¹ from which they are reprinted here.

III. For editing the texts of the WELSH FRAGMENTS relating to the mantle, which are not older than the fifteenth century, I am indebted to Thomas Stephens, Esq., of Merthyr Tydfil, whom I look upon as one of our best and most judicious scholars in the Welsh literature of the middle ages. It is to be regretted that these fragments are so few and so scanty in their nature; but I have hopes that the story, in some form or other, may still be found among the Welsh manuscripts yet in existence. "The story of *Le Court Mantel*, or the *Boy and the Mantle*," Warton tells us, "is recorded in many manuscript Welsh chronicles, as I learn from original letters of Lhuyd in the Ashmolean Museum."²

IV. The GAELIC POEM and translation are printed *verbatim* from the very curious and interesting volume of selections from the manuscript of Gaelic poetry collected by the Dean of Lismore (in the Perthshire Highlands) soon after the beginning of the sixteenth century.³ Some of the poems in this manuscript are, no doubt, considerably older than the manuscript in which they are preserved; but in all probability the greater part of them are not older than the fifteenth century.

T. W.

¹ *Frühlingsgabe für Freunde älterer Literatur* (a spring gift for the friends of old literature). Von Th. G. v. Karajan. 12mo, Wien, 1839.

² Warton, *History of English Poetry*, vol. i, p. vi, edition of 1840.

³ *The Dean of Lismore's Book, a Selection of Ancient Gaelic Poetry*. Edited, with a translation and notes, by the Rev. Thomas McLauchlan. 8vo. Edinburgh, 1862. P. 72 of translations, and p. 50 of texts.

THE FABLIAU OF THE CORT MANTEL.

D'une aventure qui avint
 A la cort au bon roi qui tint
 Bretaingne et Engleterre quite,
 Por ce que n'ert pas à droit dite,
 Vous vueil dire la verité.
 A la Pentecouste en esté
 Tint li rois Artus cort pleniére ;
 Onques rois en nule maniere
 Nule plus riche cort ne tint. 10
 De maint lointain país i vint
 Maint roi et maint duc et maint conte,
 Si com l'estoire le raconte.
 Li rois Artus ot fet crier
 Qui tuit li jone bachelor
 I venissent delivrement ;
 Et si fu el commandement,
 Que qui auroit sa bele amie,
 Que venist en sa compaignie.
 Que vous iroie-je contant ?
 De damoiseles i vint tant 20
 Que je n'en sai le conte dire.
 Molt par en fust griez à eslire
 La plus bele, la plus cortoise.
 A la roïne pas n'en poise
 De se qu'eles sont assamblees.
 En sa chambre les a menées,
 Et por eles plus esjoir
 Lor fist maintenant despartir
 Robes de diverses manieres.
 Molt furent vaillans les mains chieres, 30
 De molt bone soie et de riche ;
 Mès qui vous voudroit la devise
 Et l'uevre des dras aconter,
 Trop i covendroit demorer,
 Qui bien en voudroit reson rendre ;
 Mès ailleurs me covient entendre.
 Molt fit la roïne à loer.
 Après lor a fet aporter
 Fermaus, çaintures, et aniaus.
 Onques tel plenté de joiaus 40
 Nus hom, mien escient, ne vit
 Comme la roïne lor fist
 A ses puceles aporter.
 S'en fist à chascune doner
 Tant comme onques en voudreut prendre.
 Or me covient ailleurs entendre,
 Et du bon roi Artu parler,
 Qui fist aus chevaliers doner
 Robes molt riches et molt beles,
 Et grant plenté d'a[r]mes noveles, 50
 Et molt riches chevaus d'Espaingne,
 De Lombardie, et d'Alemaingne.
 N'i ot si povre chevalier
 Qui n'eüst armes et destrier,
 Et robes, se prendre les volt.
 Onques si grant plenté n'en ot
 A une feste plus doné.
 Si en ont tuit le roi loé,
 Qui ne l' fist mie en repentant,
 Ains fist toutes voies samblant 60
 Que riens ne li griet, ne ne couste.

Of an adventure which occurred
 At the court of the good king who held
 Britany and England entirely,
 Because it has not been told rightly,
 I will tell you the truth.
 At Pentecost in summer
 King Arthur held his full court ;
 Never king in any manner
 Held a richer court. [10
 From many a distant country there came
 Many a king and many a duke and many
 As the history relates. [a count,
 King Arthur had caused to be proclaimed
 That every young bachelor
 Should come in fair array :
 And there was another command,
 That whoever had a *belle amie*
 She should come along with him.
 Why should I go on talking ?
 Of damsels there came so many 20
 That I cannot tell you the number.
 Very difficult it was to choose
 The fairest or the most courteous.
 It was no grievance to the queen
 That they were assembled.
 She has conducted them to her chamber,
 And to cause them greater pleasure
 She at once distributed among them
 Robes of different shapes.
 Very valuable were the least precious, 30
 Of very good and rich silk ;
 But whoever would the style
 And work of the cloths describe,
 It would take too much time
 If he would do it properly ;
 But I must take up other matters.
 The queen was much to be praised.
 Afterwards she caused bring them
 Brooches, girdles, and rings.
 Never such plenty of jewels 40
 To my knowledge any man saw
 As the queen then caused
 To bring to her maidens.
 And she caused to be given to each
 As many as ever they would take.
 Now I must consider elsewhere,
 And speak of good king Arthur
 Who caused to give to the knights
 Robes very rich and very handsome,
 And great plenty of new arms,
 And very rich horses of Spain,
 Of Lombardy, and of Germany.
 There was not so poor a knight
 Who had not arms and a steed
 And robes, if he would take them.
 Never was there so great plenty
 Of them given at one feast.
 And they have all praised the king,
 Who did it without grudging, 50
 But by all means shewed 60
 That nothing grieved or cost him.

Le samedi de Pentecoste Fu cele grant cort assablée. Molt ont grant joie demenéé ; Molt i ot le jor grant deduit. Quant il virent venir la nuit, Aus ostex alerent couchier. Les liz firent li escuier, Si coucha chascuns son seignor. Au matin, quant il fu cler jor, Resont à la cort assablé, Et o le roi en sort alé Tuit ensamble à la mestre yglise. La roïne vait le service Et ses puceles escouter. Ci ne vueil-je plus demorer, Ne de noient fere lonc conte. Si com l'estoie le raconte, Quant li service fu finé, Tuit en sont à la cort alé, Et la roïne en a menées En ses chambres encortinées Toutes ses puceles o li. Li serjant furent bien garni De doner au roi à mengier. Seur les tables sont li doublier, Les salieres, et li coutel. Mès au roi Artu n'ert pas bel Que il menjast, ne ne béust, Por tant que haute feste fust, Ne qu'à la table s'asséist, De si que à la cort venist Aucune aventure novele. Gavains le seneschal apele, Se li demande ce que doit Que li rois mengier ne voloit, Quar il ert jà molt près de nonne. Et Kex le roi en arresone ; "Sire," fet-il, "ici que doit Que vous ne mengiez orendroit ? Vostre mengier est prest pieçà." Li rois sourrist, si l'esgarda ; "Dites-moi," fet-il, "seneschal, Quant véistes feste anual Que je à mengier m'asséisse, De si que à ma cort véisse Aucune novele aventure ?" Estes-vous poingnant à droiture Uns vallet parmi une rue ; Son cheval d'angoisse tressue, Qui molt venoit à grant exploit. Gavains tout premerains le voit, Qui aus chevaliers escria : "Se Dieu plect, nous mengerons jà, Quar je voi çà venir corant, Seur uns molt grant roncin ferrant, Uns vallet parmi une porte Qui aucune novele aporte." Atant est li vallés venuz, Devant la sale est descenduz ; Assez fu qui son cheval prist, Li vallés de rien ne mesprist, Quar molt fu sages et membrez. De son mantel s'est desfublez, Si l'a geté demaintenant Sor le col de son auferrant. Quant desfublez fu du mantel			
	70	The Saturday of Pentecost Was this great court assembled. They have made great joy ; During the day there was great enjoy- When they saw the night come, [ment. They went to the lodgings to sleep. The esquires made the beds, And each put his lord to bed. [70	
	80	In the morning, when it was full daylight, They have reassembled at the court, And with the king they are gone All together to the principal church. The queen and her maidens Go to hear the service. Here I will no longer delay, Nor of nothing make a long story. As the history relates it, When the service was finished, All went thence to the court, 80 And the queen took thence To her tapestried chambers All these maidens with her. The servants were well provided To serve the meal to the king. On the tables are the napkins, The saltsellers, and the knives. But it was not agreeable to king Arthur Either to eat or to drink, Inasmuch as it was high festival, 90 Nor to sit down to table, Until news came to the court Of some new adventure. Gawain calls the steward, And asks him what is wanting That the king would not eat, For it was now very near noon. And Kay expostulates with the king : "Sire," said he, "what is wanting here To prevent your eating at once ? 100 Your dinner is ready some time." The king smiled and looked at him ; "Tell me," said he, "steward, When saw you the annual feast At which I seated myself to eat, Until there came to my court Some new adventure ?" Behold, riding earnestly, A valet amid the street ; His horse sweats with labour, 110 For he came with great speed. 110 Gawain saw him first, And cried out to the knights, "If God pleases, we shall eat now ; For I see there come running On a very great horse of speed, A valet through a gate, Who brings some news." At length the valet is arrived, And is descended before the hall. 120 There were plenty to take his horse. The valet forgot himself in nothing, For he was very wise and remembering. He took his mantle off, And threw it immediately On the neck of his steed. When he was freed from his mantle	

