Sir Gawayne

and

The Green Knight:

AN ALLITERATIVE ROMANCE-POEM,

(AB. 1360 A.D.)

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"EARLY ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE POEMS."

RE-EDITED FROM COTTON. MS. NERO, A.x., IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM,

BY

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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

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

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

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

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

R.M.

LONDON,
December 22, 1864.

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

INTRODUCTION.

No Knight of the Round Table has been so highly honoured by the old Romance-writers as Sir Gawayne, the son of Loth, and nephew to the renowned Arthur. They delighted to describe him as Gawayne the good, a man matchless on mould, the most gracious that under God lived, the hardest of hand, the most fortunate in arms, and the most polite in hall, whose knowledge, knighthood, kindly works, doings, doughtiness, and deeds of arms were known in all lands.
When Arthur beheld the dead body of his kinsman lying on the ground bathed in blood, he is said to have exclaimed, "O righteous God, this blood were worthy to be preserved and enshrined in gold!" Our author, too, loves to speak of his hero in similar terms of praise, calling him the knight faultless in his five wits, void of every offence, and adorned with every earthly virtue. He represents him as one whose trust was in the five wounds, and in whom the five virtues which distinguished the true knight were more firmly established than in any other on earth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And yet give I him respite,  
A twelvemonth and a day;  
Now haste and let see tis't (soon)  
Dare any here-in ought say.'"  
If he astounded them at first, much more so did he after this speech, and fear held them all silent. The knight, righting himself in his saddle, rolls fiercely his red eyes about, bends his bristly green brows, and strokes his beard awaiting a reply. But finding none that would carp with him, he exclaims, "What! is this Arthur's house, the fame of which has spread through so many realms? Forsooth, the renown of the Round Table is overturned by the word of one man's speech, for all tremble for dread without a blow being struck!" (ll. 283-313). With this he laughed so loud that Arthur blushed for very shame, and waxed as wroth as the wind. "I know no man," he says, "that is aghast at thy great words. Give me now thy axe and I will grant thee thy request!" Arthur seizes the axe, grasps the handle, and sternly brandishes it about, while the Green Knight, with a stern cheer and a dry countenance, stroking his beard and drawing down his coat, awaits the blow (ll. 314-335). Sir Gawayne, the nephew of the king, beseeches his uncle to let him undertake the encounter; and, at the earnest entreaty of his nobles, Arthur consents "to give Gawayne the game" (ll. 336-365).

Sir Gawayne then takes possession of the axe, but, before the blow is dealt, the Green Knight asks the name of his opponent. "In good faith," answers the good knight, "Gawayne I am called, that bids thee to this buffet, whatever may befall after, and at this time twelvemonth will take from thee another, with whatever weapon thou wilt, and with no wight else alive." "By Gog," quoth the Green Knight, "it pleases me well that I shall receive at thy fist that which I have sought here—
moreover thou hast truly rehearsed the terms of the covenant,—but thou shalt first pledge me thy word that thou wilt seek me thyself, wheresoever on earth thou believest I may be found, and fetch thee such wages as thou dealest me to-day before this company of doughty ones." "Where should I seek thee?" replies Gawayne, "where is thy place? I know not thee, thy court, or thy name. I wot not where thou dwellest, but teach me thereto, tell me how thou art called, and I shall endeavour to find thee,—and that I swear thee for truth and by my sure troth."

"That is enough in New Year," says the groom in green, "if I tell thee when I have received the tap. When thou hast smitten me, then smartly I will teach thee of my house, my home, and my own name, so that thou mayest follow my track and fulfil the covenant between us. If I spend no speech, then speedest thou the better, for then mayest thou remain in thy own land and seek no further; but cease thy talking¹ (ll. 366-412). Take now thy grim tool to thee and let us see how thou knockest." "Gladly, sir, for sooth," quoth Gawayne, and his axe he brandishes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Though words were wanting when they first to seat went, now are their hands full of stern work, and the marvel affords them good subject for conversation. But a year passes full quickly and never returns,—the beginning is seldom like the end; wherefore this Christmas passed away and the year after, and each season in turn followed after another (ll. 476-520). Thus winter winds round again, and then Gawayne thinks of his wearisome journey (ll. 521-535). On All-hallows day Arthur entertains right nobly the lords and ladies of his court in honour of his nephew, for whom all courteous knights and lovely ladies were in great grief. Nevertheless they spoke only of mirth, and, though joyless themselves, made many a joke to cheer the good Sir Gawayne (ll. 536-565). Early on the morrow Sir Gawayne, with great ceremony, is arrayed in his armour (ll. 566-589), and thus completely equipped for his adventure he first hears mass, and afterwards takes leave of Arthur, the knights of the Round Table, and the lords and ladies of the court, who kiss him and
commend him to Christ. He bids them all good day, as he thought, for evermore (ll. 590-669);

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

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

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

Gawayne urges on his steed Gringolet, and finds himself at the "chief gate." He called aloud, and soon there appeared a "porter" on the wall, who demanded his errand.
"Good sir," quoth Gawayne, "wouldst thou go to the high lord of this house, and
 crave a lodging for me?"

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

The drawbridge is soon let down, and the gates opened wide to receive the knight.
 Many noble ones hasten to bid him welcome (ll. 773-825). They take away his
 helmet, sword, and shield, and many a proud one presses forward to do him honour.
 They bring him into the hall, where a fire was brightly burning upon the hearth. Then
 the lord of the land\(^1\) comes from his chamber and welcomes Sir Gawayne, telling him
 that he is to consider the place as his own. Our knight is next conducted to a bright
 bower, where was noble bedding—curtains of pure silk, with golden hems, and
 Tarsic tapestries upon the walls and the floors (ll. 826-859). Here the knight doffed
 his armour and put on rich robes, which so well became him, that all declared that a
 more comely knight Christ had never made (ll. 860-883).

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

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

After dinner, in reply to numerous questions, he tells his host that he is Gawayne,
 one of the Knights of the Round Table. When this was made known great was the joy
 in the hall. Each one said softly to his companion, "Now we shall see courteous
 behaviour and learn the terms of noble discourse, since we have amongst us 'that
 fine father of nurture.' Truly God has highly favoured us in sending us such a noble
 guest as Sir Gawayne" (ll. 884-927). At the end of the Christmas festival Gawayne
desires to take his departure from the castle, but his host persuades him to stay,
 promising to direct him to the Green Chapel (about two miles from the castle), that
 he may be there by the appointed time (ll. 1029-1082).
A covenant is made between them, the terms of which were that the lord of the castle should go out early to the chase, that Gawayne meanwhile should lie in his loft at his ease, then rise at his usual hour, and afterwards sit at table with his hostess, and that at the end of the day they should make an exchange of whatever they might obtain in the interim. "Whatever I win in the wood," says the lord, "shall be yours, and what thou gettest shall be mine" (ll. 1083-1125).

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

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

Gawayne behaves most discreetly, for the remembrance of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel prevents him from thinking of love (ll. 1205-1289). At last the lady takes leave of the knight by catching him in her arms and kissing him (ll. 1290-1307). The day passes away merrily, and at dusk the Lord of the castle returns
from the chase. He presents the venison to Gawayne according to the previous covenant between them. Our knight gives his host a kiss as the only piece of good fortune that had fallen to him during the day. "It is good," says the other, "and would be much better if ye would tell me where ye won such bliss" (ll. 1308-1394). "That was not in our covenant," replies Gawayne, "so try me no more." After much laughing on both sides they proceed to supper, and afterwards, while the choice wine is being carried round, Gawayne and his host renew their agreement. Late at night they take leave of each other and hasten to their beds. "By the time that the cock had crowed and cackled thrice" the lord was up, and after "meat and mass" were over the hunters make for the woods, where they give chase to a wild boar who had grown old and mischievous (ll. 1395-1467).

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

At the end of the day the lord of the castle returns home with the shields and head of the wild boar. He shows them to his guest, who declares that "such a brawn of a beast, nor such sides of a swine," he never before has seen. Gawayne takes possession of the spoil according to covenant, and in return he bestows two kisses upon his host, who declares that his guest has indeed been rich with "such chaffer" (ll. 1558-1647).
After much persuasion, Gawayne consents to stop at the castle another day (ll. 1648-1685). Early on the morrow the lord and his men hasten to the woods, and come upon the track of a fox, the hunting of which affords them plenty of employment and sport (ll. 1686-1730). Meanwhile our good knight sleeps soundly within his comely curtains. He is again visited by the lady of the castle. So gaily was she attired, and so "faultless of her features," that great joy warmed the heart of Sir Gawayne. With soft and pleasant smiles "they smite into mirth," and are soon engaged in conversation. Had not Mary thought of her knight, he would have been in great peril (ll. 1731-1769). So sorely does the fair one press him with her love, that he fears lest he should become a traitor to his host. The lady enquires whether he has a mistress to whom he has plighted his troth. The knight swears by St John that he neither has nor desires one. This answer causes the dame to sigh for sorrow, and telling him that she must depart, she asks for some gift, if it were only a glove, by which she might "think on the knight and lessen her grief" (ll. 1770-1800). Gawayne assures her that he has nothing worthy of her acceptance; that he is on an "uncouth errand," and therefore has "no men with no mails containing precious things," for which he is truly sorry.

Quoth that lovesome (one)—

"Though I had nought of yours,
Yet should ye have of mine.
Thus saying, she offers him a rich ring of red gold "with a shining stone standing aloft," that shone like the beams of the bright sun. The knight refused the gift, as he had nothing to give in return. "Since ye refuse my ring," says the lady, "because it seems too rich, and ye would not be beholden to me, I shall give you my girdle that is less valuable" (ll. 1801-1835). But Gawayne replies that he will not accept gold or reward of any kind, though "ever in hot and in cold" he will be her true servant.

"Do ye refuse it," asks the lady, "because it seems simple and of little value? Whoso knew the virtues that are knit therein would estimate it more highly. For he who is girded with this green lace cannot be wounded or slain by any man under heaven." The knight thinks awhile, and it strikes him that this would be a "jewel for the jeopardy" that he had to undergo at the Green Chapel. So he not only accepts the lace, but promises to keep the possession of it a secret (ll. 1836-1865). By that time the lady had kissed him thrice, and she then takes "her leave and leaves him there."
Gawayne rises, dresses himself in noble array, and conceals the "love lace" where he might find it again. He then hies to mass, shrives him of his misdeeds, and obtains absolution. On his return to the hall he solaces the ladies with comely carols and all kinds of joy (ll. 1866-1892). The dark night came, and then the lord of the castle, having slain the fox, returns to his "dear home," where he finds a fire brightly turning and his guest amusing the ladies (ll. 1893-1927). Gawayne, in fulfilment of his agreement, kisses his host thrice.¹ "By Christ," quoth the other knight, "ye have caught much bliss. I have hunted all this day and nought have I got but the skin of this foul fox (the devil have the goods!), and that is full poor for to pay for such precious things" (ll. 1928-1951).

After the usual evening's entertainment, Gawayne retires to rest. The next morning, being New Year's day, is cold and stormy. Snow falls, and the dales are full of drift. Our knight in his bed locks his eyelids, but full little he sleeps. By each cock that crows he knows the hour, and before day-break he calls for his chamberlain, who quickly brings him his armour (ll. 1952-2014). While Gawayne clothed himself in his rich weeds he forgot not the "lace, the lady's gift," but with it doubly girded his loins. He wore it not for its rich ornaments, "but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer," and as a safeguard against sword or knife (ll. 2015-2046).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gawayne now pursues his journey, rides through the dale, and looks about. He sees
no signs of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks, and the very shadows of
the high woods seemed wild and distorted. No chapel, however, could he discover.
After a while he sees a round hill by the side of a stream; thither he goes, alights, and
fastens his horse to the branch of a tree. He walks about the hill, debating with
himself what it might be. It had a hole in the one end and on each side, and
everywhere overgrown with grass, but whether it was only an old cave or a crevice
of an old crag he could not tell (ll. 2149-2188).
"Now, indeed," quoth Gawayne, "a desert is here; this oratory is ugly with herbs overgrown. It is a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions after the devil's manner.' Now I feel it is the fiend (the devil) in my five wits that has covenanted with me that he may destroy me. This is a chapel of misfortune—evil betide it! It is the most cursed kirk that ever I came in." With his helmet on his head, and spear in his hand, he roams up to the rock, and then he hears from that high hill beyond the brook a wondrous wild noise. Lo! it clattered in the cliff as if one upon a grindstone were grinding a scythe. It whirred like the water at a mill, and rushed and re-echoed, terrible to hear. "Though my life I forgo," says Gawayne, "no noise shall cause me to fear."

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

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

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

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

Then he stoops a little and shows his bare neck, unmoved by any fear. The Green Knight takes up his "grim tool," and with all his force raises it aloft, as if he meant utterly to destroy him. As the axe came gliding down Gawayne "shrunk a little with
the shoulders from the sharp iron." The other withheld his weapon, and then reproved the prince with many proud words. "Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed, that never feared for no host by hill nor by vale, for now thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm (ll. 2247-2272). Such cowardice of that knight did I never hear. I never flinched nor fled when thou didst aim at me in King Arthur's house. My head flew to my feet and yet I never fled, wherefore I deserve to be called the better man."

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

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

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

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

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

"Nay, forsooth," quoth the knight, "but for your kindness may God requite you. Commend me to that courteous one your comely wife, who with her crafts has beguiled me. But it is no uncommon thing for a man to come to sorrow through women's wiles; for so was Adam beguiled with one, and Solomon with many. Samson was destroyed by Delilah, and David suffered much through Bathsheba. 'It were indeed great bliss for a man to love them well and believe them not.' Since the greatest upon earth were so beguiled, methinks I should be excused. But God reward you for your girdle, which I will ever wear in remembrance of my fault, and when pride shall exalt me, a look to this love-lace shall lessen it (ll. 2407-2438). But since ye are the lord of yonder land, from whom I have received so much honour, tell me truly your right name, and I shall ask no more questions."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We want nothing but an increased supply of members to enable us to give to a large circle of readers many an equally interesting record of Early English minds.
SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNY3T.

[FYTTE THE FIRST.]

I.

[Fol. 91α.]
After the siege of Troy

Siþen þe sege & þe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye,
Þe bor3 brittened & brent to bron3e & aske3,
Þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wro3t,

4
Wat3 tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe;
Hit wat3 Enniæ þe athel, & his highe kynæ,
Þat siþen deprecæ pþro3uinces, & patrounes bicome
Welne3e of al þe wele in þe west iles,

Romulus built Rome,8

Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe,
With gret bobbauncæ þat bur3æ he bigæs vpon fyrst,
& neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
Ticius to Tuskan [turnes.] & telledes bigynæ;

12
Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftæ vp homes;
and Felix Brutus founded Britain,

& fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
On mony bonkkes ful brodæ Bretayn he sette3,
wyth wynne;

a land of war and wonder,16

Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,
Bi syþæ hat3 wont þer-inne,
and oft of bliss and blunder.

& oft boþe blysse & blunder
Ful skete hat3 skyftæ synne.

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

Þen in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
Of all Britain's kings Arthur was the noblest.

Bot of alle þat here bult of Bretaygne kynges
Ay wat3 Arthur þe hendest; as I haf herde telle;

[Fol. 91b.]

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

28

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

If 3e wyl lysten þis laye bot on littel quile,
I schal telle hit, as-tit, as I in tou3n herde,

32

    with tongue;
    As hit is stad & stoken,
    In stori stif & stronge,
    With lel letteres loken,
    36

    In londe so hat3 ben longe.

III.

Arthur held at Camelot his Christmas feast,

Þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse,
With mony luflych lorde, lede3 of þe best,
    with all the knights of the Round Table,

Rekenly of þe rounde table alle þo rich breþer,

40
With rych reuel ory3t, & rechles merþes;
Þer tournayed tulkes bi-tyme3 ful mony,
Justed ful Iolilé þise gentyle kni3tes,
Sypen kayred to þe court, caroles to make.
full fifteen days.44

For þer þe fest wat3 ilyche ful fiften dayes,
With alle þe mete & þe mirþe þat men couþe a-vyse;
Such glaumande gle glorious to here,
Dere dyn vp-on day, daunsyn glorio to here.
All was joy in hall and chamber,48

Al wat3 hap upon he3e in halle3 & chambre3,
With lorde3 & ladies, as leuest hi3t st;
With all þe wele of þe worlde þay woned þer samen,
among brave knights and lovely ladies,

Þe most kyd kny3te3 vnder kryste seluen,
52

& þe louelokkest ladies þat euer lif haden,
& he þe comlokest kynþat þe court haldes;
For al wat3 þis fayre folk in her first age,
on sille;
the happiest under heaven.56

Þe hapnest vnder heuen,
Kynþ hy3est mon of wylle,
Hit were¹ now gret nye to neuen
So hardy a here on hille.
¹ MS. werere.

They celebrate the New Year with great joy.60

Wyle nw 3er wat3 so 3ep þat hit wat3 nwe cummen,
Þat day doubble on þe dece wat3 þe douth serued,
Fro þe kynþ wat3 cummen with kny3tes in to þe halle,
Þe chaunte of þe chapel cheued to an ende;
64

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

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

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

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

Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme; 72

When þay had waschen, worþyly þay wenten to sete, Þe best burne ay abof, as hit best semed;
Queen Guenever appears gaily dressed.

Whene Guenore ful gay, grayþed in þe myddes.
Dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute, 76

Smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer
Of tryed Tolouse, of Tars tapites in-nogh,
Þat were enbrawded & beten wyth þe best gemmes,
Þat my3t be preued of prys wyth penyes to bye, 80

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

Þe comlokest to discrye,
Þer glent with y3en gray,
A semloker þat euer he sy3e, 84

Soth mo3t no mon say.

V.

Arthur would not eat,

Bot Arthure wolde not ete til al were serued,
He wat3 so Ioly of his Ioyfnes, & sum-quat child gered,
His lif liked hym ly3t, he louied þe lasse
nor would he long sit88

Auþer to lenge lye, or to longe sitte,
So bi-sied him his 3onge blod & his brayn wylde;
& also anoþer maner meued him eke,
Þat he þur3 nobelay had nomen, ho wolde neuer ete

92

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

Of sum aenturус þyng an vncoþe tale,
Of sum mayn meruayle, þat he my3t trawe,
Of1 alderes, of armes, of ofer aenturUs,

96

Oþer sum segg hym bi-so3t of sum siker kny3t,
To loyne wyth hym in iustynq in lopardé to lay,
Lede lif for lyf, leue vchon oþer,
As fortune wolde fulsun hom þe fayrer to haue.

100

Þis wat3 [þe] kynges countenance where he in court were,
At vch farand fest among his fre meny,
  [Fol. 92b.]

    in halle;
    He of face so bold makes much mirth with all.

Þer-fore of face so fere.

104

He sti3tle3 stif in stalle,
  Ful 3ep in þat nw 3ere,
Much mirthe he mas with alle.
  1 Of of, in MS.

VI.

The king talks with his knights.

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

108

Talkkande bifore þe hy3e table of trifles ful hende
  Gawayne,

There gode Gawan wat3 grayped, Gwenore bisyde
  Agravayn,
& Agrauyn a la dure mayn on þat oþer syde sittes
Boþe þe kynges sister sunes, & ful siker kni3tes;
   Bishop Bawdewyn,112

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

& Ywan, Vryn son, ette wit hy m-seluen;
Þise were di3t on þe des, & derworþly serued,
   & siþen mony siker segge at þe sidborde3.
   The first course is served with cracking of trumpets.116

Þen þe first cors come with crakkyng of tru mpes,
Wyth mony baner ful bry3t, þat þer-bi henged,
Nwe nakryn noyse with þe noble pipes,
Wylde werbles & wy3t wakned lote,
   120

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

Dayntes dryuen þer-wyth of ful dere metes,
Foysoun of þe fresche, & on so fele disches,
Þat pine to fynde þe place þe peple bi-forne
   124

For to sette þe syluener,1 Þat sere sewes halden,
   on clothe;
   Iche lede as he loued hym-selue
   Þer laght with-outen loþe,
   Each two had dishes twelve,128

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

   Good ber, & bry3t wyn boþe.
1 svlueren (?) (dishes).

VII.

There was no want of anything.

Now wyl I of hor seruise say yow no more,
For veþ wy3e may wel wit no wont þat þer were;
   Scarcely had the first course commenced,132

An oþer noyse ful newe ne3ed bilieue,
That þe lude myȝt haf leue lif-lode to cach.
For vneþe watȝ þe noyce not a whyle sesed,
& þe fyrst courc in þe court kyndely serued,
  when there rushes in at the hall-doore a knight

Þer hales in at þe halle dor an aghlich mayster,
On þe most on þe molde on mesure hyȝhe;
Fro þe swyre to þe swange so sware & so þik,
  the tallest on earth

& his lyndes & his lymes so longe & so grete,
  [Fol. 93.]140

Half etayn in erde I hope þat he were.
  he must have been.

Bot mon most I algate myyn hym to bene,
& þat þe myriest in his muckle þat myȝt ride;
  His back and breast were great,

For of bak & of brest al were his bodi stern,
  but his belly and waist were small.144

Bot his wombe & his wast were worthily smale,
& alle his fetures fol3ande, in forme þat he hade,
  ful clene;
  For wonder of his hwe men hade,
  148

Set in his semblauȝt sene;
  He ferde as freke were fade,
  & ouer-al enker grene.

VIII.

He was clothed entirely in green.

Ande al grayȝed in grene þis gome & his wedes,
  152

A strayt cote ful streȝt, þat steke on his sides,
A mere mantile abof, mensked with-inne,
  With pelure pured apert þe pane ful clene,
  With blyȝe blauynge ful bryȝt, & his hod boȝe,
  156

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

Þat spenet on his sparlyr, & clene spures vnder,  
Of bry3t golde, vpon silk bordes, barred ful ryche

160  
& scholes vnder schankes, þere þe schalk rides;  
& alle his vesture uerayly wat3 clene verdure,  
Boþe þe barres of his belt & oþer blyþe stones,  
Þat were richely rayled in his aray clene,  
His saddle was embroidered with birds and flies.164

Aboutte hym-self & his sadel, vpon silk werke3,  
Þat were to tor for to telle of tryfles þe halue,  
Þat were enbrauded abof, wyth bryddes & fly3es,  
With gay gaudi of grene, þe golde ay in myddes;  
168

Þe pendauntes of his paytrure, þe proude cropure  
His molaynes, & alle þe metail anamayld was þenne  
Þe steropes þat he stod on, stayned of þe same,  
& his arsoun3 al after, & his apel sturtes,  
172  
Þat euer glemered\(^1\) & glent al of grene stones.  
The foal that he rode upon was green;

Þe fole þat he ferkkes on, fyn of þat ilke,  
sertayn;  
A grene hors grete & þikke,  
it was a steed full stiff to guide.176

A stede ful stif to strayne,  
In brawden brydel quik,  
[Fol. 93b.]  
To þe gome he wat3 ful gayn.  
\(^1\) glemed (?).

IX.

Gaily was the knight attired.

Wel gay wat3 þis gome gered in grene,  
180
& þe here of his hed of his hors swete;
Fayre fannand fax vmbe-foldes his schulderes;
    His great beard, like a bush, hung on his breast.

A much berd as¹ a bush ouer his brest henges,
Þat wyth his hi3lich here, þat of his hed reches,
    184
Wat3 euesed al vmbe-torne, a-bof his elbowes,
Þat half his armes þer vnder were halched in þe wyse
Of a kynge3 capados, þat closes his swyre.
The horse's mane was decked with golden threads.

Þe mane of þat mayn hors much to hit lyke,
    188
Wel cresped & cemmmed wyth knottes ful mony,
Folden in wyth fildore aboute þe fayre grene,
Ay a herle of þe here, an oþer of golde;
    Its tail was bound with a green band.

Þe tayl & his toppyngh twynmen of a sute,
    192
& bounden boþe wyth a bande of a bry3t grene,
Dubbed wyth ful dere stone3, as þe dok lasted,
Syþen þrawen wyth a þwong a þwarle knot alofte,
Þer mony belle3 ful bry3t of brende golde rungen.
    Such a foal nor a knight were never before seen.196

Such a fole vpon folde, ne freke þat hym rydes,
Wat3 neuuer sene in þat sale wyth sy3t er þat tyme,
    with y3e;
He loked as layt so ly3t,
    200
So sayd al þat hym sy3e,
    It seemed that no man might endure his dints.

Hit semed as no mon my3t,
Vnder his dynnte3 dry3e.
¹ as as, in MS.