- A grant merveille par fu bel.
Blont ot le chief et cler le vis,
Bele bouche et nez bien assis, 130
Grosses espauls et lons braz ;
Trestout à uns mot le vous faz,
Onques plus bel ne fist nature.
Grant cors et grant enforcéure,
Jambes bien fetes, piez voutiz.
Sages paroles et biaux diz
Out li vallès à grant plenté.
Quant en la sale fu entré,
Cortoisement et biau parla :
" Cil Diex," fet-il, " qui tout forma, 140
Saut et gart ceste compaignie !"
" Biaux amis, Diex vous benéie !"
Ce li dist Kex li seneschaus.
" Tressuez est vostre chevaus ;
Quar me dites que vous querrez."
" Sire," fet-il, " ainz me moustrez
Et m'enseigniez Artu le roi ;
Quar, par la foi que je vous doi,
Je li dirai jà tex noveles
Qui à toz ne seront pas beles, 150
Et teux i a qu'en auront joie."
A chascun est tart que li oie
Que c'est que li vallès a quis.
" Par mon chief," dist-il, " biaux amis,
Vez-le là en cele chaire."
Li chevalier sont tret arriere,
Si lessent le vallet aler.
Cil qui n'a soing de demorer,
En est devant le roi venuz,
Se li a fet uns gent saluz. 160
" Cil Diex," fet-il, " qui fist le mont
Et toutes les choses qu' i sont,
Et de tout fet sa volenté,
Gart le meillor roi coroné
Qui onques fust, ne jamès soit !
Sire," fet-il, " or est bien droit
Que je vous die que j'ai quis.
Une pucele m'a tramis
De moult lointain país à vous ;
Uns don vous requier à estrous, 170
Et si vueil bien que vous sachoiz,
Se je ne l'ai à ceste foiz,
Jà ne vous ert plus demandé,
Ne jà ne vous sera nommé
Ne le don, ne la damoisele,
Qui tant est avenant et bele,
De si que je de fi saurai
Se je de vous le don aurai ;
Et je vous créant une rien,
Et vueil que tuit le sachent bien, 180
Que je ne vous querrai hontage
Où aitez honte ne domage."
Gavains a premerains parlé :
" Cist dons ne puet estre véé,"
Fet-il, " quant n'i ait vilonie,
Mès que misires l'en mercie."
Lors a dit li rois q'il l'auroit
Tout maintenant, quoi que ce soit.
Cil l'en mercie o bele chiere,
Et li vallès prist s'aumosniere, 190
Si en a tret fors un mantel.
Onques nus hom ne vit si bel,
Quar une fée l'avoit fet ;
- He was wonderfully handsome. [bright ;
He had his head blonde, and his face
A handsome mouth, and nose well placed ; [130
Broad shoulders and long arms ;
I tell it you all in one word,
Nature never made one more handsome.
Large body and large cleft,
Legs well made, feet vaulted.
Wise words and fair speech
Had the valet in great plenty.
When he had entered the hall,
He spoke courteously and fair :
" That God," said he, " who created all,
Save and guard this company !" [140
" Fair friend, God bless you !"
Replied Kay the seneschal.
" Your horse is covered with sweat ;
Tell me what you come for."
" Sir," said he, " first show me
And point out to me Arthur the king ;
For, by the faith I owe you,
I will here tell him such news
As shall not be good to all, 150
And some there are will rejoice at them."
Each was in a hurry to hear
What it was the valet wanted.
" By my head," said he, " fair friend,
There he is in that chair."
The knights drew back,
And made way for the valet.
He, who wanted no delay,
Came before the king,
And made him a gentle salutation. 160
" That God," said he, " who made the
And all things in it, [world
And does his will on everything,
Guard the best king crowned
That ever was or ever may be !
Sire," said he, " now it is quite right
That I tell you my errand.
A maiden has sent me
From a very distant country to you ;
I ask you a grant without delay, 170
And I wish you to know positively,
If I have it not at this asking,
It will not be asked of you again,
And you will never hear the name
Of the grant or of the damsel,
Who is so agreeable and beautiful,
Until I know certainly
If I shall have from you the grant ;
And I give you my faith,
And wish all to know it well, 180
That I shall not seek your discredit
Where you would either have shame or
Gawain spoke first : [loss."
" This gift cannot be refused,"
Said he, " if there is no vilany,
But let milord thank him for it."
Then the king said that he should have it
At once, whatever it might be.
He thanks him with fair mien ;
And the valet takes his aumosniere, 190
And draws from it a mantle.
No man ever saw one so handsome,
For a fairy made it ;

Nus n'en sauroit le portret
 Ne l'uevre du drap aconter ;
 Trop i covendroit demorer.
 Or leraï de l'ouvrage esier ;
 D'autre chose voudrai parler,
 Si vous dirai une merveille,
 Onques n'oïstes la pareille.
 La fée fist el drap une oeuvre
 Qui les fausses dames descuevre.
 Jà fame qui l'ait afublé,
 Se ele a de rien messerré
 Vers son seignor, se ele l'a,
 Jà puis adroit ne li serra ;
 Ne aus puceles autressi,
 Se ele vers son bon ami
 Avoit mespris en nul endroit,
 Jà puis ne li serroit à droit
 Que ne soit trop lonc ou trop cort.
 Et cil, oiant toute la cort,
 Lor a tout aconté et dit
 L'uevre du mantel et descrit.
 Puis dist au roi iselemant :
 "Sire," fet-il, "demaintenant
 Que n'i ait point de demorer,
 Fetes le mantel afubler ;
 Si n'i ait dame ne pucele
 Qui sache mot de la novele,
 Dont céenz a grant assablée ;
 El me fu de molt loins contée.
 Si sui venuz d'estrangle terre
 Por seulement cest don requester."
 Molt esgarderent le mantel,
 Et dist : "Gavains, ei a don bel,
 Et molt regnable est à doner.
 Fetes la roïne mander.
 Gavains, alez i esraument,
 Vous et Yvain tant seulement,
 Et si dites à la roïne
 Que n'i ait dame ne meschine
 Qu'ele ne face o li venir ;
 Quar je vueil fermement tenir
 Ce qu'au vallet ai créanté."
 Et cil cui il l'a commandé
 I sont alé demaintenant.
 La roïne truevent lavant,
 Qui du mengier s'apareilloit,
 Que durement li anuioit
 De ce que tant ot jéuné.
 Gavains a premerain parlé :
 "Dame," fet-il, "li rois vous mande,
 Et tout à estrouz vous commande
 Que vous sans plus de delaier
 Venez en la sale mengier.
 Si amenez ces damoiseles
 Qui tant sont avenanz et beles ;
 Quar à cort vint ore uns danzel,
 Qui aporta uns cort mantel,
 Onques nus si riche ne vit.
 Le drap est d'un riche samit ;
 Il est à merveilles bien fet ;
 Molt honorera le portret
 Et les ouvragés qui i sont ;
 Il n'a son per en tout le mont.
 Et sachiés bien de verité
 Que il a au roi créanté
 Que il à cele le donra,

No one could describe the design of it,
 Or the work of the cloth ;
 It would take too much time.
 Now I will speak no more of the work ;
 I will speak of other matter,
 And I will tell you a wonder,
 You never heard its equal.
 The fairy made in the cloth a work
 Which discovers false ladies.
 Never lady who had put it on,
 If she has in any way sinned
 Towards her lord, if she has one,
 It will never fit her ;
 Nor to damsels similarly,
 If she towards her lover
 Has erred in any way,
 It will never afford fit her,
 But will be too long or too short.
 And he, in the hearing of the whole court,
 Has related and told them all
 The work of the mantle, and described it.
 Then he said to the king promptly :
 "Sire," said he, "now
 Let there be no delay,
 Cause the mantle to be tried on ;
 And let there be nor dame nor maiden
 Knows a word of the news,
 Of whom there are here great assembly ;
 It was told me from a great distance.
 And I am come from foreign land
 In order only to ask this grant."
 They looked much at the mantle,
 And said (the king) : "Gawain, here is a
 And it is very reasonable to give. [fair gift,
 Cause the queen to be sent for.
 Gawain, go there directly,
 You and Ivain only,
 And tell the queen
 To leave neither dame nor girl,
 Whom she does not bring with her ;
 For I will hold firmly
 That which I have promised to the valet."
 And those to whom he gave the order
 Went there immediately.
 They found the queen washing her hands,
 And preparing for dinner,
 For it had grieved her much
 To fast so long.
 Gawain spoke first :
 "Lady," said he, "the king sends for you,
 And commands you immediately
 That you without more delay
 Come into the hall to dinner.
 Bring also the damsels
 Who are so agreeable and handsome ;
 For a youth is now come to court,
 Who has brought a short mantle,
 None ever saw one so rich.
 The cloth is of rich samite ;
 It is wonderfully well made ;
 The style of it is very becoming,
 And the works that are in it ;
 There is not its equal in the whole world.
 And know well the truth,
 That he has promised the king
 That he will give it to her