The knight carried neither spear nor shield,
Wheþer hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauþer,
  204
Ne no pysan, ne no plate þat pented to armes,
Ne no schafte, ne no schelde, to schwne ne to smyte,
  in one hand was a holly bough,
Bot in his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe,
Þat is grattest in grene, when greue3 ar bare,
  in the other an axe, 208
& an ax in his oþer, a hoge & vn-mete,
A spetos sparþe to expoun in spelle quo-so my3t;
Þe hede of an eln3erde þe large lenkþe hade,
Þe grayn al of grene stele & of golde hewen,
  the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor, 212
Þe bit burnyst bry3t, wíth a brod egge,
As wel schapen to schere as scharp rasores;
Þe stele of a stif staf þe sturne hit bi-grypte,
[Fol. 94.]
Þat wat3 wounden wyth yrm to þe wande3 ende,
  and the handle was encased in iron, curiously "graven with green, in gracious works." 216
& al bigrauen wíth grene, in gracios 1 werkes;
A lace lapped aboute, þat louked at þe hede,
& so after þe halme halched ful ofte,
Wyth tried tassele3 þerto tacched in-noghe,
  Thus arrayed the Green Knight enters the hall, 220
On botou3 of þe bry3t grene brayden ful ryche.
Þís hapel helde3 hym in, & þe halle entres,
Driuande to þe he3e dece, dut he no woþe,
  without saluting any one.
Haylsed he neuer one, bot he3e he ouer loked.
  224
Þe fyrst word þat he warp, "wher is," he sayd,
  He asks for the "governor" of the company,
"Þe gouernour of þis gyng? gladly I wolde
Se þat segg in sy3t, & with hym self speke
  raysoun."
  228
To kny3te he kest his y3e,
& reled hym vp & doun,
and looks for the most renowned.

He stemmed & con studie,
Quo walt þer most renoun.
1  looks like gracons in MS.

XI.

Much they marvel to see a man and a horse232
Ther wat lokyn on lenpe, þe lude to be-holde,
For vch mon had merauley quant mene my3t,
þat a haþel & a horse my3t such a hwe lach,
as green as grass.

As growe grene as þe gres & grener hit semed,
236

þen grene aumayl on golde lowande brynster;
Al studied þat þer stod, & stalked hym nerre,
Never before had they seen such a sight as this.

Wyth al þe wonder of þe worlde, what he worch schulde.
For fele sellye3 had þay sen, bot such neuer are,
240

For-þi for fantoum & fayry3e þe folk þere hit demed;
They were afraid to answer,

þer-fore to answare wat3 ar3e mony aþel freke,
& al stouned at his steuen, & stonstil seten,
and were as silent as if sleep had taken possession of them;

In a swoghe sylence þur3 þe sale riche
244

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

Bot sum for cortaysye,
248

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

XII.

Arthur salutes the Green Knight.

Þenn Arþour bifice þe hi3 dece þat auenture byholde3, & rekenly hym reuerenced, for rad was he neuer, 252

& sayde, "wy3e, welcum iwyys to þis place, [Fol. 94b.]

bids him welcome, and invites him to stay awhile.

Þe hede of þis ostel Arthour I hat, Li3t luflych adou, & lenge, I þe praye, & quat so þy wylle is, we schal wyt aft."
The knight says that he will not tarry.256

"Nay, as help me," quod þe haþel, "he þat on hy3e syttes, To wone any quyle in þis won, hit wat3 not myn ernde; Bot for þe los of þe lede is lyft vp so hy3e, & þy bur3 & þy burnes best ar holden, 260

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

Þe wy3test & þe worþyest of þe worldes kynde, Preue for to play wyth in oþer pure layke3; & here is kydde cortaysye, as I haf herd carp, 264

& þat hat3 wayned me hider, I-wyis, at þis tyme. 3e may be seker bi þis braunch þat I bere here, He comes in peace.

Þat I passe as in pes, & no ply3t seche; For had I fou3ned in fere, in fe3tyng wyse, At home, however, he has both shield and spear.268

I haue a haubergh at home & a helme boþe, A schelde, & a scharp spere, schinande bry3t, Ande oþer weppenes to welde, I wene wel als, Bot for I wolde no were, my wede3 ar softer. 272

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

& sayd, "sir cortays kny3t,
If þou craue batayl bare,
Here fayle3 þou not to fy3t."

Arthur con onsware,
276

"I seek no fight," says the knight.

"Nay, frayst I no fy3t, in fayth I þe telle,
"Here are only beardless children.'280

Hit arn aboute on þis bench bot berdle3 chylder;
If I were hasped in armes on a he3e stede,
Here is no man to match me.

Here is no mon me to mach, for my3te3 so1 wayke.
For-þy I craue in þis court a crystmas gomen,
Here are brave ones many,284

For hit is 3ol & nwe 3er, & here ar 3ep mony;
If any so hardy in þis hous holde3 hym-seluen,
if any be bold enough to 'strike a stroke for another,'

Be so bolde in his blod, brayn in hys hede,
Þat dar stifly strike a strok for an oþer,
288

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

Þis ax, þat is heué in-nogh, to hondele as hym lykes,
[Fol. 95.]

& I schal bide þe fyrst bur, as bare as I sitte.
If any freke be so felle to fonde þat I telle,
292

Lepe ly3tly me to, & lach þis weppen,
I quit clayme hit for euer, kepe hit as his auen,
but I shall give him a 'stroke' in return
& I schal stonde hym a strok, stif on þis flet,
Elle þou wyl diȝt me þe dom to dele hym an oþer,

barlay;
& ȝet gif hym respite,
within a twelvemonth and a day."

A twelmonyth & a day;—
Now hyȝe, & let se tite

Dar any her-inne oȝt say." 

But I shall give him a 'stroke' in return

& I shal stonde hym a strok, stif on þis flet,
Elle þou wyl diȝt me þe dom to dele hym an oþer,

barlay;
& ȝet gif hym respite,
within a twelvemonth and a day."
Forsooth the renown of the Round Table is overturned 'with a word of one man's speech.'

Now is þe reuel & þe renoun of þe rounde table
Ouer-walt wyth a worde of on wy3es speche;
For al dares for drede, with-oute dynt schewed!"

Wyth þis he la3es so loude, þat þe lorde greued;
Arthur blushes for shame.

Þe blod schot for scham in-to his schyre face
& lere;
He waxes as wroth as the wind.

He wex as wroth as wynde,
So did alle þat þer were
Þe kyn as kene bi kynde,
þen stod þat stif mon nere.

XV.

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

Ande sayde, "haþel, by heuen þyn askyng is nys,
& as þou foly hat3 frayst, fynde þe be-houes;
I know no gome þat is gast of þy grete wordes.
Gif me now þy geserne, vpon gode3 halue,
& I schal bayþen þy bone, þat þou boden habbes."

Ly3tly lepe3 he hym to, & la3t at his honde;
Þen feersly þat oþer freke vpon fote ly3tis.
Arthur seizes his axe.

Now hat3 Arthure his axe, & þe halme grype3,
& sturnely sure3 hit aboute, þat stryke wyth hit þo3t.

Þe stif mon hym before stod vpon hy3t,
Herre þen an³ in þe hous by þe hede & more;
The knight, stroking his beard, awaits the blow, and with a "dry countenance" draws down his coat.
Wyth sturne schere\(^1\) þer he stod, he stroked his berde,
& wyth a countenaunce dry\(3\)e he dro\(3\) doun his cote,

336

No more mate ne dismayd for hys mayn dint\(e3\),
Þen any burne vpon bench hade bro\(3\)t hym to drynk
of wyne,
Sir Gawayne beseeches the king to let him undertake the blow.

Gawan, þat sate bi þe quene,

340

To þe kynge he can enclyne,
"I be-seche now with sa\(3\)e3 sene,
Þis melly mot be myne."
\(^1\) chere (?).

XVI.

"Wolde 3e, worþilych lorde," quod Gawan to þe kynge,
He asks permission to leave the table; he says,344

"Bid me bo\(3\)e fro þis benche, & stonde by yow þere,
Þat I wyth-oute vylanye my\(3\)t voyde þis table,
& þat my legge lady lyked not ille,
I wolde com to your counseyl, bifo\(re\) your cort ryche.

it is not meet that Arthur should be active in the matter,348

For me þink hit not semly, as hit is soþ knawen,
Þer such an askyng is heuened so hy\(3\)e in yo\(u\)r sale,
Þa\(3\)e yo\(u\)-self be talenttyf to take hit to yo\(u\)-seluen,
while so many bolde ones sit upon bench.

Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten,

352

Þat vnder heuen, I hope, non ha\(3\)er er of wylle,
Ne bett\(e\)r bodyes on bent, þer baret is rered;
Although the weakest, he is quite ready to meet the Green Knight.

I am þe wakkest, I wot, and of wyt feblest,
& lest lur of my lyf, quo laytes þe soþe,

356

Bot for as much as 3e ar myn em, I am only to prayse,
No bount\(e\)t bot your blod I in my bodé knowe;
& syþen þis note is so nys, þat no\(3\)t hit yow falles,
& I haue frayned hit at yow fyrst, folde3 hit to me,
   360
& if I carp not comlyly, let alle þis cort rych,
    bout blame."
    The nobles entreat Arthur to "give Gawayne the game."

Ryche to-geder con roun,
& syþen þay redden alle same,
   364
To ryd þe kyng wyth croun,
& gif Gawan þe game.

XVII.

[ Fol. 96. ]

Þen comaundded þe kyng þe kny3t for to ryse;
& he ful radly vp ros, & ruchched hym fayre,
   The king gives his nephew his weapon,368
Kneled doun bifiore þe kyng, & cache3 þat weppen;
& he luflyly hit hym laft, & lyfte vp his honde,
& gef hym godde3 blessyng, & gladly hym biddles
    and tells him to keep heart and hand steady.
Þat his hert & his honde schulde hardi be boþe.
   372
"Kepe þe cosyn," quod þe kyng, "þat þou on kyrf sette,
& if þou rede3 hym ry3t, redly I trowe,
Þat þou schal byden þe bur þat he schal bede aft.
Gawan got3 to þe gome, with giserne in honde,
   376
& he baldly hym byde3, he bayst neuer þe helder
    The Green Knight enquires the name of his opponent.
Þen carppe3 to sir Gawan þe kny3t in þe grene,
"Refourme we oure for-wardes, er we fyrre passe.
Fyrst I eþe þe, haþel, how þat þou hattes,
   380
Þat þou me telle truly, as I tryst may?"
    Sir Gawayne tells him his name, and declares that he is willing to give and receive a blow.
"In god fayth," quod þe goode knyȝt, "Gawan I hatte, Þat bede þe þis buffet,quat-so bi-falleȝ after, & at þis tyme twelmonyth take at þe anoȝer, 384
Wyth what weppen soþou wylt, & wyth no wyȝ elleȝ, on lyue."
Þat oþer on-swareȝ agayn, "Sir Gawan, so mot I þryue, The other thereof is glad.388
As I am ferly fayn. Þis dint þat þou schal dryue." 1 MS. fo.

XVIII.
"It pleases me well, Sir Gawayne," says the Green Knight, "that I shall receive a blow from thy fist; but thou must swear that thou wilt seek me,
"Bigog," quod þe grene knyȝt, "sir Gawan, melykes, Þat I schal fange at þy fust þat I haf frayst here; 392
& þou hatȝ redily rehersed, bi resoun ful trwe, Clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kynȝe asked, Saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawȝe, Þat þou schal seche me þi-self, where-so þou hopes 396
I may be funde vpon folde, & foch þe such wages to receive the blow in return."
As þou deles me to day, bifore þis douȝe rych."  "Where shall I seek thee?" says Sir Gawayne;
"Where schulde I wale þe," quod Gauan, "where is þy place? I wot neuer where þou wonyes, bi hym þat me wroȝt, 400
Ne I know not þe, knyȝt, þy cort, ne þi name. "tell me thy name and abode and I will find thee."
Bot teche me truly þer-to, & telle me howe þou hattes, & I schal ware alle my wyt to wynne me þeder, [Fol. 96b.]
& þat I swere þe for soþe, & by my seker traweþ.

"Pat is in-nogh in nwe 3er, hit nedes no more,"
Quod þe gone in þe grene to Gawan þe hende,
"When thou hast smitten me," says the knight, "then tell I thee of my home and name;

"3if I þe telle trwly, quen I þe tape haue,
& þou me smoþely hat3 smyten, smartly I þe teche

Of my hous, & my home, & myn owen nome,
Þen may þou frayst my fare, & forwarde3 holde,
if I speak not at all, so much the better for thee.

& if I spende no speche, þenne spede3 þou þe better,
For þou may leng in þy londe, & layt no fyrre,

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

Ta now þy grymme tole to þe,
& let se how þou cnoke3."
"Gladly sir, for soþe,"

Quod Gawan; his ax he strokes.

The Green Knight

The grene kny3t vpon grounde grayþely hym dresses,
A littel lut with þe hede, þe lere he discouere3,
puts his long lovely locks aside and lays bare his neck.

His longe louelych lokke3 he layd ouer his croun.

Let þe naked nec to þe note schewe.
Gawan gripped to his ax, & gederes hit on hy3t,
Þe kay fot on þe folde he be-fore sette,
Sir Gawayne lets fall his axe

Let hit doun ly3tly ly3t on þe naked,
That þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones,
    and severs the head from the body.

& schrank þur3 þe schyire grece, & scade hit in twyne,
That þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde.
    The head falls to the earth.

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

Þat fele hit foyned wyth her fete, þere hit forth roled;
Þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe grene;
    The knight never falters;

& nawþer faltered ne fel þe freke neuer þe helder,
Bot styþly he start forth vpon styf schonkes,
    he rushes forth, seizes his head,432

& ru[n]yschly he ra3t out, þere as renkke3 stoden,
La3t to his luflly hed, & lyft hit vp sone;
& sypen bo3e3 to his blonk, þe brydel he cachche3,
    steps into the saddle,

Steppe3 in to stel bawe & stryde3 alofte,
    holding the while the head in his hand by the hair,436

& his hede by þe here in his honde halde3;
& as sadly þe segge hym in his sadel sette,
As non vnhap had hym ayled, þa3 hedle3 he1 we[re],
    in stedde;
    and turns his horse about.440

He brayde his bluk2 aboute,
    [Fol. 97.]

Þat vgly bodi þat bledde,
Moni on of hym had doute,
Bi þat his resoun3 were redde.
1 MS. ho. 2 blank (?).

XX.

444

For þe hede in his honde he halde3 vp euen,
    The head lifts up its eyelids,
To-ward þe derrest on þe dece he dresse3 þe face,
& hit lyfte vp þe y3e-lydde3, & loked ful brode,
and addresses Sir Gawayne; "Look thou, be ready to go as thou hast promised,
& meled þus much with his muthe, as 3e may now here.

448

"Loke, Gawan, þou be grayþe to go as þou hette3,
& layte as lelly til þou me, lude, fynde,
and seek till thou findest me.

As þou hat3 hette in þis halle, herande þise kny3tes;
Get thee to the Green Chapel,

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

452

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

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

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

Þer-fore com, oþer recreaut be calde þe be-houe us.'
With a runisch rout þe rayne3 he torne3,
The Green Knight then rushes out of the hall, his head in his hand.

Halled out at þe hal-dor, his hed in his hande,
Þat þe fyr of þe flynt fla3e fro folه houes.

460

To quat kyth he be-com, knwe non þere,
Neuermore þen þay wyste fram queþen he wat3 wonnen;
what þenne?
Þe kyng & Gawen þare,
At that green one Arthur and Gawayne "laugh and grin."464

At þat grene þay la3e & grenne,
3et breued wat3 hit ful bare,
A meruayl among þo menne.

XXI.
Arthur addresses the queen:

Þa3 Arþer þe hende kyng at hert hade wonder, 468

He let no semblauþt be sene, bot sayde ful hyȝe  
To þe comlych quene, wyth cortays speche,  
"Dear dame, be not dismayed; such marvels well become the Christmas festival;

"Dere dame, to day demay yow neuer;  
Wel by-commes such craft vpon cristmasse, 472

Laykyng of enterlude3, to laȝe & to syng.  
Among þise, kynde caroles of knyȝte3 & ladye3;  
I may now go to meat.

Neuer-þe-lece to my mete I may me wel dres,  
For I haf sen a selly, I may not for-sake." 476

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

"Now sir, heng vp þyn ax, þat hatȝ in-nogh hewen."  
[Fol. 97b.]

& hit watȝ don abof þe dece, on doser to henge,  
Þer alle men for mayerly myȝt on hit loke, 480

& bi trwe tytel þer-of to telle þe wonder.  
The king and his knights sit feasting at the board till day is ended.

Þenne þay boȝed to a borde þise burnes to-geder,  
Þe kyng & þe gode knyȝt, & kene men hem serued  
Of alle dayntyȝe3 double, as derrest myȝt falle, 484

Wyth alle maner of mete & mynstralcie boȝe;  
Wyth wele walt þay þat day, til worȝed an ende,  
in londe.  
Now beware, Sir Gawayne, lest thou fail to seek the adventure that thou hast taken in hand.

Now þenk wel, sir Gawan, 488
For woþe þat þou ne wonde,
Þis auenture forto frayn,
Þat þou hat3 tan on honde.

[FYTTE THE SECOND.]

I.

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

This hansell hat3 Arthur of auenturus on fyrst,

492

In 3onge 3er, for he 3erned 3elpyng to here,
Tha3 hym worde3 were wane, when þay to sete wenten;
Now ar þay stoken of sturne werk staf-ful her hond.
Gawan wat3 glad to be-gynne þose gomne3 in halle,

496

Bot þa3 þe ende be heuy, haf 3e no wonder;
For þa3 men ben mery in mynde, quen þay han mayn drynk,
The year passes full quickly and never returns.

A 3ere 3ernes ful 3erne, & 3elde3 neuer lyke,
Þe forme to þe fynisment folde3 ful selden.

500

For-þi þis 3ol ouer-3ede, & þe 3ere after,
& vche sesoun serlepes sued after oþer;
After Christmas comes the "crabbed Lenten."

After crysten-masse com þe crabbed lentoun,
Þat frayste3 flesch wyth þe fysche & fode more symple

504

Bot þenne þe weder of þe worlde wynter hit þrepe3,
Spring sets in and warm showers descend;

Colde clenge3 adoun, cloude3 vp-lyften,
Schyre schede3 þe rayn in schowre3 ful warme,
Falle3 vpon fayre flat, flowre3 þere schewen,
the groves become green,508

Boþe grounde3 & þe greue3 grene ar her wede3,
birds build and sing,

Brydde3 busken to bylde, & bremlych syngen,
for joy of the summer that follows;

For solace of þe softe somer þat sues þer after,
bi bonk;
blossoms begin to bloom,

& blossum bolne to blowe,
Bi rawe rych & ronk,
and noble notes are heard in the woods

Þen note noble in-no3e,
[Fol. 98]

Ar herde in wod so wlonk.

II.

Then the soft winds of summer,

After þe sesoun of somer wyth þe soft wynde,
Quen Þeferus syfle hym-self on sede & erbe,
beautiful are the flowers wet with dew-drops.

Wela-wynne is þe wort þat woxes þer-oute.
When þe donkande dewe drope of þe leue,

To bide a blysful blusch of þe bryt sunne.
But harvest approaches soon,

Bot þen hy3es heruest, & hardenes hym sone.
Warne hym for þe wynter to wax ful ripe;
and drives the dust about.

He dryues wyth dro3t þe dust for to ryse.

Fro þe face of þe folde to flye ful hy3e;
Wroþe wynde of þe welkyn wrastele with þe sunne,
The leaves drop off the trees,

Þe leue lancen fro þe lynde, & lyþen on þe grounde,
the grass becomes gray, and all ripens and rots.

& al grayes þe gres, þat grene wat3 ere;

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Winterpilze rollen durch die Lüfte,
Wintereinbruch, der die Welt befragt.

Dann denken Gawan bald darauf,
Von seiner ängstlichen Reise.

III.

Am All-Halbtag feiert Arthur einen Festmahl
3et quyl al-hal-day with Arther he lenges,
& he made a fare on þat fest, for þe freke3 sake,
With much reuel & ryche of þe rounde table;
Kny3te3 ful cortays & comlych ladies,
540

Al for luf of þat lede in longynge þay were,
Bot neuer-þe-lece ne þe later þay neuened bot merþe,
Mony ioyle3 for þat ientyle iape3 þer maden.
After meat, Sir Gawayne thus speaks to his uncle:

For after mete, with mourning he mele3 to his eme,
544

& speke3 of his passage, & pertly he sayde,
"Now, liege lord, I ask leave of you,
"Now, lege lorde of my lyf, leue I yow ask;
3e knowe þe cost of þis cace, kepe I no more
To telle yow tene3 þer-of neuer bot trifel;
for I am bound on the morn to seek the Green Knight."548

Bot I am boun to þe bur barely to morn,
To sech þe gome of þe grene, as god wyl me wysse."
Sir Dodin Daual de Sauage, þe duk of Clarence,  
Launcelot, & Lyonel, & Lucan þe gode,  
Sir Boos, & sir Byduer, big men boþe,  

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

& mony oþer menskful, with Mador de la Port.

Alle þis compayny of court com þe kyng nerre,  
For to counseyl þe kny3t, with care at her hert;  

Much sorrow prevails in the hall.

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

To dry3e a delful dynt, & dele no more  
wyth bronde.  
Þe kny3t mad ay god chere,  
& sayde, "quat schuld I wonde,  
Gawayne declares that he has nothing to fear.564  

Of destines derf & dere,  
What may mon do bot fonde?"  
1 derne (?).

IV.

On the morn he asks for his arms.

He dowelle3 þer al þat day, and dresse3 on þe morn,  
Aske3 erly hys arme3, & alle were þay bro3t  

A carpet is spread on the floor,568  

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

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

Dubbed in a dublet of a dere tars,  

572  

& syþen a crafty capados, closed aloft,  
Þat wyth a bry3t blau ener was bouneden with-inne;  
They set steel slices on his feet, and lap his legs in steel greaves.
The knight is arrayed:

\[\text{Penne set by sabatoue vpon sege fote,}\]
\[\text{His lege lapped in stel with luflych greue,}\]
\[576\]

\[\text{With polayne piched per-to, policed ful clene,}\]
\[\text{Aboute his kne knaged wyth knote of golde;}\]
\[\text{Fair cuisses enclose his thighs,}\]

\[\text{Queme quyssewe by, pat coynlych closed}\]
\[\text{His thik prawen bye with byonges to-tachched;}\]
\[\text{and afterwards they put on the steel habergeon,}\]
\[580\]

\[\text{& syben bye brawen bryne of bryt stel wynge,}\]
\[\text{Vmbe-weued pat wy, vpon wonk stuffe;}\]
\[\text{well-burnished braces, elbow pieces, and gloves of plate.}\]

\[\text{& wel bornyst brace vpon his bope armes,}\]
\[\text{With gode cowters & gay, & gloue of plate,}\]
\[584\]

\[\text{& alle bye godlych gere by hym gayn schulde}\]
\[\text{Pat tyde;}\]
\[\text{Over all this is placed the coat armour.}\]

\[\text{Wyth ryche cote armure,}\]
\[\text{His spurs are then fixed,}\]

\[\text{His gold spore spend with pryde,}\]
\[\text{and his sword is attached to his side by a silken girdle.}\]
\[588\]

\[\text{Gurde wyth a bront ful sure,}\]
\[\text{With silk sayn vmbe his syde.}\]

\[V.\]

[Fol. 99a.]
Thus arrayed the knight hears mass,

When he wat hasped in armes, his harnays wat ryche,
\[\text{Bye lest lachet ou[\text{p}]er loupe lemed of golde;}\]
\[592\]

So harnayst as he wat he herkne his masse,
\[\text{Offred & honoured at by he3e auter;}\]
\[\text{and afterwards takes leave of Arthur and his court.}\]

\[\text{Syben he come to by kynge & to his cort fere,}\]
Lache3 lufl3 his leue at lorde3 & ladye3;

596

& þay hym kyst & conuyed, bikende hym to kryst.
By that time his horse Gringolet was ready,

Bi þat wat3 Gryngolet grayth, & gurde with a sadel,
Þat glemed ful gayly with mony golde frenges,
Ay quere naylet ful nwe for þat note ryched;

600

Þe brydel barred aboute, with bry3t golde bounden;
the harness of which glittered like the "gleam of the sun."

Þe apparayl of þe paytttrure, & of þe proude skyrte3,
Þe cropore, & þe couertor, acorded wyth þe arsoune3;
& al wat3 rayled on red ryche golde nayle3,

604

Þat al glytered & glent as glem of þe sunne.
Then Sir Gawayne sets his helmet upon his head,

Þenne hentes he þe holme, & hastily hit kysses,
Þat wat3 stapled stifly, & stoffed wyth-inne:
Hit wat3 hy3e on his hede, hasped bihynde,
fastened behind with a "urisoun,"608

Wyth a ly3tli vrysou ouer þe auentayle,
richly embroidered with gems.