- A cui miex et plus bel serra." 260
 Mais onques ne lor en dist plus.
 S'eles séussent le surplus,
 Miex vousissent que il fust ars,
 Se il vausist cent mille mars.
 La roïne premier le prent,
 Maintenant à son col le pent,
 Que molt amast que il siens fust ;
 Mès se la verité séust
 Comment li mantiaus fu toissuz,
 Jà à son col ne fust penduz ;
 A paine au soller li ataint.
 Toz li vis li palist et taint
 Por la honte que ele en ot.
 Yvains par delez li estot,
 Qui li voit si noircir le vis :
 " Dame," fet-il, " il m'est avis
 Que il ne vous est pas trop lonc ;
 Sachiez qui le travers d'un jonc
 Du mantel sanz plus osteroit,
 Jà puis à droit ne vous serroit.
 270
 Cele damoisele de là
 Qui delez vous à destre esta,
 Ele l'afublera avant,
 Quar ele est bien de vostre grant.
 Amie est Tors, le filz Arés ;
 Le mantel li bailliez après,
 Si porrez bien à li véoir
 S'il vous porra à droit séoir."
 Desfublée s'est la roïne,
 Le mantel tent à la meschine,
 Qui molt volentiers l'afubla ;
 Et le mantel plus acorça
 Qu'à la roïne n'avoit fet.
 " Tost est ore," dist Kex, " retret
 Si ne l'a on pas lours porté."
 Et la roïne a demandé
 Tout entor li à ses barons :
 " Dont ne m'est-il assez plus lons ?"
 " Dame," dist Kex li seneschaus,
 " Avis m'est qu'estes plus loiaus
 300
 Que ceste n'est, mès c'est petit ;
 Et si ai-je malement dit
 Que plus léaus n'estes-vous mie,
 Mès mains a en vous tricherie."
 Et la roïne a demandé
 Comment va de la loiauté,
 Que l'en die delivrement
 Tout quanqu' au mantel en apent.
 Et Kex li a trestout conté
 De chief en chief la verité,
 Si com li vallès l'ost contée
 310
 Et du mantel et de la fée,
 Et l'ouvrage que ele i fist ;
 Tout de chief en chief li a dit,
 Si c'onques riens n'en trespasa.
 La roïne se porpenssa,
 S'ele fesoit d'ire samblant
 Tant seroit la honte plus grant ;
 Chascune l'aura afublé ;
 Si l'a en jenglois atorné.
 320
 " Que vont ces autres atendant,
 Quant je l'ai afablé avant ?"
 " Dame, dame," ce a dit Koi,
 " Ancui verrons la bone foi
 Que vous fetes à voz seignors,
 Whom it shall fit best and fairest." 260
 But he told them nothing more.
 If they had known the rest
 They would have rather had it burnt,
 If it had been worth a hundred thousand
 The queen first takes it : [marks.
 She now attaches it to her neck,
 Desiring much that it were hers ;
 But if she knew the truth,
 How the mantle was woven,
 It would not be hanged at her neck ; 270
 It hardly reached her shoe.
 All her face became pale and coloured
 For the shame she had of it.
 Yvain stood near her,
 And saw her face darken :
 " Lady," said he, " it is my opinion
 That it is not too long for you ;
 Know that if the breadth of a rush
 One took from the mantle, without more,
 280
 It would not fit you the better. 280
 That damsel there,
 Who stands by you on the right,
 She will come forward and try it,
 For she is about your size.
 She is mistress of Tors, son of Ares.
 Give her the mantle next,
 And you will see well by her
 If it can fit you right."
 The queen took it off,
 290
 And gave the mantle to the girl, 290
 Who very willingly put it on ;
 And the mantle shrank more
 Than it had done with the queen.
 " It is now soon told," said Kay,
 " Although it has not been carried far."
 And the queen asked
 All round her of her barons,
 " Why is it not long enough for me ?"
 " Lady," said Kay the steward,
 " It is my opinion that you are more loyal
 300
 Than she is, but not much ; [300
 And yet I have misspoken,
 For you are not more loyal,
 But there is less deception in you."
 And the queen asked
 What it was about loyalty,
 That they should tell her at once
 What was the affair about the mantle.
 And Kay told her all
 310
 The truth from head to head, 310
 As the valet had told it,
 Both of the mantle and of the fairy,
 And of the work she had done in it ;
 All from head to head he told her,
 And omitted nothing.
 The queen reflected
 That if she made show of anger
 Her shame would be only the greater ;
 Each will have tried it on ;
 320
 So she turned it to jest. 320
 " Why are the others waiting,
 Since I have put it on first ?"
 " Lady, lady," said Kay,
 " We shall soon see the good faith
 You hold to your lords,

- Et la léauté des amors
 Que ces damoiseles demainent,
 Por qui cil chevalier se painent
 Et metent en grantz aventures.
 Molt se féissent ore hui.....res 330
 Qui d'amors les aresonast.
 N'i a cele qui ne jurast,
 S'il fust qui prendre la vousist,
 Que onques de riens ne mesprist."
 Quant les dames ont entendu
 Comment le mantel fu tissu,
 Et l'uevre que la fée i fist,
 N'i a cele qui ne vousist
 Estre arrières en sa contrée,
 Que n'i a dame si osée 340
 Ne damoisele qui l'ost prendre.
 "Bien le poons," dist li rois, "rendre
 Au vallet qui ça l'aporta ;
 Bien voi céenz ne remaindra
 Por damoisele qui i soit."
 Li vallès dist : "Tenés moi droit ;
 Jamès nul jor ne le prendrai
 De si adont que je verrai
 Que toutes l'auront afublé ;
 Quar ce que rois a créanté 350
 Doit par reson estre tenu."
 Et li rois li a respondu :
 "Biaus amis, vous dites reson ;
 Il n'i aura jà achoison
 Que ne lor coviegne afubler."
 Lors les véissiez encliner,
 Muer color et empalir,
 D'ire et de mantalent fremir ;
 N'i a cele qui ne vousist
 Que la compaigne le préist, 360
 Ne jà ne l'en portast envie.
 Kex en a apelé s'amie :
 "Damoisele, venez avant,
 Oiant ces chevaliers me vant
 Que vous estes léaus partout ;
 Que je sai bien, sanz nul redout
 Vous le poez bien afubler.
 N'i aurez compaigne ne per
 De léauté, ne de valor ;
 Vous en porterez hui l'onor 370
 De céenz, sanz nul contredit."
 La damoisele li a dit :
 "Sire," fet-el, "s'il vous pléust,
 Je voussisse qu'autre l'éust
 Afublé tout premierement,
 Quar j'en voi céenz plus de cent
 Que nule ne l' veut afubler."
 "Ha !" fet Kex, "je vous voi douter,
 Je ne sai que ce senefie."
 "Sire," fet-el, "ce n'i a mie ; 380
 Mès j'en voi céens grant plenté,
 Dont chascune a assez biauté,
 Et nule ne l' ose sesir ;
 Si ne me vueil por ce envair
 Que ne me fust à mal torné."
 "Jà mar en douterez maugré,"
 Fet Kex, "qu'eles n'en ont talent."
 Et la damoisele le prent,
 Voiant les barons l'afubla,
 Et li mantiaus plus acorça, 390
 Aus jarés et noient avant ;
- And the faithfulness of the loves
 Which these damsels entertain,
 For whom these knights labour
 And put themselves in great adventures.
 They would now do much 330
 Who would talk to them of love.
 There is not one but would swear,
 If any one would take her,
 That she never erred in anything."
 When the ladies have heard
 How the mantle was woven,
 And the work which the fairy did in it,
 There was not one but wished
 To be back in her country ; [340
 And there was not a lady so courageous,
 Nor damsel, who wish to take it. [it
 "We had better," said the king, "return
 To the valet who brought it here ;
 I see well it will not remain here
 For any damsel we have."
 The valet said : "Keep faith with me ;
 I will never take it
 Until I have seen
 All of them try it on ;
 For what a king has promised 350
 Ought rightly to be performed."
 And the king replied to him :
 "Fair friend, you say right ;
 There shall not be any excuse,
 But they must all put it on."
 Then you might see them bow their heads,
 Change colour, and become pale,
 Tremble with anger and spite ;
 There was not one but wished
 Her companion to go before her, 360
 Nor was at all envious of her.
 Kay called his mistress :
 "Damsel, come forward,
 In the hearing of these knights vaunt
 That you are loyal in all things ;
 For I know well, without fear,
 That you are able to put it on.
 You will have neither companion nor equal
 In loyalty or worth ;
 You will today bear the honour 370
 Here without any contradiction."
 The damsel said to him :
 "Sir," said she, "if you please,
 I would that another had
 Tried it on first ;
 For I see here more than a hundred,
 Of whom not one will put it on."
 "Ah !" said Kay, "I see you are afraid ;
 I know not what that means."
 "Sir," said she, "that is not it ; 380
 But I see here great plenty,
 Each of whom has beauty enough,
 And not one dare take it ;
 Therefore I will not presume,
 That I may get no reproach."
 "Now you shall not fear it, although,"
 Said Kay, "they have no will to it."
 And the damsel took it,
 Before the barons she put it on,
 And the mantle became shortened 390
 To the ham, and not beyond ;

- Et li dui acor de devant
 Ne porent les genouz passer.
 "Voirement n'i avoit son per,"
 Ce li a dit Bruns sanz pitié ;
 "Bien doit estre joiant et lié
 Messires Kex li seneschaus ;
 Voirement estes des léaus."
 Quant Kex li vit si messéoir,
 Il ne voustis por nul avoir
 400 Que li rois péust aramir,
 Que ne se pot mie couvrir,
 Que véu est de tant de gent.
 Lors dist Ydier en sorriant,
 "Bien doit à eschar revertir
 Qui en toz tens en veut servir."
 Cele n'i voit point de rescousse ;
 Et Kex dist à la perestrousse :
 "Seignor, trop vous pomez haster,
 Nous verrons jà sanz demorer
 410 Comment il ert aus voz séant.
 Festes les tost venir avant,
 Jà verrons comme il lor serra."
 Arrière lors le desfubla,
 Si l'a geté sor uns séoir ;
 Si se r'est alée séoir.
 Quant les autres orent véu
 Que si mal li est avenu,
 Molt par fu le vallet maudit ;
 Quar bien savent que escondit
 420 Ne lor pooit avoir mestier ;
 Por noient feroient dangier,
 Que ne lor coviegne afubler.
 Le connestable du lorer
 En a le roi à reson mis.
 "Sire," fet-il, "il m'est avis
 Que nous sommes tuit molt vilain ;
 L'amie mon seignor Gavain,
 Qui tant est noble et avenant,
 Le déust affubler ayant,
 430 Venelaus, la preus, la cortoise.
 A mon seignor Gavains en poise
 De ce que trop est oubélie."
 "Si soit," fet li rois, "apelée."
 Beduiers tantost l'apela ;
 Et la pucele se leva,
 Qui pas ne l'osoit refuser.
 Et li rois li fist aporter
 Le mantel, et ele le prent.
 440 Maintenant à son col le pent,
 Qui n'i osa essoine querre.
 Derrière li ataint à terre
 Si que plain pié li traina ;
 Et la puciele se leva,
 Si que li genouz descouvri
 Et li senestres se forni,
 Tout entor ala le mantel.
 A Keu le seneschal fu bel,
 Quant il chosi l'acor si cort.
 Ne cuidoit qu'en toute la cort
 450 Eust dame plus fust loiaus.
 "Par mon chief !" dist li seneschaus,
 "Huimès, la dame Dieu merci !
 Ne serai-je seul escharni,
 Quar cel acor que je là voi
 Nous senefie ne sai qoi ;
 Or vous en dirai mon avis.
- And the two lappets before
 Could not pass the knees.
 "Truly there was not her equal."
 Bruns told her so without pity ;
 "Well may be joyous and glad
 My lord Kay the steward ;
 Truly you are one of the loyal."
 When Kay saw it fit so ill,
 He would not for anything
 400 That the king could engage
 That it might not be concealed,
 Which is seen by so many.
 Then said Ydier smiling,
 "Well ought he to come to scorn
 Who will use it always."
 She sees no rescue ;
 And Kay says to those around,
 "Lords, you may be too hasty ;
 410 We shall see without delay
 How it will be with you.
 Make them immediately come forward,
 Then we shall see how it will fit them."
 She then took it off,
 And threw it on a seat,
 And went to sit down again.
 When the others had seen
 That her success was so ill,
 The valet was much accursed ;
 420 For they know well that excuse
 Could not be of use to them ;
 In vain they might make difficulty,
 For they must try it on.
 The constable of the (?)
 Expostulated with the king.
 "Sire," said he, "it is my opinion
 That we are all very ill-mannered :
 My lord Gawain's mistress,
 Who is so noble and elegant,
 430 Ought to put it on now,
 Venelaus, the gentle and courteous.
 My lord Gawain is grieved
 That she has been too long forgotten."
 "Let her," said the king, "be called."
 Beduiers immediately called her ;
 And the maiden rose,
 For she dared not refuse.
 And the king caused to be brought her
 The mantle, and she took it.
 440 Now she hangs it to her neck,
 For she dared not seek an excuse.
 Behind her it reached the ground,
 So that it trailed a whole foot ;
 And the maiden rose,
 So that it uncovered her knees,
 And the left was covered,
 The mantle went all round.
 It pleased Kay the steward,
 When he saw the lappet so short. [450
 He did not believe that in the whole court
 There was a lady more loyal.
 "By my head !" said the steward,
 "Today, thank God !
 I shall not be the only one scorned,
 For the lappet I see there
 Means I know not what ;
 But I will tell you my opinion.

- La damoisele, o le cler vis,
 Ot la destre jambe levée
 Et sor icelle fu corbée,
 Et l'autre remest en estant;
 Et si croi-je que en gisant
 Li avint ce en uns trespas.
 Je croi que je ne vous ment pas
 A la besoingne que je di."
 Mesires Gavins fu marri,
 Que onques mot ne li sona,
 Et Kex dist que il la menra
 Séoir avoec la seue amie,
 Quar poi out encor compaignie. 460
 Li rois prist par la destre main
 L'amie monseignor Yvain,
 Qui au roi Urien fu fil,
 Le preu chevalier, le gentil,
 Qui tant ama chiens et oisiaus.
 "Bele," fet-il, "icist mantiaus
 Doit estre vostre par reason;
 Nus ne set en vous achoison
 Que bien ne le doiez avoir;
 Nus ne puet rien de vous savoir." 480
 Dist Gahariès, li petiz:
 "N'afchiez mie si voz diz,
 Devant que vous auez véu
 Comment il li ert avenu."
 Affublé l'a delivrement;
 Li mantiaus arriere s'estent,
 Si que plain pié li traîna.
 Li mestres acors se leva
 Seur le genoil uns seul petit.
 Sire Gahariès a dit: 490
 "Molt par est fols qui nule en croit,
 Que chascune le sien deçoit.
 S'il estoit le mieudres de l'ost,
 Tant le decevroit el plus tost;
 Or en droites le disiez-vous
 Qu'ele l'auroit tout a'estrous;
 Or poez bien apercevoir
 S'ele le puet par droit avoir.
 Or vous en dirai mon samblant;
 Li mantiaus qui arriere pant, 500
 Nous monstre qu'il chiet de son gré
 Volentiers seur icel costé;
 Et li autres qui tant li lieve
 Nous moustre que molt poi li grieve
 A lever contre mont les dras;
 Quar ele veut isnel le pas
 Soit la besoingne apareillie."
 La damoisele est tant irie
 Qu'ele ne set que fere doie;
 Si prent par l'atache de soie 510
 Le mantel, si l'a jus geté;
 Le vallet qui l'ot aporté
 A molt escordelment maudit.
 Et Kex, li sénésciaus, a dit:
 "Bele, ne vous corouciez pas;
 O damoisele Venelas
 Vendrez séoir et o m'amie,
 Quar poi ont encor compaignie."
 Li rois apela demanois
 L'amie au damoiseil Galois 520
 Qui Percheval ert apelez.
 "Bele," fet li rois, "or prenez
 Le mantel; vostres ert en fin,
- The lady with the bright countenance
 Had the right leg raised,
 And on it was enjoyed, 460
 And the other remained straight;
 And I believe that as she lay
 This happened to her by mishap.
 I think I do not say false
 In the explanation I give."
 My lord Gawain was vexed,
 And said not a word to him;
 And Kay said that he would lead her
 To sit with his own mistress,
 For there was yet small company. 470
 The king took by the right hand
 The mistress of my lord Iwain,
 Who was king Urien's son,
 The brave knight and gentle,
 Who so much loved dogs and birds.
 "Beauty," he said, "this mantle
 Ought rightly to be yours;
 Nobody knows in you a cause
 Why you ought not to have it;
 Nobody knows ill of you." 480
 Gahariès the little said:
 "Don't be so ready in your opinion,
 Before you have seen
 How it shall happen to her."
 She immediately put it on;
 The mantle stretched behind,
 So that it trailed a foot.
 The main lappet rose
 A very little above the knee.
 Sir Gahariès said: [man, 490
 "He is a great fool who believes any wo-
 For each deceives her lover.
 If he were the best of the host,
 She would the sooner deceive him.
 Now you said off hand
 That she would have it all at will;
 Now you may well perceive
 If she could have it rightly.
 Now I will tell you my opinion;
 The mantle, which hangs behind, 500
 Shews that she gladly falls
 Willingly on that side;
 And the other, which rises so much,
 Shews that it grieves her very little
 To raise up her clothes;
 For she desires quickly
 That the business be done."
 The damsel was so provoked
 That she knew not what to do:
 So she takes by its silk tie 510
 The mantle, and threw it down.
 The vallet who had brought it
 She very thoroughly cursed.
 And Kay the seneschal said to her:
 "Beauty, be not angry;
 With damsel Venelas
 You shall sit, and with my mistress,
 For they have yet little company."
 The king called next
 The mistress of the Welsh youth 520
 Who was called Perceval.
 "Beauty," said the king, "now take
 The mantle; it will be yours at last,

- Vous avez le cuer enterin ;
 Bien saï que il vous remaindra."
 Girflès de parler se hasta,
 Si dist au roi : " Sire, merci,
 N'afchiez nule riens issi,
 Tant que la fin aurez véue,
 Et com l'uevre ert aperçuee." 530
 La damoisele s'aperçoit,
 Et à escient set et voit
 Qu'ele n'en puet par el passer.
 Mès quant el le dut affubler,
 Les ataches en sont rompues,
 Et à la terre jus chéues,
 Avoec le mantel tout ensamble ;
 Et li cors d'angoisse li tramble
 Si que ne se set conseillier.
 Molt l'esgardant li chevalier 540
 Et escuier et jovencel ;
 Molt par ont maudit le mantel
 Et celui qui li aporta ;
 Quar jamès à droït ne serra
 A dame ne à damoisele,
 Tant soit ne cortoise, ne bele,
 Que jà por ce li séist miex.
 Les lermes li chieent des iex,
 N'i a si petit qui ne l' voie ;
 Et Kex maintenant la convoie 550
 O s'amie et o la Gavain.
 "Tenez," fet-il, " je vous amain
 Que ne vous anuit compaignie."
 Mès nule si ne l'en mercie,
 Et il s'en retourne riant.
 Le vallet prist demaintenant
 Le mantel qui gisoit à terre.
 " Or i covient ataches querre,
 Biaux amis," ce li dist li rois.
 Et il en i mist demanois 560
 Unes q'il prist en s'aumosniere,
 Qu'il ne veut en nule maniere
 Soit destorbée la besoingne,
 Ne que nus hom i quiere essoingne,
 Mès affubler delivrement.
 Et lors li rois le mantel prent.
 Kex a par grant ire parlé :
 " Trop avons," fet-il, " jeuné ;
 Por qoi font ces dames dangier ?
 Que jà ne serront au mengier 570
 Tant qu'eles l'aient afublé,
 Et s'en puent avoir maugré,
 Et si l'afubleront après."
 Girflès, qui fu fel et engrés,
 Li respondi : " Sire, ne l' dites,
 Bien les en poez clamer quites,
 Se il vous venoit à plesir.
 Volez les vous plus que honir ?
 Et quant eles le mantel voient
 Eles creantent et otroient, 580
 Oiant seignors, oiant amis,
 Que le mantel soit arrier mis ;
 Volez les vous chacier avant ?"
 Lors le lessast li rois atant,
 Por ce que avoit dit Girflès,
 Quant avant sailli li valles,
 Et dist au roi : " Je vous demant
 Que vous me tenez couvenant,
 Si com vous le m'avez promis."
- You have a heart without reproach.
 I am quite sure it will be yours."
 Girflès spoke in haste,
 And said to the king : " Sire, thank you,
 Don't make sure of anything
 Until you have seen the end,
 And how the work will turn out." 530
 The damsel perceived,
 And knew and saw perfectly
 That she could not avoid the trial.
 But when she came to put it on,
 Its ties broke
 And fell to the ground,
 With the mantle altogether ;
 And her body trembles with vexation,
 So that she knows not what to do.
 The knights look much at her, 540
 And squires and youths ;
 They have much cursed the mantle
 And him who brought it ;
 For it will never fit well
 Either dame or damsel,
 However courteous or beautiful,
 That it will become her the better for that.
 The tears fell from her eyes,
 There is no one so little but sees it ;
 And Kay now takes her 550
 To sit with his mistress and Gawain's.
 " Come," said he, " I lead you
 Where the company will not annoy you."
 But no one thanks him for it,
 And he goes back laughing.
 The valet now took
 The mantle, which lay on the ground.
 " New ties must be sought,
 Dear friend," said the king to him.
 And he immediately put on 560
 Some which he took from his aumonière,
 Because he would that in no manner
 The proceedings should be interrupted,
 Nor that anybody should makeit an excuse,
 But try it on immediately.
 And then the king took the mantle.
 Kay spoke in great ire :
 " We have," said he, " fasted too long :
 Why do these ladies make difficulties ?
 They will not sit down to dinner 570
 Until they have tried it on ;
 And they may have spite of it,
 And try it on after."
 Girflès, who was fierce and wicked,
 Replied : " Sir, say it not ;
 You can easily cry them quit,
 If it were your pleasure.
 Will you do more than shame them ?
 And when they see the mantle
 They consent and grant, 580
 In the hearing of husbands and lovers,
 That the mantle be put back ;
 Will you drive them forward ?"
 Then the king would have laid it by,
 For what Girflès had said ;
 But the valet stepped forward,
 And said to the king : " I ask of you
 That you hold your covenant with me,
 As you promised me."