Enbrawden & bounden wyth þe best gemme3,
On brode sylkyn borde, & brydde3 on seme3,
As papiaye3 paynted peryng bitwene,

612

Tortors & trulofe3 entayled so þyk,
As mony burde þer aboute had ben seuen wynter
in toune;
The circle around the helmet was decked with diamonds.

Þe cercle wat3 more o prys,

616

Þat vmbe-clypped hys croun,
Of diamaunte3 a deuys,
Þat boþe were bry3t & broun.
VI.

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

Then þay schewed hym þe schelde, þat was of schyr goule3,

Wyth þe pentangel de-paynt of pure golde hwe3;
He brayde3 hit by þe baude-ryk, aboute þe hals kestes,
Þat bisemed þe segge semlyly fayre.

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

& quy þe pentangel apende3 to þat prynce noble,

I am in tent yow to telle, þof tary hyt me schulde;
Hit is a synynge þat Salamon set sum-quyle,
In bytoknyng of trawþe, bi tytle þat hit habbe3,

For hit is a figure þat halde3 fyue poynte3,

& vche lyne vmbe-lappe3 & louke3 in ðer,
It is called the endless knot

& ay quere hit is endele3,1 & Englych hit callen
Ouer-al, as I here, þe endeles knot.
For-þy hit acorde3 to þis kny3t, & to his cler arme3,

For ay faythful in fyue & sere fyue syþe3,
It well becomes the good Sir Gawayne,

Gawan wat3 for gode knawen, & as golde pured,
Voyded of vche vylany, wyth vertue32 enmoured

For-þy þe pen-tangel nwe
He ber in schelde & cote,
 a knight the truest of speech and the fairest of form.

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

1 MS emdele3. 2 MS verertue3
He was found faultless in his five wits.

Fyrst he was funden fautle in his fyue wytte, & eft sye laid neuer þe freke in his fyue fyngres, His trust was in the five wounds.

& alle his afyauence vpon folde was in þe fyure wounde. Pat Cryst kaȝt on þe croys, as þe crede telle;

644

& quere-so-euer þys mon in melly wat sted, His þro þoȝt wat in þat, þur alle oþer þynge, Pat alle his fyrst þat þe heuen quene had of hir chylde;

648

At þis cause þe knyȝt comlyche hade The image of the Virgin was depicted upon his shield.

In þe more half of his schelde hir ymage depaynted, Pat quen he blusched þerto, his belde neuer payred. Þe fyrst þat I finde þat þe frek wased, 652

Wat strange, & felaȝschyp for-bey al þynge; In cleanness and courtesy he was never found wanting,

His clannes & his cortaysye croked were neuer, & pite, þat passe alle poynȝte, þysse pur fyue Were harder happe on þat haȝel þen on any oþer.

656

Now alle þese fyue syȝe, forsoȝe, were fetled on þis knyȝt, & vchone halched in oþer, þat non ende hade, & fyched vpon fyue poynȝte, þat fayld neuer, Ne samned neuer in no syde, ne sundred nouþer;

660

Withoȝt end at any noke [a]i quere fynde, Where-euer þe gomen bygan, or glod to an ende. therefore was the endless knot fastened on his shield.

Per-fore on his schene schelde schapen was þe knot, Þus alle wyth red golde vpon rede gowle,
Pat is þe pure pentaungel wyth þe peple called,
with lore.
Now grayþed is Gawan gay,
Sir Gawayne seizes his lance and bids all "good day."

& laȝt his launçe ryȝt þore,
668

& gef hem alle goud day,
He wende for euer more.
1 MS fyft. 2 for-bi (?).

VIII.

He spurs his horse and goes on his way.

He sperred þe sted with þe spureȝ, & sprong on his way,
So stif þat þe ston fyr stroke out þer-aft;
All that saw that seemly one mourned in their hearts.672

Al þat seȝ þat semly syked in hert,
& sayde soȝly al same segges til oþer,
Carande for þat comly, "bi Kryst, hit is scapes,
Þat þou, leude, schal be lost, þat art of lyf noble!
They declared that his equal was not to be found upon earth.676

To fynde hys fere vpon folde, in fayth is not eþe;
Warloker to haf wroȝt had more wyt bene,
& haf dyȝt ȝonder dere a duk to haue worþed;
It would have been better for him to have been a leader of men,

A lowande leder of ledeȝ in londe hym wel semeȝ,
680

& so had better haf ben þen britned to noȝt,
than to die by the hands of "an elvish man."

Hadet wyth an aluisch mon, for angardeȝ pryde.
Who knew euer any kyng such counsel to take,
As knyȝteȝ in cauelounȝ on cryst-masse gomneȝ!"
Much was the warm water that poured from eyes that day.684

Wel much watȝ þe warme water þat waltered of yȝen,
When þat semly syre soȝt fro þo woneȝ
þatȝ daye;
He made non abode,
688
Bot wy3tly went hys way,  
Meanwhile many a weary way goes Sir Gawayne.

Mony wylsun way he rode,  
Þe bok as I herde say.  
¹ MS. þad.

IX.

Now rides the knight through the realms of England.

Now ride3 þis renk þur3 þe ryalme of Logres,  
692

Sir Gauan on Gode3 halue, þa3 hym no gomen þo3t;  
Oft, leudle3 alone, he lenge3 on ny3te3,  
Þer he fonde no3t hy  
He has no companion but his horse.

Hade he no fere bot his fole, bi frythe3 & doune3,  
696

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

Til þat he ne3ed ful noghe¹ in to þe Norþe Wale3;  
Alle þe iles of Anglesay on lyft half he halde3,  
& fare3 ouer þe forde3 by þe for-londe3,  
From Holyhead he passes into Wirral.700

Ouer at þe Holy-Hede, til he hade eft bonk  
In þe wyldrenesse of Wyrale; wonde þer bot lyte  
[fol. 100b]
There he finds but few that loved God or man.

Þat auþer God oþer gome wyth goud hert louied.  
& ay he frayned, as he ferde, at freke3 þat he met,  
He enquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel,704

If þay hade herde any karp of a kny3t grene,  
In any grounde þer-aboute, of þe grene chapel;²  
& al nykked hym wyth nay, þat neuer in her lyue  
but can gain no tidings of him.

Þay se3e neuer no segge þat wat3 of suche hwe3  
708

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of grene.
Þe knyt tok gates straunge,
In mony a bonk vnborne,
His cheer oft changed before he found the Chapel.

His cher ful oft con chaunge,
712

Þat chapel er he my3t sene.
1 nyghe (?). 2 MS. clapel.

X.

Many a cliff he climbed over;

Mony klyf he ouer-clambe in contraye3 straunge,
Fer floten fro his frende3 fremedy he ryde3;
many a ford and stream he crossed, and everywhere he found a foe.

At vche warþe oþer wat er þe wy3e passed,
716

He fonde a foo hym byfore, bot ferly hit were,
& þat so foue & so felle, þat fe3t hym by-hode;
It were too tedious to tell the tenth part of his adventures

So mony meruayl hi mount þer þe mon fynde3,
Hit were to tore for to telle of þe tenþe dole.
with serpents, wolves, and wild men;720

Sumwhyle wyth worme3 he werre3, & with wolues als,
Sumwhyle wyth wodwos, þat woned in þe knarre3,
with bulls, bears, and boars.

Boþe wyth bulle3 & bere3, & bore3 oþer-quyle,
& etayne3, þat hym a-nelede, of þe he3e felle; 724
Had he not been both brave and good, doubtless he had been dead.

Nade he ben du3ty & dry3e, & dry3tyn had serued,
Douteles he hade ben ded, & dreped ful ofte.
The sharp winter was far worse than any war that ever troubled him.

For werre wrathed hym not so much, þat wynter was wors,
When þe colde cler water fro þe cloude3 schadden,
728

& fres er hit falle my3t to þe fale erþe;

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Ner slayn wyth þe slete he sleped in his yrnes,  
Mo nyȝte3 þen in-noghe in naked rokke3,  
Þer as claterande fro þe crest þe colde borne renne3,  

732  
& henged heȝe ouer his hede in hard āsse-ikkles.  
Thus in peril he travels till Christmas-eve.

Þus in peryl, & payne, & plytes ful harde,  
Bi contray carye3 þis knyȝt, tyl kryst-masse euen,  
  al one;  

736  
Þe knyȝt wel þat tyde,  
To the Virgin Mary he prays to guide him to some abode.

To Mary made his mone.  
Þat ho hym red to ryde,  
[Fol. 101.]  

& wysse hym to sum won.

XI.

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

Bi a mounte on þe morne meryly he rydes,  
Into a forest ful dep, þat ferly watȝe wylde,  
Hiȝe hilleȝ on vche a halue, & holt wodeȝ vnder,  
where were old oaks many a hundred.

Of hore okeȝ fill hoge a hundreth to-geder;  

744  
Þe hasel & þe haȝ-ȝorne were harled al samen,  
With roȝe raged mosse rayled ay-where,  
Many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold.

With mony bryddeȝ vnblyȝe vpon bare twyges,  
Þat pitosly þer piped for pyne of þe colde.  

748  
Þe gome vpon Gryngolet glydeȝ hem vnder,  
Through many a mire he goes, that he may celebrate the birth of Christ.

Þurȝ mony misy & myre, mon al hym one,  
Carande for his costes, lest he ne keuer schulde,
To se þe seruy of þat syre, þat on þat nyȝt
 752

Of a burde watȝ borne, oure baret to quelle;
     He beseeches the Virgin Mary to direct him to some lodging where he may hear mass.
& þerfore sykyng he sayde, "I be-seche þe, lorde, & Mary, þat is myldest moder so dere.
Of sum herber, þer heȝly I myȝt here masse.
          756

Ande þy matyneȝ to-morne, mekely I ask,
& þer-to prestly I pray my pater & aue,
& crede."
     He rode in his prayere,
          760

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

XII.

Scarcely had he blessed himself thrice

Nade he sayned hym-self, segge, bot þrye,
          764

Er he watȝ war in þe wod of a won in a mote.
     when he saw a dwelling in the wood, set on a hill,

Abof a launde, on a lawe, loken vnder boȝe3e3,
Of mony borelych bole, aboute bi þe diches;
     the comeliest castle that knight ever owned.

A castel þe comlokest þat euer knȝȝt aȝte,
          768

Pyched on a prayere, a park al aboute,
With a pyked palays, pyned ful þik,
þat vmbe-teȝe mony tre mo þen two myte.
þat holde on þat on syde þe hapel auysed,
     It shone as the sun through the bright oaks.772
As hit schemered & schon þurþ þe schyre oke3;  
Þenne hat3 he hendly of his helme, & he3ly he þonke3  
Iesus & say[nt] Gilyan, þat gentyle ar boþe,  
[Fol. 101b.]

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

"Now bone hostel," coþe þe burne, "I be-seche yow 3ette!"  
Þenne gedere3 he to Gryngolet with þe gilt helc3,  
Sir Gawayne goes to the chief gate,  

& he ful chauncely hat3 chosen to þe chef gate,  
Þat bro3t bremly þe burne to þe bryge ende,  
780

in haste;  
and finds the draw-bridge raised, and the gates shut fast.

Þe bryge wat3 breme vp-brayde,  
Þe 3ate3 wer stoken faste,  
Þe walle3 were wel arayed,  
784

Hit dut no wynde3 blaste.

XIII.

The knight abides on the bank,

Þe burne bode on bonk, þat on blonk houed,  
Of þe depe double dich þat drof to þe place,  
Þe walle wod in þe water wonderly depe,  
and observes the "huge height,"788

Ande eft a ful huge he3t hit haled vpon lofte,  
Of harde hewen ston vp to þe table3,  
with its battlements and watch towers.

Enbaned vnder þe abataylment, in þe best lawe;  
& syþen garyte3 ful gaye gered bi-twene,  
792

Wyth mony luflych loupe, þat louked ful clene;  
A better barbican þat burne blusched vpon neuer;  
& innermore he be-helde þat halle ful hy3e,  
Bright and long were its round towers,
Towre telded bytwene trochet ful þik,
    796
Fayre fylyole þat fy3ed, & ferlyly long,
    with their well-made capitals.