Li chevalier sont tuit penssis, Nus d'aus ne li set nus mot dire. Ydiers en apela par ire S'amie qui lez lui séoit ; Quar au matin de voir cuidoit Que nule ne fust plus loians. " Damoisele, li seneschaus Me dist or que trop me hastoie. Je dis que riens ne me doutoie ; Mès je me fiaï en vous tant Que je parlai séurement. Mès molt le fetes lentement. Or sachiez que je m'en repent Por ce que je vous voi douter. Alez le mantel affubler, Quar je ne vueil plus delaiar. Por quoi en fetes-vous dangier, Quant n'en poez par el passer ?" Li rois li fist tost aporter Le mantel, et ele le prent ; Maintenant à son col le pent, Que n'i osa essoine querre. Li acor cheïrent à terre, Si que plain pié li traïnerent. Li plus des chevaliers cuidèrent Que en li n'eüst se bien non, Puis regarderent le crepon Qui trestoz descouvers estoit. Girflet, qui premerains le voit, Li escrie demaintenant : " Li acor en sont trop pendant, Ne sont pas à vostre oés taillez ; Jamès derrier n'ert si moilliez Qu'il puisse roons devenir." Et Kex qui ne se pot tenir De ce qu' Ydier l'ot ramposné, L'en rendi tantost la bonté. " Ydiex, que vous en est avis ? Vostre amie n'a rien mespris ! Bien vous en poez or gabër ; Vous n'en poez que .iij. trover Esprovées de léauté. Li siècles est si atorné Que chascuns en cuïde une avoir. Vous cuidiez jà hui avoir La léauté qui en vous ert. Mal est couvert cui le cul pert. Or vous en dirai la maniere : El se fet cenglar par derriere, Si com li mantiaus le devise." Ydiers ne set en nule guise Que il puisse fere ne dire. Ele prist le mantel par ire, Si le geta devant le roi. Lors l'a prise par la main Qoi, Si l'a o les autres menée : " Par foi !" fet-il, " ceste assablée Ert jà, se Dieu plest, grant et bele. Jà n'i remaindra damoisele Ne viegne en ceste compaignie ; Por ce seroit grant vilonie Se l'une aloit l'autre gabant." Que vous iroie-je disant ? Unes et autres l'afublerent Et lor amis les esgarderent. Onques à nule bien ne sist,	590	The knights are all sorrowful, Not one of them had a word to say. Ydier called in anger On his mistress who sat by him ; For in the morning he believed truly That there was none more loyal. " Damsel, the steward Told me just now I was in too great haste. I said that I feared nothing ; But I put such trust in you That I spoke with confidence. But you move very slowly. Now know that I repent it, Because I see you hesitate. Go and put on the mantle, For I will delay no longer. Why do you make a difficulty of it, Since you cannot escape it ?" The king causes quick to be brought to her The mantle, and she takes it. Now she hangs it to her neck, For she dared not make excuse. The lappets fell to the ground, So that they trailed a whole foot. Most of the knights believed That there was nothing but good in her, Now they looked at her behind, Which was all uncovered. Girflet, who first saw it, Now cries to her : " Its lappets are too long, They are not made for your use ; Never the behind was so formed That it could become round." And Kay, who could not restrain himself, Because Ydier had rallied him, Soon returned the favour. " Ydier, what is your opinion of it ? Your mistress has not erred ! You have now a right to joke ; You can find but three of them Of proved loyalty. The world is so turned That each believes he has one. You thought today to have The loyalty which is in you. One is illcovered who is uncovered behind. And I will tell you the manner : She lets herself be girded behind, As the mantle intimates." Ydier knows not anywise What to do or say. She took the mantle in anger, And threw it before the king. Then Kay took her by the hand, And led her with the others. " In faith," said he, " this assembly Will soon be, if God please, great and fair. There will not remain a damsel But will come in this company ; Therefore it would be great want of man- If one mocked the other." What shall I say further ? One after another put it on, And their lovers looked on. It never fitted one of them ;	590 600 610 620 630 640 650
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- Et Kex toutes voies les prist ;
 Si comme il lor vit messéoir,
 Si les mena en renc séoir.
 A la cort n'ot nul chevalier
 Qui drue i éüst ne moillier, 660
 Qui molt n'éüst le cuer dolent.
 Qui véist lor contenment,
 Com li uns l'autre regardoit,
 Mès auques les reconfortoit
 Ce que li uns ne pooit mie
 Dire de l'autre vilonie,
 Que il méismes n'i partist.
 Et Kex li seneschaus a dit :
 "Seignor, ne vous corouciez pas,
 Igaument sont parti li gas,
 Quant chascune en porte son fès ;
 Bien doivent estre desormés
 Par nous chieres et amées,
 Quar bien se sont hui acutéés.
 Ce nous doit molt reconforter,
 Li uns ne puet l'autre gaber."
 Mesires Gavains respondi :
 "Ici a mauvès geu parti,
 Je ne sai le meilleur eslire,
 Que la meilleur en est la pire, 680
 Et ce seroit anuiz et tort
 Se nostre anui estoit confort.
 Ainçois nous en doit toz peser
 Li uns ne doit l'autre gaber."
 Kex li dist : "Ce n'i a mestier ;
 J'ai oï dire en reprovier,
 Grant piece a, que duel de noient
 Seut acorer chetive gent.
 Maudehez ait qui ce juga
 Et qui jà le créanterá,
 Que jà chevaliers soit honi
 Se s'amie fet autre ami ;
 Ainz le devons bien contredire
 Que doions estre de ce pire.
 Se de mauvestie est provée,
 S'il l'avoit .ix. foiz espouée,
 Si seroit-ce faus jugement
 Que il empirast de noient ;
 Que li doit nuire autrui meffet ?
 Sor celui soit qui l'autre fet." 700
 Ce dist Plators, li filz Arès,
 "Cis conseus est assez mauvès."
 "Certes," ce dist li seneschaus,
 "Veritez est qu'il font mains maus ;
 Bien sachiez que maint chevalier
 Est de cest meffet parçonnier,
 Et molt en a aillors que ci."
 Li vallès dist : "Sire, merci ;
 Biaux sire chiers, ce que sera,
 Je cuit que il m'en covendra
 Mon mantel arriere porter.
 Fetes par ces chambres garder,
 Que n'en i ait nule mucie.
 Jà est vostre cort tant proisie
 Et par tout le mont renommée,
 J'ai oï dire en ma contrée
 C'onques n'i vint de nule part
 Aventure, ne tost ne tart
 Qui s'en alast en tel maniere.
 Hontes ert se s'en vait arriere, 720
 Vostre cort en sera blasinée ;
- And Kay always took them ;
 As he saw it did not fit them,
 He led them to sit in the rank.
 There was not a knight in the court,
 Who had mistress or wife there, 660
 Who had not much grief at heart.
 Who had seen their behaviour,
 How one looked at the other ;
 But it always consoled them
 That one could not
 Say reproach to the other,
 In which he did not share himself.
 And Kay the steward said :
 "Lords, do not be angered ;
 The jokes are equally shared, 670
 When each lady bears her burden ;
 They ought well henceforth to be
 Cherished and loved by us,
 For they have well acquitted them today.
 This ought much to console us,
 One cannot mock the other."
 Milord Gawain replied :
 "Here is a bad game for all,
 I cannot choose the best part,
 For the best is the worst, 680
 And it would be grief and wrong
 If our grief were comfort.
 Thus we ought all to bear it ;
 One must not mock the other."
 Kay said to him : "There is no need ;
 I have heard say in proverb,
 Long ago, that grief for nothing
 Can kill wretched people.
 Cursed be he who judged that,
 And whoever will believe it, 690
 That ever a knight is shamed
 Because his mistress has another lover ;
 Therefore we ought to deny
 That we should be the worse for this.
 If she be convicted of naughtiness,
 Though he had married her nine times,
 It would be false judgment
 To think him any worse for it ;
 Why should another's offence injure him ?
 Be it upon the offender." 700
 Said Plator, the son of Ares,
 "This counsel is bad enough."
 "Truly," replied the steward,
 "It is a fact that they do less hurt ;
 You know well that many a knight
 Is sharer in this misdeed ;
 And there are many elsewhere."
 The valet said : "Sire, thanks ;
 Fair and dear sir, whatever may happen,
 I think that I shall be obliged 710
 To carry back my mantle.
 Cause the chambers to be visited,
 That there be no one concealed there.
 Your court is so much praised
 And renowned through all the world,
 I have heard say in my country [where
 That there never came there from any-
 Adventure, early or late,
 Which went away in such manner.
 It will be a shame if it go back ; 720
 Your court will be blamed for it ;

S'en ira en mainte contrée
 La novele, qui par tout cort.
 Et sachiés que en vostre cort
 En vendront aventures mains."
 "Par mon chief," ce a dit Gavains,
 "De ce dit a li vallès voir ;
 Fetes par ces chambres savoir,
 Que n'i ait petite, ne grant,
 Qui orendoit ne viegne avant." 730
 Li rois commande c'on i aut ;
 Et Girflès i ala le saut,
 Dès que li rois le commanda.
 Une damoisele i trova,
 Mès ele n'estoit pas mucie,
 Ainz estoit uns poi deshaité ;
 Si se séoit seule en son lit.
 Et Girflès maintenant li dist :
 "Levez tost sus, bele pucele,
 Quar une aventure novele 740
 Est en cele sale venue.
 Onques tele ne fu véue ;
 Si la vous covient à véoir.
 Vostre part en devez avoir,
 Quant toutes les autres en ont."
 La damoisele li respont :
 "G'irai volentiers orendroit,
 Mès lessiez-moi vestir à droit."
 Galeta s'estoit affublée,
 Vestue s'est et atornée 750
 Au miex et au plus bel que pot,
 De la meilleur robe qu'ele ot ;
 Puis est en la sale venue.
 Et quant ses amis l'a véue,
 Sachiez que il fu molt iriez.
 Devant estoit joianz et liez
 De ce que n'i avoit esté ;
 Que s'il fust à sa volenté
 Ele ne l'affublast jà nul jor.
 Quar il l'amoit tant par amor,
 Que s'ele eüst de rien mespris
 Il vousist miex estre à Paris,
 Quar il en perdist son solaz.
 Ses noms ert Carados Briebraz.
 Or voit tantost le damoiseil
 Qui ot aporté le mantel,
 Et se li a dit et conté
 Du mantel toute la verté,
 Et por quoi il l'i aporta. 760
 Et Carados grant duel en a ;
 Oiant toz dist : "Ma douce amie,
 Por Dieu ne l'affublez vous mie
 Se vous vous doutez de noient ;
 Quar je vous aim tant bonement
 Que je ne voudroie savoir
 Vostre meffet por nul avoir :
 Miex en vueil estre en doutance ;
 Por tout le roiaume de France
 N'en voudroie-je estre cert ;
 Quar qui sa bone amie pert,
 Molt a perdu, ce m'est avis. 780
 Miex voudroie estre mors que vis
 Que vous fussiez orainz assise
 Où l'amie Gavain est mise."
 Lors parla Kex li seneschaus :
 "Et cil qui pert sa desloians,
 Dont ne doit-il estre molt liez ?

And in many a country will go
 The news, which travels everywhere.
 And know that in your court
 Will come fewer adventures."
 "By my head!" said Gawain,
 "The valet has said right in this.
 Cause to be known in the chambers
 That there be neither little nor big,
 But she come now forwards." 730
 The king commands it to be done ;
 And Girflet starts to do it
 As soon as the king commanded.
 He found there a damsel ;
 But she was not concealed,
 But only a little sad,
 And was sitting alone on her bed.
 And Girflet said to her forthwith :
 "Rise quickly, fair maiden,
 For a new adventure 740
 Is come into the hall.
 Such an one was never seen ;
 So you must see it.
 You must have your share,
 As all the others have had."
 The damsel replied :
 "I will go willingly this moment ;
 But let me dress fittingly."
 Galeta put on her things,
 She is dressed and adorned 750
 The best and most handsomely she could,
 With the best robe she had ;
 And then she came into the hall.
 And when her lover saw her,
 Know that he was much vexed.
 Before he was joyful and glad
 That she had not been there ;
 And if he had his will,
 She would never have put it on.
 For he loved her so much, 760
 That if she had done wrong in anything,
 He would rather have been at Paris,
 For he would lose all his joy.
 His name was Caradoc Briebraz.
 Then comes quick the youth
 Who had brought the mantle,
 And told and related to her
 The whole truth of the mantle,
 And why he had brought it there.
 And Caradoc had great sorrow ; [love, 770
 In the hearing of all he said : "My sweet
 For God's sake put it not on
 If you have any fear ;
 For I love you so affectionately
 That I would not know
 Your misdeed for anything :
 I would rather be in doubt ;
 For all the kingdom of France
 I would not be assured of it ;
 For who loses his good love 780
 Has sustained great loss, I think.
 I would rather be dead than alive
 To see you now seated
 Where Gawain's mistress is placed."
 Then spoke Kay the steward :
 "And he who loses his disloyal one,
 Ought he not to be very glad ?

Vous serez jà molt corouciez, Se vous l'amez tant bonement. Vez en là séoir plus de cent Qui se cuidoient hui matin Plus esmerées que or fin ; Or les poés toutes véoir Por lor meffez en renc séoir." Cele, qui point ne s'esbahi, Molt doucement li respondi :		You will soon be much angered, If you love her so affectionately. [790 See there sitting more than a hundred Who believed themselves this morning More refined than pure gold ; Now you may see them all Sitting in a row for their misdeeds." She, who was not abashed, Very gently replied to him :	
" Sire," fet-ele, " bien savon Que il meschiet à maint preudon, Ne je ne m'os mie vanter Que les doie toutes passer De léauté, ne de valor ; Mès se il plect à mon seignor, Je l'affublerai volentiers." ³ " Par mon chief !" dist li chevaliers, " Vous n'en puez par el passer." Encor ne l' vout ele affubler Tant que ele en ait le congie De celui que molt a proisie. Molt à enois li a doné.	790	" Sir," ³ said she, " we know well That it mishaps to many a man of worth ; And I dare not vaunt That I ought to pass them all In loyalty or worth ; But if it please my lord, I will willingly put it on." " By my head !" said the knight, " You cannot do otherwise." Still she would not put it on Till she had the leave Of him whom she had much prized. He gave it very unwillingly.	
Ele l'a pris et affublé ; Maintenant voiant les barons Ne li fu trop cort, ne trop lons ; Tout à point li avint à terre. " Ceste fesoit molt bien à querre," Fet li vallès, " ce m'est avis. Damoisele, li vostre amis Doit estre molt joianz et liez. Une chose de voir sachiez : Je l'ai par maintes cors porté, Et plus de mil l'ont afublé ; Onques mès ne vi en ma vie Sanz meffet ne sanz vilonie Nule fors vous tant seulement. Je vous otroi le garnement, Qui bien vaut plain uns val d'avoir, Et vous le devés bien avoir." La damoisele l'en mercie. Li rois bonement li otrie, Et dist que siens est par reson.	800	800 She has taken and put it on ; Then in sight of the barons It was neither too short nor too long, But fitted exactly to the ground, " It was well done to fetch her," Said the valet. " I think. Damsel, your lover Ought to be very joyful and glad. Know one thing for truth : I have carried it to many courts, And more than a thousand have put it on ; But I have never once seen in my life, Without mishap and disgrace, Any one do it except you. I give you the garment, Which is well worth a valley full of wealth, And you deserve well to have it." The damsel thanked him for it. The king gives it to her graciously, And said it was hers by right.	810
N'i a chevalier, ne baron, Ne damoisele que l' desdie ; Et s'en ont-il molt grant envie Qu'el l'enporte, lor iex voiant, Mès n'en osent fere samblant. N'i a chevalier, ne baron, Qui en ost dire se bien non ; * Quant nule n'i trove achoison Dont ele ost dire par raison. Lors si dist messire Gauvain : " Bele," fait-il, " je prain en vain Que vous n'en devez guerredon Se à vostre loiauté non. Cil qui vostre loiauté voient, Lo vos créantent et otroient ; Volantiers lo contredéissent, Se eles lor droit i véissent Que vos ne l' déüssiez avoir. A escient puez savoir Que li plus en sont moult dolant." Li damoisiex lo congrié prant,	810	820 There was neither knight nor baron Nor damsel who contradicted it ; Yet they have great jealousy Of her gaining it in their sight, Though they did not dare to shew it. There is neither knight nor baron Who dares disapprove it ; When no lady finds in it cause Wherefore she dare complain. Then said my lord Gawain : " Fair one," says he, " I assert That you owe the reward of it Only to your loyalty. Those who see your loyalty, Trust and give it to you ; They would willingly refuse, If they saw their right That you ought not to have it. You may know evidently That most of them are much grieved at it." The valet takes his leave,	820
	820		830

* The conclusion, from line 837, which is omitted in MS. No. 7218, is here added from the Berne MS., where the poem is most complete.

Onques n'i volt plus demorer.
 Ainz se hasta por lo disner,
 Ne vout en nule guise atandre,
 Car à sa dame voloit randre
 Son mesaige delivrement.
 Et li rois et tote sa gent
 Asist maintenant au mangier.
 Sachiez que maint bon chevalier
 I sist plain de coroz et d'ire.
 De l' mangier ne vos voil plus dire,
 Fors que moult bien furent servi.
 Et qant li mangiers fu feni,
 Caradox si a congié pris,
 Si s'an ala en son país,
 Liez et joieus, o tot s'amie.
 En Gales, en une abaie
 Mistrent estoier lo mantel,
 Qu'i or est trovez de novel;
 Et si set-l'an très bien qui l'a,
 Et qui partot lo portera
 As dames et as damoiseles.
 Seignor, dites lor tex nouveles,
 Qui par tot lo fera porter,
 Si lo covandra afubler.
 Por noiant me travailleroie,
 Se je cest present lor faisoie,
 El m'en arroient mais toz dis;
 Si m'an porroit estre de pis,
 Se les requeroie de rien.
 Por ce me covient dire bien,
 Por mon besoing, non por l'onor;
 Et si n'i aurai fors enor.
 Or nos gart toz cil de laissus,
 Car de cest conte n'i a plus.

He would not remain there any longer.
 He so hastened on account of the dinner,
 He would in no wise wait,
 For he wished to deliver to his lady
 His message quickly.
 And the king and all his people
 Now sits down to eat.
 Know that many a good knight
 Sits there full of vexation and anger.
 I will tell you no more of the meal,
 Except that they were very well served.
 And when the dinner was ended,
 Caradoc took his leave,
 And departed to his country,
 Glad and joyful, with his mistress.
 In Wales, in an abbey
 They deposited the mantle,
 Which now is lately found there;
 And it is well known who has it,
 And who will carry it everywhere
 To ladies and damsels.
 Lords, tell them this news,
 Who anywhere will cause it to be brought,
 Must try it on.
 I should labour in vain,
 If I made them this present,
 They would hate me ever after;
 And so it might be the worse for me,
 If I sought any favour of them.
 Hence I must speak well,
 For my need, not for the honour;
 And yet I shall have from it ^{much} ~~nothing~~ ~~but~~
 Now may He above protect us, [honour].
 For there is no more of this tale.

Ci fenit Cort Mantel.

II.

THE ENGLISH BALLADS OF THE BOY AND THE MANTLE.

In the third day of May,
 To Carleile did come
 A kind courteous child,
 That cold much of wisdom.

A kirtle and a mantle
 This child had upon,
 With brouches and ringes
 Full richely bedone.

He had a sute of silke
 About his middle drawne;
 Without he cold of curtesye
 He thought itt much shame.

"God speed the, king Arthur,
 Sitting at thy meate;
 And the goodly queene Guenever,
 I cannott her forgett.

In Carleile dwelt king Arthur,
 A prince of passing might,
 And there maintain'd his table round,
 Beset with many a knight.

And there he kept his Christmas
 Whit mirth and princely cheare,
 When, lo! a strange and cunning boy
 Before him did appear.

A kirtle and a mantle
 This boy had him upon,
 Whit brooches, rings, and owches,
 Full daintily bedone.

He had a sarke of silk
 About his middle meet;
 And thus, with seemely curtesy,
 He did king Arthur greet.