With coruon coprounes, craftyly sle3e;
Chalk whyt chymnees þer ches he in-no3e,
Vpon bastel roue3, þat blenked ful quyte;
    800
So mony pynakle payntet wat3 poudred ay quere,
Among þe castel carnele3, clambred so þik,
Þat pared out of papure purely hit semed.
    He thinks it fair enough if he might only come within the cloister.
Þe fre freke on þe fole hit fayr in-n[o]ghe þo3t,
    804
If he my3t keu er to com þe cloyst wyth-i
To herber in þat hostel, whyl halyday lested
    auitant;
    He calls, and soon there comes a porter to know the knight's errand.
He calde, & sone þer com
    808
A porter pure plesaunt,
On þe wal his ernd he nome,
    & haylsed þe kny3t erraunt.

XIV.

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

"Gode sir," quod Gawan, "wolde þou go myn ernde,
    812
To þe he3 lorde of þis hous, herber to craue?"
    [Fol. 102.]
"3e, Peter," quod þe porter, "& purely I trowe,¹
    "You are welcome to dwell here as long as you like," replied the porter.
Þat 3e be, wy3e, welcum to won quyle yow lyke3."
Den 3ede þat wy3e a3ayn awyþe,
    816

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The draw-bridge is let down, and the gate is opened wide to receive him.

The lord of the country bids him welcome,

Knights and squires bring Gawayne into the hall.

His horse is well stabled.

Many a one hastens to take his helmet and sword.

His bronde & his blasoun bothe they token.

The lord of the country bids him welcome,

and they embrace each other.

As freke3 that seemd fayn,
XV.

Gawayne looks on his host;

Gawayn gly3t on þe gome þat godly hym gret,
   a big bold one he seemed.

& þu3t hit a bolde burne þat þe bur3 a3te,
   844

A hoge hapel for þe none3, & of hyghe elde;¹
   Beaver-hued was his broad beard,

Brode bry3t wat3 his berde, & al beuer hwed,
Sturne stif on þe stryþþe on stal-worth schonke3,
   and his face as "fell as the fire."

Felle face as þe fyre, & fre of hys speche;
   848

& wel hym semed for soþe, as þe segge þu3t,
To lede a lortschyp in lee of leude3 ful gode.
   [Fol. 102b.]
   The lord leads Gawayne to a chamber, and assigns him a page to wait upon him.

Þe lorde hym charred to a chambre, & chefly cu3mau3nde3²
To delyu3er hym a leude, hym lo3ly to serue;
   852

& þere were boun at his bode burne3 in-no3e,
   In this bright bower was noble bedding;

Þat bro3t hym to a bry3t boure, þer beddyng wat3 noble,
Of cortynes of clene sylk, wyth cler golde hemme3,
   the curtains were of pure silk with golden hems;

& cou3ertore3 ful curious, with comlych pane3,
   856

Of bry3t blaunnier a-boue enbrawded bisyde3,
Rudele3 rem3ande on rope3, red golde rynge3,
   Tarsic tapestries covered the walls and the floor.

Tapyte3 ty3t to þe wo3e, of tuly & tars,
   & vnder fete, on þe flet, of fol3ande sute.
   Here the knight doffed his armour,860
Þer he wat3 dispoyled, wyth speche3 of myerþe,
Þe burn of his bruny, & of his bry3t wede3;
and put on rich robes,

Ryche robes ful rad renkke3 hem3 bro3ten,
For to charge, & to chaunge, & chose of þe best.

864

Sone as he on hent, & happed þer-inne,
Þat sete on hym4 semly, wyth saylande skyrte3,
which well became him.

Þe ver by his uisage verayly hit semed
Wel ne3 to vche haþel alle on hwes,

868

Lowande & luufly, alle his lyme3 vnder,
A more comely knight Christ never made.

Pat a comloker kny3t neuer Kryst made,
               hem þo3t;
Whelen in worlde he were,

872

Hit semed as he my3t
Be prync e with-outen pere,
In felde þer felle men fy3t.
  1 eldee, MS.  2 clesly, MS.  ³ hym (?).  ⁴ MS. hyn.

XVI.

A chair is placed for Sir Gawayne before the fireplace.

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

876

Wat3 grayþed for sir Gawan, grayþely with cloþe3,
Whyssynes vpon queldepoyntes, þat koyn3t wer boþe;
A mantle of fine linen, richly embroidered, is thrown over him.

& þenne a mere mantyle wat3 on þat mon cast,
Of a broun bleaunt, enbrauded ful ryche,

880

& fayre furred wyth-inne with felle3 of þe best,
Alle of ermyn in erde, his hode of þe same;
& he sete in þat settel semlych ryche,
& achaufed hym chiefly, & þenne his cher mended.
A table is soon raised.

Sone wat3 telled vp a tapit, on treste3 ful fayre,
and the knight, having washed, proceeded to meat.

Clad wyth a clene cloþe, þat cler quyt schewed,
Sanap, & salure, & syluer-in spone3;

[Fol. 103.]

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

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

Wyth sere sewes & sete, sesounde of þe best,
Double felde, as hit falle3, & fele kyn fishe3;
with fish baked and broiled,

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

Summe sopen, summe in sewe, sauere3d with spyces,
& ay sawes3 so sle3e3, þat þe segge lyked.

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

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

as hende;
"Þis penaunce now 3e take,
& eft hit schal amende;"
and much mirth he makes, for the wine is in his head.

Þat mon much merþe con make.

For wyn in his hed þat wende,

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

XVII.

Sir Gawayne, in answer to questions put to him,

Þenne wat3 spyed & spured vpon spare wyse.
Bi preue poynte3 of þat prynce, put to hym-seluen, 
Þat he be-knew cortaysly of þe court þat he were, 

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

Þat aþel Arthure þe hende halde3 hym one, 
Þat is þe ryche ryal kyng of þe rounde table; 
& hit wat3 Wawen hym-self þat in þat won sytte3, 
Comen to þat krystmasse, as case hym þen lymped. 
When this was made known,908

When þe lorde hade lerned þat he þe leude hade, 
Loude la3ed he þer at, so lef hit hym þo3t, 
great was the joy in the hall.

& alle þe men in þat mote maden much joye, 
To apere in his presense prestly þat tyme, 
912

Þat alle prys, & prowes, & pured þewes 
Apendes to hys persoun, & prayesd is euer, 
By-fore alle men vpon molde, his mensk is þe most. 
Each one said softly to his mate,

Vch segge ful softly sayde to his fere, 
"Now we shall see courteous manners and hear noble speech,916

"Now schal we semlych se sle3te3 of þewe3, 
& þe teccheles termes of talkyng noble, 
Wich spede is in speche, vnspurd may we lerne, 
for we have amongst us the 'father of nurture.'

Syn we haf fonged þat fyne fader of nurture; 
920

God hat3 geuen vus his grace godly for soþe, 
Þat such a gest as Gawan graunte3 vus to haue, 
When burne3 blyþe of his burþe schal sitte 
& synge. 
924

In menyng of manere3 mere, 
[Fol. 103b.]

Þis burne now schal vus bryng, 
He that may him hear shall learn of love-talking."

I hope þat may hym here,
Schal lerne of luf-talkyng."

**XVIII.**

After dinner the company go to the chapel,

Bi þat þe diner wat3 done, & þe dere vp,
Hit wat3 ne3 at þe niy3t ne3ed þe tyme;
Chaplayne31 to þe chapeles chosen þe gate,
Runþen ful rychely, ry3t as þay schulden,

to hear the evensong of the great season.932

To þe hersum euensong of þe hy3e tyde.
Þe lorde loutes þerto, & þe lady als,
In-to a comly closet coyntly ho entre3;
Gawan glyde3 ful gay, & gos þeder sone;
936

Þe lorde laches hym by þe lappe, & lede3 hym to sytte,
& couþly hym knowe3, & calle3 hym his nome,
& sayde he wat3 þe welcomest wy3e of þe worlde;
The lord of the castle and Sir Gawayne sit together during service.

& he hym þonkked þroly, & ayþer halched oþer.
940

& seten soberly samen þe seruise-quyle;
Þenne lyst þe lady to loke on þe kny3t.
His wife, accompanied by her maids, leaves her seat.

Þenne com ho of hir closet, with mony cler burde3,
Ho wat3 þe fayrest in felle, of flesche & of lyre,
944

& of compas, & colour, & costes of alle oþer,
She appeared even fairer than Guenever.

& wener þen Wenore, as þe wy3e þo3t.
He ches þur3 þe chaunsel, to cheryche þat hende;
An older lady (an ancient one she seemed) led her by the hand.

An oþer lady hir lad bi þe lyft honde,
948

Þat wat3 alder þen ho, an auñcian hit semed,
& he3ly honowred with hapele3 aboute.

Very unlike were these two.
Bot yn-lyke on to loke þo ladyes were,
if the young one was fair the other was yellow,

For if þe 3onge wat3 3ep, 3ol3e wat3 þat oþer;
952

Riche red on þat on rayled ay quere,
and had rough and wrinkled cheeks.

Rugh ronkled cheke3 þat oþer on rolled;
Kerchofes of þat on wyth mony cler perle3
The younger had breast and throat "bare displayed."

Hir brest & hir bry3t þrote bare displayed,
956

Schon schyrer þen snawe, þat scheder² on hille3;
Þat oþer wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre,
Chymbled ouer hir blake chyn with mylk-quiete vayles,
The ancient one exposed only her "black brows," her two eyes,

Hir froun folden in sylk, enfoubled ay quere,
960

Toret & treieted with tryfle3 aboute,
[Fol. 104.]
nose, and naked lips, all sour and bleared.

Þat no3t wat3 bare of þat burde bot þe blake bro3es.
Þe tweyne y3en, & þe nase, þe naked lyppe3,
& þose were soure to se, & sellyly blered;
964

A mensk lady on molde mon may hir calle,
for gode;
Her body was short and thick;

Hir body wat3 schort & þik.
her buttocks broad and round.

Hir buttoke3 bay & brode,
968

More lykker-wys on to lyk,
Wat3 þat scho hade on lode.
¹ MS. [claplayne3.] ² schedes (?).
With permission of the lord,

When Gawayn gly3t on þat gay, þat graciously loked,
Wyth leue la3t of þe lorde he went hem a3aynes;
Sir Gawayne salutes the elder,972

Þe alder he haylses, heldande ful lowe,
Þe loueloker he lappe3 a lyttel in arme3,
   but the younger he kisses,

He kysses hir comlyly, & kny3tly he mele3;
Þay kallen hym of a quoyntaunce, & he hit quyk aske3
   and begs to be her servant.976

To be her seruaunt sothly, if hem-self lyked.
Þay tan hym bytwene hem, wyth talkynge hym leden
   To chamber all go,

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

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

& þe wynne-lych wyne þer-with vche tyme.
Þe lorde luflych aloft lepe3 ful ofte,
Mynned merthe to be made vpon mony sype3.
   The lord takes off his hood and places it on a spear.

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

& wayned hom to wynne þe worship þer-of,
   He who makes most mirth is to win it.

Þat most myrþe my3t mene1 þat crystenmas whyle;
"& i schal fonde, bi my fayth, to fyler wyth þe best,
Er me wont þe wede3, with help of my frende3."
   988

Þus wyth la3ande lote3 þe lorde hit tay12 make3,
   Night approaches, and then

For to glade sir Gawayn with gomne3 in halle
   þat ny3t;
Til þat hit wat3 tyme,

992

Þe kyng comaundet ly3t,
Sir Gawayne takes his leave and retires to rest.

Sir Gawen his leue con nyme,
& to his bed hym di3t.
1 meue (?). 2 layt (?).

XX.

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

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

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

Boþe at mes & at mele, messes ful quaynt
1000

Derf men vpon dece drest of þe best.
The lord and "the old ancient wife" sit together.

Þe olde au3cian wyf he3est ho sytte3;
Þe lorde luflly her by lent, as I trowe;
Gawayne sits by the wife of his host.

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

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

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

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

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

1012

Þur3 her dere dalyaunce of her derne worde3,
Wyth clene cortays carp, closed fro fylþe;
& hor play wat3 passande vcbe prynce gomen,
in vayres;
Trumpets and nakers give forth their sounds.1016

Trumpe3 &nakerys,
Much pypyng þer repayres,
Vche mon tented hys,
& þay two tented þayres.

XXI.

Great was the joy for three days.1020

Much dut wat3 þer dryuen þat day & þat oþer,
& þe þryd as þro þronge in þerafter;
St. John's-day was the last of the Christmas festival.

Þe ioye of sayn Ione3 day wat3 gentyle to here,
& wat3 þe last of þe layk, leude3 þer þo3ten.