10

10

- I tell you, lords in this hall,
I hett you all to heere;
Except you be the more surer,
Is for you to dread." 20
- He plucked out of his poterner,
And longer wold not dwell,
He pulled forth a pretty mantle
Betweene two nut-shells.
- "Have thou here, king Arthur,
Have thou heere of mee;
Give itt to thy comely queene,
Shapen as itt is al readye.
- Itt shall never become that wiffe
That hath once doue amisse." 30
Then every knight in the kings court
Began to care for his.
- Forth came dame Guenever,
To the mantle shee her hied;
The ladye shee was newfangle,
But yett shee was affrayd.
- When shee had taken the mantle,
She stooode as shee had bene madd;
It was from the top to the toe
As sheeres had itt shread. 40
- One while was it gaule,
Another while was itt greene,
Another while was it wadded;
Ill itt did her beseeme.
- Another while was it blacke,
And bore the worst hue.
"By my troth," quoth king Arthur,
"I thinke thou be not true."
- Shee threw downe the mantle
That bright was of blee; 50
Fast, with a rudd redd,
To her chamber can shee flee.
- She curst the weaver and the walker
That clothe that had wrought;
And bade a vengeance on his crowne
That hither hath itt brought.
- "I had rather be in a wood,
Under a greene tree,
Then in king Arthurs court
Shamed for to bee." 60
- Kay called forth his ladye,
And bade her come nere;
Sais, "Madam, and thou be guiltye,
I pray thee hold thee there."
- Forth came his ladye
Shortlye and anon;
Boldlye to the mantle
Then is shee gone.
- When she had tane the mantle,
And cast it her about; 70
Then was shee bare
All above her tout.
- "God speed thee, brave king Arthur,
Thus feasting in thy bowre;
And Guenever thy goodly queen,
That fair and peerlesse flowre. 20
- Ye gallant lords and lordings,
I wish you all take heed,
Lest what ye deem a blooming rose
Should prove a cankred weed."
- Then straitway from his bosome
A little wand he drew;
And with it eke a mantle
Of wondrous shape and hew.
- "Now have thow here, king Arthur,
Have this here of mee, 30
And give unto thy comely queen,
All shapen as you seee.
- No wife it shall become,
That once hath been to blame."
Then every knight in Arthurs court
Slye glanced at his dame.
- And first came lady Guenever,
The mantle she must trye.
This dame she was newfangled,
And of a roving eye. 40
- When she had tane the mantle,
And all was with it cladde,
From top to toe it shiver'd down,
As tho with sheers beshradde.
- One while it was too long,
Another while too short,
And wrinkled on her shoulders
In most unseemly sort.
- Now green, now red it seemed,
Then all of sable hue. 50
"Beshrew me," quoth king Arthur,
"I think thou beest not true,"
- Down she threw the mantle,
Ne longer wold not stay,
But, storming like a fury,
To her chamber flung away.
- She curst the whoreson weaver
That had the mantle wrought,
And doubly curst the froward impe
Who thither had it brought. 60
- "I had rather live in desarts,
Beneath the greenwood tree,
Than here, base king, among thy groomes,
The sport of them and thee."
- Sir Kay call'd forth his lady,
And bade her to come near;
"Yet, dame, if thou be guilty,
I pray the now forbear."
- This lady, pertly gigling,
With forward step came on, 70
And boldly to the little boy
With fearless face is gone.

- Then every knight
That was in the kings court
Talked, laughed, and showted,
Full oft att that sport.
- Shee threw downe the mantle,
That bright was of blee ;
Fast with a red rudd,
To her chamber can shee flee. 80
- Forth came an old knight
Pattering ore a creede,
And he proffered to this litle boy
Twenty markes to his meede ;
- And all the time of the Christmasse
Willinglye to ffeede ;
For why this mantle might
Doe his wiffe some need.
- When she had tane the mantle
Of cloth that was made, 90
Shee had no more left on her
But a tassell and a threed.
Then every knight in the kings court
Bade evill might shee speed.
- Shee threw downe the mantle,
That bright was of blee ;
And fast, with a redd rudd,
To her chamber can shee flee.
- Craddocke called forth his ladye,
And bade her come in ; 100
Saith, "Winne this mantle, ladye,
With a litle dinne.
- Winne this mantle, ladye,
And it shal be thine,
If thou never did amisse,
Since thou wast mine."
- Forth came Craddockes ladye
Shortlye and anon ;
But boldlye to the mantle
Then is shee gone. 110
- When she had tane the mantle
And cast it her about,
Upp att her great toe
It began to crinkle and crowt.
Shee said, "Bowe downe, mantle,
And shame me not for nought.
- Once I did amisse,
I tell you certainlye,
When I kist Craddockes mouth
Under a greene tree ; 120
When I kist Craddockes mouth
Before he married me."
- When shee had her shreeven,
And her sines shee had tolde,
The mantle stooede about her
Right as shee wold ;
- Seemelye of coulour,
Glittering like gold.
- When she had tane the mantle,
With purpose for to wear,
It shrunk up to her shoulder,
And left her backside bare.
- Then every merry knight
That was in Arthurs court
Gib'd, and laught, and flouted,
To see that pleasant sport. 80
- Downe she threw the mantle,
No longer bold or gay,
But with a face all pale and wan,
To her chamber slunk away.
- Then forth came an old knight,
A pattering o'er his creed,
And proffer'd to the litle boy
Five nobles to his meed.
- "And all the time of Christmass
Plumb-porridge shall be thine, 90
If thou wilt let my ladye fair
Within the mantle shine."
- A saint his ladye seemed,
With step demure and slow,
And gravely to the mantle
Whit mincing pace doth goe.
- When she the same had taken,
That was so fine and thin,
It shrivell'd all about her,
And show'd her dainty skin. 100
- Ah ! little did her mincing
Or his long prayers bestead !
Shee had no more hung on her
Than a tassell and a threed.
- Down she threwe the mantle,
With terror and dismay,
And, with a face of scarlet,
To her chamber hyed away.
- Sir Cradock call'd his ladye,
And bade her to come neare : 110
"Come, win this mantle, ladye,
And do me credit here.
- Come, win this mantle, ladye,
For now it shall be thine,
If thou hast never done amiss
Sith first I made the mine."
- The ladye, gently blushing,
With modest grace came on,
And now to trye the wondrous charm
Courageously is gone. 120
- When she had tane the mantle,
And put it on her backe,
About the hem it seemed
To wrinkle and to cracke.
- "Lye still," shee cried "O mantle !
And shame me not for nought,
I'll freely own whate'er amiss
Or blameful I have wrought.

- Then every knight in Arthurs court
Did her behold. 130
- Then spake dame Guenever
To Arthur our king,
"She hath tane yonder mantle,
Not with right, but with wronge.
- See you not yonder woman
That maketh her self soe cleane ?
I have scene tane out of her bedd
Of men fiveteene ;
- Priests, clarkes, and wedded men
From her bydeene : 140
Yett shee taketh the mantle,
And maketh herself cleane."
- Then spake the litle boy
That kept the mantle in hold,
Sayes, " King, chasten thy wiffe,
Of her wordes shee is to bold.
- Shee is a bitch, and a witch,
And a whore bold.
King, in thine owne hall,
Thou art a cuckold." 150
- The litle boy stooode
Looking out a dore ;
[And there as he was lookinge
He was ware of a wyld bore.]
- He was ware of a wyld bore,
Wold have werryed a man ;
He pulld forth a wood-kniffe,
Fast thither that he ran ;
He brought in the bores head,
And quitted him like a man. 160
- He brought in the bores head,
And was wonderous bold ;
And said there was never a cuckolds kniffe
Carve itt that cold.
- Some rubbed their knives
Uppon a whetstone ;
Some threw them under the table,
And said they had none.
- King Arthur and the child
Stood looking upon them ; 170
All their knives edges
Turned backe againe.
- Craddocke had a litle knive
Of iron and of steele,
He birtled the bores head
Wonerous weele,
That every knight in the kings court
Had a morseell.
- The litle boy had a horne
Of red gold that ronge, 180
He said, " there was noe cuckolde
Shall drinke of my horne ;
But he shold it sheede,
Either behind or beforene."
- Once I kist sir Craddocke
Beneathe the green-wood tree ; 130
Once I kist sir Craddockes mouth
Before he married mee."
- When thus she had her shriven,
And her worst fault had told,
The mantle soon became her
Right comely as it shold.
- Most rich and fair of colour,
Like gold it glittering shone ;
And much the knights in Arthurs court
Admir'd her every one. 140
- Then towards king Arthurs table
The boy he turn'd his eye,
Where stood a boars head garnished
With bayes and rosemarye.
- When thrice he o'er the boars head
His litle wand had drawne, [knife
Quoth he " There's never a cuckolds
Can carve this head of brawne."
- Then some their whittles rubbed
On whetstone and on hone ; 150
Some threw them under the table,
And swore that thay had none.
- Sir Craddock had a litle knive
Of steel and iron made,
And in an instant thro' the skull
He thrust the shining blade.
- He thrust the shining blade
Full easily and fast ;
And every knight in Arthurs court
A morsel had to taste. 160
- The boy brought forth a horne,
All golden was the rim :
Saith he, " No cuckolde ever can
Set mouth unto the brim ;
- No cuckolde can this litle horne
Lift fairly to his head,
But or on this or that side
He shall the liquor shed."
- Some shed it on their shoulder,
Some shed it on their thigh ; 170
And hee that could not hit his mouth,
Was sure to hit his eye.
- Thus he that was a cuckold
Was known of every man.
But Craddock lifted easily,
And wan the golden can.
- Thus boars head, horn, and mantle
Were this fair couples meed ;
And all such constant lovers
God send them well to speed. 180
- Then down in rage came Guenever,
And thus could spightful say,
" Sir Craddockes wiffe most wrongfully
Hath borne the prize away."

Some shedd on their shoulder,
 And some on their knee;
 He that cold not hitt his mouthe,
 Put it in his eye:
 And he that was a cuckold
 Every man might him see.

190

Craddocke wan the horne
 And the bores head;
 His ladie wan the mantle
 Unto her meede.
 Everye such a lovely ladye
 God send her well to speede.

See yonder shameless woman
 That makes herselfe so clean;
 Yet from her pillow taken
 Thrice five gallants have been.

Priests, clerkes, and wedded men
 Have her lewd pillow prest;
 Yet she the wonderous prize, forsooth,
 Must beare from all the rest." 190

Then bespake the little boy,
 Who had the same in hold,—
 "Chastize thy wife, king Arthur,
 Of speech she is too bold:

Of speech she is too bold,
 Of carriage all too free;
 Sir king, she hath within thy hall
 A cuckold made of thee. 200

All frolick, light, and wanton
 She hath her carriage borne,
 And given thee for a kingly crowne
 To wear a cuckolds horne."

III.

THE WELSH TRIADS.

1.