1024

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

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

1028

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

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

1032

Of þe wynne worship &1 he hym wayned hade,
As to honour his hous on þat hy3e tyde,
& enbelyse his burʒ with his bele chere.
"I-wysse sir, quy! I leue, me worpeʒ þe better,
[ Fol. 105. ] 1036

Þat Gawayn hatʒ ben my gest, at Goddeʒ awen fest."
"Grant merci2 sir, quod Gawayn, "in god fayth hit is yowreʒ, Al þe honour is your awen, þe heʒe kyng yow ʒelde; & I am wyʒe at your wylle, to worch your e hest,
1040

As I am halden þer-to, in hyʒe & in loʒe,
    bi riʒt."
He endeavours to keep the knight at his court.

Þe lorde fast can hym payne,
To holde lenger þe knyʒt,
1044

To hym answreʒ Gawayn,
Bi non way þat he myʒt.
1  þat (?). 2 nerci, in MS.

XXII.

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

Then frayned þe freke ful fayre at him-selue,
Quat derne1 dede had hym dryuen, at þat dere tyme,
1048

So kenly fro þe kyngʒe kourt to kayre al his one,
Er þe halidayeʒ holly were halet out of touŋ?
    The knight replies that "a high errand and a hasty one" had forced him to leave the court.

"For soʒe sir," quod þe segge, "3e sayn bot þe trawʒe
A heʒe ernde & a hasty me hade fro þo woneʒ,
1052

For I am sumned my selfe to sech to a place,
I wot2 in worlde wheder warde to wende, hit to fynde;
I nolde, bot if I hit negh myʒt on nwʒeres morne,
For alle þe londe in-wyθ Logres, so me our e lorde help!
1056

For-þy, sir, þis enquest I require yow here,
He asks his host whether he has ever heard of the Green Chapel,
Then was Gawayne glad,

The Green chapel is not more than two miles from the castle.

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

XXIII.

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"Now I þonk yow þryuandely þur3 alle oþ er
and consents to tarry awhile at the castle.

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

The ladies are brought in to solace him.

Let þe ladie3 be fette, to lyke hem þe better;
Þer wat3 seme solace by hem-self stille;
Þe lorde let for luf lote3 so myry,
As wy3 þat wolde of his wyte, ne wyst quat he my3t.

The lord of the castle asks the knight to grant him one request;

"3e han demed to do þe dede þat I bidde;
Wyl 3e halde þis hes here at þys one3?"
"3e sir, for-soþe," sayd þe segge trwe,

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

3e schal lenge in your loft, & ly3e in your ese,
and then go to meat with his hostess.

To morn quyle þe messe-quyle, & to mete wende,
When 3e wyl, wyth my wyf, þat wyth yow schal sitte,
& comfort yow with compayny, til I to cort torne,

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

Gauayn grante3 alle þyse,
"Whatsoever," says the host, "I win in the wood shall be yours,

"3et firre," quod þe freke, "a forwarde we make;
Quat-so-euer I wyne in þe wod, hit wor þe3 to youre3, and what check you achieve shall be mine."

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

1108

Swete, swap we so, sware with trawþe,
Queþer, leude, so lymp lere ofer better."
"Bi God," quod Gawyn þe gode, "I grant þer-tylle,
[Fol. 106.]

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

"Who bringe3 vus þis beuerage, þis bargayn is maked:"
So sayde þe lorde of þat lede; þay la3ed vchone,
Þay dronken, & daylyeden, & dalten vnty3tel,1
Þise lorde3 & ladye3, quyle þat hem lyked;
1116

& sypen with frenkysch fare & fele fayre lote3
Þay stoden, & stemed, & styly speken,
Kysten ful comlyly, & kaþten her leue.
Night approaches and each "to his bed was brought at the last."

With mony leude ful ly3t, & lemande torches,

1120

Vche burne to his bed wat3 bro3t at þe laste,
ful softe;
To bed 3et er þay 3ede,
Recorded couenaunte3 ofte;
1124

þe olde lorde of þat leude,2
Cowþe wel halde layk a-lofte.
1 vntyl ny3te (?). 2 lede (?).

[FYTTE THE THIRD.]
Before day-break folks uprise,

Ful erly bifo þe day þe folk vp-rysen,
Gestes þat go wolde, hor grome3 þay calden,
    saddle their horses, and truss their mails.1128

& þay busken vp bilyue, blonkke3 to sadel,
Tyffen he[r] takles, trussen her males,
Richen hem þe rychest, to ryde alle arayde,
Lepen vp ly3tly, lachen her brydeles,
    Each goes where it pleases him best.1132

Vche wy3e on his way, þer hy
    The noble lord of the land arrays himself for riding.

Þe leue lorde of þe londe wat3 not þe last,
A-rayed for þe rydyng, with renkke3 ful mony;
    He eats a sop hastily and goes to mass.

Ete a sop hastily, when he hade herde masse,
         1136

With bugle to bent felde he buske3 by-lyue;
    Before day-light he and his men are on their horses.

By þat þat any day-ly3t lemed vpon erþe,
He with his hæpeles on hy3e horses weren.
    Then the hounds are called out and coupled.

Þenne þise cacheres þat couþe, cowpled hor hounde3,
         1140

Vnclosed þe kenel dore, & calde hem þer-outè,
    Three short notes are blown by the bugles.

Blwe bygly in bugle3 þre bare mote;
Braches bayed þerfore, & breme noyse maked,
    A hundred hunters join in the chase.

& þay chastysed, & charred, on chasyng þat went;
         1144

A hundreth of huntæres, as I haf herde telle,
    of þe best;
To the stations the "fewters" go,
To trystors vewters 3od,
Couples huntes of kest,
[Fol. 106b.]1148

Þer ros for blaste3 gode,
and the dogs are cast off.

Gret rurd in þat forest.

II.

Roused by the clamour the deer rush to the heights,

At þe fy rst quethe of þe quest quaked þe wylde;
Der drof in þe dale, doted for drede,

1152

Hi3ed to þe hy3e, bot heterly þay were
but are soon driven back.

Restayed with þe stablye, þat stoutly ascryed;
The harts and bucks are allowed to pass,

Þay let þe hertt3e haf þe gate, with þe hy3e hedes,
Þe breme bukke3 also, with hor brode paume3;

1156

For þe fre lorde hade de-fende in fermysoun tyme,
Þat þer schulde no mon mene1 to þe male dere.
but the hinds and does are driven back to the shades.

Þe hinde3 were halden in, with hay & war,
Þe does dryuen with gret dyn to þe depe slade3;

1160

Þer my3t mon se, as þay slypte, slentyng of arwes,
As they fly they are shot by the bowmen.

At vche [þat] wende vnder wande wapped a flone,
Þat bigly bote on þe broun, with ful brode hede3,
The hounds and the hunters, with a loud cry, follow in pursuit.

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

1164

& ay rachches in a res radly hem fol3es,
Huntene3 wyth hy3e horne hasted hem after,
Those that escaped the arrows are killed by the hounds.

Wyth such a crakkande kry, as klyffes haden brusten;
What wylde so at-waped wy3es þat schotten,

Wat3 al to-raced & rent, at þe resayt.
Bi þay were tened at þe hy3e, & taysed to þe wattre3,
Þe lede3 were so lerned at þe lo3e trysteres,
& þe gre-hounde3 so grete, þat geten hem by1yue,

& hem to fylched, as fast as freke3 my3t loke,
þer ry3t.
The lord waxes joyful in the chase,

Þe lorde for blys abloy
Ful oft con lau3ce & ly3t,
which lasted till the approach of night.1176

& drof þat day wyth Ioy
Thus to þe derk ny3t.

All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Þus layke3 þis lorde by lynde wode3 eue3,
& G. þe god mon, in gay bed lyge3,
under "coverture full clear".1180

Lurkke3 quyl þe day-ly3t lemed on þe wowes,
Vnder couertour ful clere, cortyned aboute;
& as in slomeryng he slode, sle3ly he herde
He hears a noise at his door.

A littel dyn at his dor, & derfly vpon;

A corner of þe cortyn he ca3t vp a lyttel,
& wayte3 warly þider-warde, quat hit be my3t.
A lady, the loveliest to behold, enters softly.
Hit wat3 þe ladi, loflyest to be-holde,
1188

Þat dro3 þe dor after hir ful dernly & stylle,
She approaches the bed.

& bo3ed to-warde þe bed; & þe burne schamed.
& layde hym doun lystyly, & let as he slepte.
Gawayne pretends to be asleep.

& ho stepped stilly. & stel to his bedde,
The lady casts up the curtain and sits on the bedside.1192

Kest vp þe cortyn, & creped with-inne,
& set hir ful softly on þe bed-syde,
& lenged þere selly longe, to loke quen he wakened.
Þe lede lay lurked a ful longe quyle,
Gawayne has much wonder thereat.1196

Compast in his conscience to quat þat cace my3t
Mene oþer amount, to meruayle hym þo3t;
Bot 3et he sayde in hym-self, "more semly hit were
To aspye wyth my spelle [in] spacequat ho wolde."

He rouses himself up,1200

þen he wakenede, & wroth, & to hir warde torned,
unlocks his eyes, and looks as if he were astonished.

& vn-louked his y3e-lydde3, & let as hym wondered,
& sayned hym, as bi his sa3e þe sauer to worthe,
   with hande;
1204

Wyth chynne & cheke ful swete,
Boþe quit & red in-blande,
Ful lufly con ho lete,
Wyth lyppe3 smal la3ande.

IV.

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

"God moroun, sir Gawayn," sayde þat fayr lady,
"3e ar a sleper vn-sly3e, þat mon may slyde hider;
Now ar 3e tan astyt, bot true vus may schape,
   I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure."
"Goud moroun g[aye]," l quod Gawyn þe blyþe,
"Me schal worþe at your wille, & þat me wel lyke3,
For I 3elde me 3ederly, & 3e3e after grace,

1216

& þat is þe best, be my dome, for me by-houe3 nede;"
& þus he bourded a-3ayn with mony a blyþe laþer.
but permit me to rise and dress myself."

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

1220

I wolde bo3e of þis bed, & busk me better,
I schulde keu þe more comfort to karp yow wyth."

[Fol. 107b]
"Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one,
"Nay, for soþe, beau s sir," sayd þat swete,
"3e schal not rise of your bedde, I rych yow better,
"I shall hold talk with you here.1224

I schal happe yow here þat oþ half als,
& syþen karp wyth my kny3t þat I ka3t haue;
I know well that you are Gawayne that all the woild worships.

For I wene wel, Iwyssse, s ir Wawen 3e are,
Þat alle þe worlde worchipe3, quere-so 3e ride;

1228

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

With lorde3, wyth ladyes, with alle þat lyf bere.
& now 3e ar here, iwyssse, & we bot oure one;
My lord and his men are far off.

"My lorde & his lede3 ar on lenþe faren,
Other men are in their beds, so are my maidens.1232

Oþer burne3 in her bedde, & my burde3 als,
The door is safely closed.

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

& syþen I haue in þis hous hym þat al lyke3,  
I schal ware my whyle wel, quyl hit laste3,  
1236

with tale;  
Ye are welcome to my body.

3e ar welcum to my cors,  
Yowre awen won to wale,  
Me be-houe3 of fyne force,  
I shall be your servant."1240

Your servaunt be & schale."  
1 This word is illegible in the MS.

V.

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

Þa3 I be not now he þat 3e of speken;  
To reche to such reuerence as 3e reherce here  
1244

I am wy3e vn-worþy, I wot wel my-seluen;  
Bi God, I were glad, & yow god þo3t,  
I shall be glad, however, to please you by word, or service."

At sa3e oþer at seruyce þat I sette my3t  
To þe plesauence of your prys, hit were a pure ioye."  
1248

"In god fayth, sir Gawayn," quod þe gay lady,  
"Pe prys & þe prowes þat plese3 al oþer,  
If I hit lakked, oþer set at ly3t, hit were littel daynte;  
"There are ladies," says his visitor, "who would prefer thy company

Bot hit ar ladyes in-no3e, þat leuer wer nowþe  
1252

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

Þen much of þe garysourn oþer golde þat1 þay hauen;
  1256

Bot I louue2 þat ilk lorde þat þe lyfte halde,
I haf hit holly in my honde þat al desyres,
  þur3e grace."
Scho made hym so gret chere,
[Fol. 108.]1260

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

Þe kny3t with speches skere,
A[n]swarede to vche a cace.
  1 MS. þat þat. 2 louie or loune (?).

VI.