Tri diweirferch Ynys Pryd. Treul
 Difefyl ferch Llyngesawl Llawhael;
 Gwenfaddon[al. Gwenfronn] ferch Tutwal
 Tutelud; a Thegeu Eurfron.*
Second Series, No. 54; Third, No. 103.

2.

Tair rhaiin ardderchawg llys Arthur:
 Dyfyr Wallt eureid; Enit verch Iniwl
 iarll; a Thegeu Eurfron.
Second Series, No. 78.

1.

The three chaste damsels of the Isle
 of Britain. Trail the Spotless, daughter
 of Lungessoc the generous handed;
 Gwenvron (literally white breasted),
 daughter of Tydwal † of Clydesdale; and
 Tegay the golden breasted.

2.

The three exalted ladies of Arthur's
 court: Duv-ir, ‡ the golden haired; Enid, §
 daughter of Earl Inewl; and Tegay, the
 golden breasted.

* There is nothing further known of the two first named damsels. Lungessoc is probably the person named in the Liber Landavensis as a witness to a deed in the time of bishop Oudoceus. He is named in the life of Saint Cadoc, as Ligessoc the long-handed, son of Eliman, and said to have been "a certain brave general of the Britons." He slew three soldiers of Arthur, the most illustrious king of Britain, and took refuge with Saint Cadoc. Arthur pursued him; the case was submitted to the arbitration of Saints David, Teilo, and Oudoceus; and they decreed that Arthur should have one hundred cows for each person slain. But the king, being in a contentious spirit, demanded they should all be of two colours, the fore part red and the hind part white. No such cows being at hand, Saint Cadoc performed a miracle, and caused the cattle to be of these colours; but the cows, after having been formally delivered, turned to bundles of ferns in the hands of the captors. Arthur, seeing this miracle, entreated Cadoc to pardon him. Pardon was granted, and the miracle is still commemorated in the name of Rhedynog, or the Town of Ferns, in Monmouthshire.

† Tydwal was king of Strathelyde, and father of Rhydderch Hael, or Roderick the generous, who fought the battle of Airdrie, near Glasgow, in A.D. 574, when Christianity triumphed over Druidism, and Merlin "insanus effectus est."

‡ Duv-ir is not otherwise known.

§ Enid is the heroine of the Welsh romance of Geraint ab Erbin, and the subject of Tennyson's first Idyll.

3.
Tair gwenriain llys Arthur.
Third Series, No. 108.

3.
The three beautiful ladies of Arthur's
court. The same names as in the pre-
ceding Triad.

IV.

THE GAELIC POEM.

Laa zaane deach Finn di zoill in nalwe
is ner ymmit sloyg
Sessir bann is sessir far Iyn zhil is anneir
ucht zaal
Finn fayn is Dermoit gin on keilt is
ossain is oskir
Conan meithl gom maal er myg agus
mnan nin vi leith sen
Mygin is ban einn bi zane is annir ucht
zall mi wan feyn
Gormlay aolli is dow rosg neaof is neyn
enneiss
Nor a zoif meska no mnan tugsiddir in
gussi raa
Nach royf er in doythyn teg sessir ban in
goyth inrylk
A dowirt an nynnilt gyn on is Tulych
carnich in doythyn
Ga maath sewse is ymmith ban nach
drynn fes ach re in ar
Gerrid er ve zawe mir sen tanik in van
dar rochtin

'Twas on a day Finn went to drink
In Alve, with his people few;
Six women and six men were there,
The women fair, with whitest skin.
Finn was there and guileless Diarmid,
Caoilte and Ossian too, and Oscar,
Conan the bald, slow in the field,
With the wives of these six men;
Maighinis the wife of dauntless Finn,
The fair-bosomed maid, my own dear wife,
Fair skin Gormlay, of blackest eye,
Naoif, and the daughter of Angus.
When drunkenness had the women seized,
They had a talk among themselves:
They said that throughout all the earth
No six women were so chaste.
Then said the maiden without guile,
"The world is a many-sided heap;
Though pure are ye, they are not few
Women quite as chaste as you."
They had been a short time thus,
When they saw a maid approach,

Tegeu, sounded Tegay, was the daughter of Nudd or Needh the generous, one of "the thirteen kings" of North Britain in the sixth century. Nudd was one of several northern chiefs who paid a hostile visit to North Wales about A.D. 550; and his son Drywon was one of the allies of Rhydderch Hael in 574.

Caradoc Vreichvras, or the brawny-armed, is commonly said, on the authority of Geoffrey of Monmouth, to have been a duke of Cornwall and a contemporary of king Arthur. Some of the older Triads follow him in this respect, and attribute to Arthur a triplet, in which he says—

My three battle knights
Are Mened, Lud the loricated,
And Caradoc the pillar of Cambria.

Hence the king has been called one of "the three Cambrian poetasters."

Properly, however, Caradoc was, according to Welsh story, regulus of Radnorshire, and lived at the close of the sixth and beginning of the seventh century. He was one of the "threescore three hundred warriors" who fought and fell at Cattraeth (Catterick) in A.D. 603, and is thus commemorated by the bard Aneurin, who was himself in the battle:

Pan gryssyei Garadawc y gat
Mal baed coet trychwn trychyat
Tarw bedin en trin gormynyat
Ef Uithyei wydewn oe anghat
Ys vyn tyst Ewein vab Eulat
A Gwryen a Gwynn a Gwryat
O Gatraeth o gymynat
O vrynn Hydwn kynn caffat
Gwedy med gloew ar anghat
Ni weles Wryen ei dat.—Verse xxxi.

When Caradoc rushed to battle, [land boar.
The gash of the hewer was like that of the wood-
He was the bull of battle, in the conficting
He allured wild dogs with his hand. [fight;
My witnesses are Owen the son of Eylad,
Gwrien, Gwyn, and Gwryat
From Cattraeth, from the confict,
From Heddon hill before it was taken,
After clear mead in the grasp,
Gwryen did not see his father.

Hence we may conclude he was slain A.D. 603.

Ein wrata wmpa gin alda agus e na iyn
 naygh
 Tanik neyn a wrata inn an vaenissa
 v'kowlē
 Banichis din re gin non agis swis na
 arrygh
 Feafryth finn skail zyi din neyn lwchr
 lawzill
 A wan a wrat gin alda keid a rad ow is
 tein naygh
 As giss dym wrat gin alda ban ann ac na
 ennaygh
 Nocht chay naygh dein fame wrat ach
 ben in ir gyn ralocht
 Tawir ym brat dym wreith feyn do ter
 conane mor gyn chaele
 Go westmist im brear mir a twg na
 mnawe wo chanew
 Gawis ben chonnane ym brat is curris
 wmpa la rachta
 Gom bea sen an loyth locht dar lek rys
 wlle a gall ocht
 Mir a chonnik connan meil ym brat yr
 cassyth fa teyf
 Tawris in chreissyth gin neaf agis mar-
 veis in neyn
 Gavis ben dermoit a zeil ym brat wo
 wrei chonnan meil
 Noch char farr a wassi zyi cassi ym brat
 fa keiyf
 Gavis ben oskyr na zey ym brad coo
 adda coyve ra
 Ga loyvir skayth a wrat inn noch char
 ally a hymlyn
 Gawis myghinis ga aal ym brad is di
 churri fa cann
 Di chass is di chwarr mir sen ym brat gi
 loa fa clossew
 Tawir ym brata er m'raa dym wnessi is
 ne cwss clae
 Go vestnist in ness gon non tres elli da
 hymlit dewe
 Di warynsi brair riss agis ne brair
 eggiss
 Nach darri is di weiss ri far ach dol dutsi
 in neiss lenew
 Nochtis ben vek ree a teef curris umpi
 ym brat fer chei.....
 A sayth eddir chass is lawe na gi ley er a
 lwdygnane
 Ane phoik doaris in braed o wak o zwyne
 darmit
 Di reissi ym brad owm laar mor wea see
 na hynnirrane
 Tawrew mi wrat doyf a wnaa is me nein
 in derg zrana
 Noch cha dernis di locht acht fess ri finn
 fyvir noch
 Ber mo wallich is ymith woygin se der
 m'kowlē gin boy
 A dagis fa mhaalych er mnawe na tyr
 huggin ane lay.

Lay.

Her covering a single seamless robe,
 Of spotless white from end to end;
 The maiden of the pure white robe
 Drew near to where MacCumhail sat.
 She blessed the king of guileless heart,
 And close beside him there sat down.
 Finn asks her to give them her tale,
 The handsome maid of whitest hand:
 "Maid of the seamless robe, I ask,
 What virtue's in thy spotless veil?"
 "My seamless robe has this strange power,
 That women, such as are not chaste,
 Can in its folds no shelter find,—
 None but the spotless wife it shields."
 "Give my wife the robe at once,"
 Said the bulky, senseless Conan,
 "That we may learn what is the truth
 Of what the women just have said."
 Then Conan's wife does take the robe,
 And in vexation pulls it on;
 'Twas truly pity it was done,
 Her fair-skinned breast was all exposed.
 Then when the bald-pate Conan saw
 How that the robe shrunk into folds,
 He seized in passion his sharp spear,
 And with it did the woman slay.
 Then the loved Diarmid's wife
 The robe from Conan's wife did take;
 No better did she fare than she,
 About her locks it clung in folds.
 Then Oscar's wife seized on the robe,
 Which looked so long and softly smooth;
 But wide and large as were its wings,
 The robe her middle did not reach.
 Then fair Maighinis took the robe,
 And put it also o'er her head;
 The robe there creased and folded up,
 And gathered fast about her ears.
 "Give my wife the robe," said Mac Rea,
 "For the result I have no fear,
 That we may see, without deceit,
 Of her merit further proof."
 "I would pass my word for it,
 Though I claim not to be learned,
 That never have I once transgressed,
 I've been faithful aye to thee."
 Mac Rea's wife now showed her side,
 The robe was then put o'er her head;
 Her body was covered, feet and hands,
 None of it all was left exposed.
 Her bosom then one kiss received
 From Mac O'Duine, from Diarmid;
 The robe from her he then unfolds,
 From her who thus did stand alone.
 "Women, give me now my robe,
 I am the daughter of Deirg the fierce,
 I have done nought to cause me shame,
 I only erred with sharp-armed Finn."
 "Bear thou my curse, and quick away,"
 These were then the words of MacCumhail.
 On women he denounced a curse,
 Because of her who came that day.
 'Twas on a day.