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

"Madame," quod þe myry mon, "Mary yow 3elde,
  1264

For I haf founden, in god fayth, yowre fraunchis nobole,
& oþer ful much of oþer folk fongen hor dede;
Bot þe daynté þat þay delen for my disert nysen,
Hit is þe worchyp of your-self, þat no3t hot wel cone3."
The lady declares by Mary,1268

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

& I schulde chepen & chose, to cheue me a lorde,
  1272

For þe costes þat I haf knowen vpun þe kny3t here,
Of bewté, & debonerté, & blyþe semblau
  she would select Gawayne before any man on earth.

& þat I haf er herkkened, & halde hit here trwee,
Þer schulde no freke vpon folde bifoer yow be chosen."
  1276
"I-wysse, worþy," quod þe wyþe, "þe haf waled wel better,
Gawayne tells her that he will become her own knight and faithful servant.

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

1280

Þas þay meled of much-quat, til myd-morn paste,
& ay þe lady let lyk, a1 hym loued mych;

The remembrance of his adventure prevents him from thinking of love.

Þe freke ferde with defence, & feted ful fayre.
Þa3 I were burde bryþtest, þe burde in mynde hade,

1284

Þe lasse luf in his lode, for lur þat he soþt,
  boute hone;
  Þe dunte þat schulde2 hym deue,
  & neðe3 hit most be done;

The lady takes leave of Sir Gawayne.1288

Þe lady þenn spek of leue.
He granted hir ful sone.
  1 and (?) 2 sclulde, in MS.

VII.

With a laughing glance, she says,

Þenne ho gef hym god-day, & wyth a glent laþed.
& as ho stod, ho stonyed hym wyth ful stor worde3:
  "I am doubtful whether ye be Gawayne.1292

"Now he þat spede3 vche spech, þis disport 3elde yow!
Bot þat 3e be Gawan, hit got3 in mynd."  
"Quer-fore?" quod þe freke, & freschly he aske3, 
Ferde lest he hade fayled in fourme of his castes;

1296

Bot þe burde hym blessed, & bi þis skyl sayde,
[Fol. 108b.]

"So god as Gawayn gaynly is halden, 
& cortaysye is closed so clene in hym-seluen,
  Were it he, surely, ere this, he would have craved a kiss."
Couth not lyȝtly haf lenged so long wyth a lady,

1300

Bot he had craued a cosse, bi his courtaysye,
Bi sum towch of summe tryfle, at sum tale3 ende."
   "I shall kiss," says the knight, "at your commandment."

\[2\]

Þen quod Wowen, "I-wysse, worþe as yow lyke3,
I schal kysse at your comaundement, as a knyt falle3,

1304

& fire\(^1\) lest he displese yow, so\(^2\) plede hit no more."
   With that the lady catches him in her arms and kisses him.

Ho comes nerre with þat, & cache3 hym in arme3,
Loute3 luylch adoun, & þe leude kysse3;
Þay comly bykennen to Kryst ayþer oþer;

1308

Ho dos hir forth at þe dore, with-outen dyn more.
& he ryches hym to ryse, & rapes hym sone,
   Gawayne then rises and goes to mass.

Clepes to his chamberlayn, choses his wede,
Bo3e3 forth, quen he wat3 boun, blyþely to masse,

1312

& þenne he meued to his mete, þat menskly hym keped,
   He makes mirth all day till the moon rises,

& made myry al day til þe mone ryzed,
   with game;
With\(^3\) neuer freke fayrer fonge,
   between the "two dames," the older and the younger.1316

Bitwene two so dyngne dame,
þe alder & þe 3onge,
Much solace set þay same.
\(^1\) fere (?). \(^2\) fo, in MS. \(^3\) Was (?) Nas (?).

VIII.

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

And ay þe lorde of þe londe is lent on his gamne3,

1320
To hunt in holte & hepe, at hynde barayne,
Such a sowme he þer slowe bi þat þe sumne heldet,
Of dos & of oþer dere, to deme were wonder.
Þenne fersly þay flokked in folk at þe laste,
    Quickly of the killed a "quarry" they make.1324

& quyckly of þe quelled dere a querré þay maked;
Þe best bo3ed þerto, with burne3 in-noghe,
    Then they set about breaking the deer.

Gedered þe gratest of gres þat þer were,
& didden hem derely vndo, as þe dede aske3;
    They take away the assay or fat,1328

Serched hem at þe asay, summe þat þer were,
Two fyngeres þay fonde of þe fowlest of alle;
    then they slit the slot and remove the erber.

Syþen þay slyt þe slot, sesed þe erber,
    They afterwards rip the four limbs and rend off the hide.

Schaued wyth a scharp knyf, & þe schyre knitten;
    1332

Syþen þay foure lymmes, & rent of þe hyde,
    They next open the belly

Þen brek þay þe bale, þe bale3 out token,
    [Fol. 109.]
    and take out the bowels.

Lystily forlancyng, & bere of þe knot;
Þay gryped to þe gargulun, & graybely departed
    They then separate the weasand from the windhole and throw out the guts.1336

Þe wesaunt fro þe wynt-hole, & walt out þe gutte3;
Þen scher þay out þe schuldere3 with her scharp knyue3,
    The shoulders are cut out, and the breast divided into halves.

Haled hem by a lyttel hole, to haue hole sydes;
Siþen britned þay þe brest, & brayden hit in twynne,
    1340

& eft at þe gargulun bigyne3 on þenne,
    The numbles are next removed.

Ryue3 hit vp radly, ry3t to þe by3t,
Voyde3 out þe a-vanters, & verayly þerafter
Alle þe ryme3 by þe rybbe3 radly þay lance;
1344

So ryde þay of by resoun bi þe rygge bone3,
Euenden to þe haunche, þat henged alle samen,
& heuen hit vp al hole, & hwen hit of þere,
& þat þayneme for þe noumbles, bi nome as I trowe,
1348

bi kynde;
By the fork of the thighs,
Bi þe by3t al of þe þy3es,
Þe lappe3 þay lance bi-hynde,
the flaps are hewn in two by the backbone.

To hewe hit in two þay hy3es,
1352
Bi þe bak-bon to vnbynde.

IX.

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

Boþe þe hede & þe hals þay hwen of þenne,
& syþen sunder þay þe syde3 swyft fro þe chyne,
& þe corbeles fee þay kest i
1356

Þenn þurled þay ayþer þik side þur3, bi þe rybbe,
& henged þenne a[y]per bi ho3es of þe fourche3,
Vche freke for his fee, as falle3 forto haue.
Vpon a felle of þe fayre best, fede þay þayr hou
With the liver, lights and paunches, they feed the hounds.1360

Wyth þe lyuer & þe ly3te3, þe leþer of þe paunche3,
& bred bæped in blod, blende þer amonge3;
Baldely þay blw prys, bayed þayr rachche3,
Then they make for home.

Syþen fonge þay her flesche folden to home,
1364

Strakande ful stoutly mony stif mote3.
Bi þat þe dayly3t wat3 done, þe doulthe wat3 al wonen

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In-to þe comly castel, þer þe kny3t bide3
ful stille;

1368

Wyth blys & bry3t fyr bette,
þe lord is comen þer-tylle,
Gawayne goes out to meet his host.

When Gawayn wyth hym mette,
þer wat3 bot wele at wylle.

grene (?)

X.

[Fol. 109b.]
The lord commands all his household to assemble,1372

Thencode commaundde þe lorde in þat sale to samen alle þe meny,
Boþe þe ladyes on loghe to ly3t wylle at wylle,
and the venison to be brought before him.

Bi-fore alle þe folk on þe flette, freke3 he bedde3
Verayly his venysoun to fech hym byforne;
He calls Gawayne,1376

& al godly in gomen Gaway[n] he called,
Teche3 hym to þe tayles of ful tayt bestes,
Schewe3 hym þe schyree grece schorne vpon rybbes.
and asks him whether he does not deserve much praise for his success in the chase.

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

1380

Haue I þryuandely þonk þur3 my craft serued?"
"3e I-wyssse," quod þat oþer wy3e, "here is wayth fayrest
On the knight expressing himself satisfied, he is told to take the whole according to a former
agreement between them.

Þat I se3 þis seuen 3ere in sesoun of wynter."
"& al I gif yow, Gawayn," quod þe gome þenne,

1384

"For by a-corde of couenaunt 3e craue hit as your awen."
"Þis is soth," quod þe segge, "I say yow þatilke,
& I haf worthyly þis wone3 wyth-inne,
Gawayne gives the knight a comely kiss in return.
I-wysse with as god wylle hit worþe3 to 3oure3."

1388

He hasppe3 his fayre hals his arme3 wyth-inne,
& kysses hym as comlyly as he2 coupé ayse:
"Tas yow þere my cheuicaunce, I cheued no more,
I wowche hit saf fynly, þa3 feler hit were."

1392

"Hit is god," quod þe god mon, "grant mercy þerfore,
His host desires to know where he has gotten such weal.

Hit may be such, hit is þe better, &1 3e me breue wolde
Where 3e wan þis ilk wele, biwytte of hor3 seluen?"
As this does not enter into the covenant, he gets no answer to his question.

"Pat wat3 not forward," quod he, "frayst me no more,

1396

For 3e haftan þat yow tyde3, trawe3e non oþer
3e mowe."
Pay la3ed, & made hem blyþe,
They then proceed to supper, where were dainties new and enough.

Wy3e3 þat were to lowe,

1400

To soper þay 3ede asswyþe,
Wyth dayntes nwe in-nowe.

1 And = an. 2 ho, in MS. 3 your (?).

XI.

By the hearth they sit.

And syþen by þe chymné in chamber þay seten.
Wine is carried round.

Wy3e3 þe walle wyn we3ed to hem oft,

1404

& efte in her bourdyng þay bayþen in þe morn,
To fylle þe same forwarde3 þat þay by-fore maden,
Again Sir Gawayne and his host renew their agreement.

Þat chaunce so bytyde3 hor cheuysaunce to chaunce,
What nwe3 so þay nome, at na3t quen þay metten
Pay acorded of þe couenaunte3 byfore þe court alle;
[Fol. 110.]
Þe beuerage wat3 bro3t forth in bourde at þat tyme;
Then they take leave of each other and hasten to bed.

Þenne þay louelych le3ten leue at þe last,
Vche burne to his bedde busked bylyue.
Scarce had the cock cackled thrice when the lord was up.1412

Bi þat þe coke hade crowe31 & cakled bot þryse,
Þe lorde wat3 lopen of his bedde, [&] þe leude3 vch one,
So þat þe mete & þe masse wat3 metely deleyued;
Þe douthe dressed to þe wod, er any day sprenged,
1416
to chace;
With his hunters and horns they pursue the chase.

He3 with hunte & horne3,
Þur3 playne3 þay passe in space,
Vn-coupled among þo þorne3,
1420
Rache3 þat ran on race.
1 crowed (?).

XII.

The hunters cheer on the hounds,

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

Wylde worde3 hym warp wyth a wrast noyce;
1424

Þe hownde3 þat hit herde, hastid þider swyþe,
& fallen as fast to þe fuyt, fourty at ones;
Þenne such a glauerande glam of gedered rachche3
Ros, þat þe rochere3 rungen aboute;
1428

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

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

1432

Þer as þe rogh rocher vn-rydely wat3 fallen,
[Pay] ferden to þe fyndynge, & freke3 hem after;
They look about on all sides,

Þay vmbe-kesten þe knarre & þe knot bope.
Wy3e3, whyl þay wysten wel wyt inne hem hit were,

1436

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

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

On þe sellokest swyn swenged out þere,

1440

Long sythen for¹ þe sounder þat wi3t for-olde,
For he wat3 b[este &] bor alþer grattest,
[And eue]re quen he gronyed, þenne greued mony,
At the first thrust he fells three to the ground.

For [þre a]t þe fyrst þrast he þry3t to þe erþe,

1444

& [sped hym] forth good sped, boute spyt more,
[Ande þay] halowed hyghe ful hy3e & hay! hay! cryed
[fol. 110b.]
Haden horne3 to mouþe heterly rechated;
Full quickly the hunters pursue him.

Mony wat3 þe myry mouthe of men & of hounde3,

1448

Þat buskke3 after þis bor, with bost & wyth noyse,
To quelle;
Ful oft he byde3 þe baye,
& mayme3 þe mute Inn-melle,
However, he attacks the hounds, causing them to yowl and yell.

He hurte3 of þe hounde3, & þay
Ful 3omerly 3aule & 3elle.
1 fro (?).

XIII.

The bowmen send their arrows after this wild swine,

Schalke3 to schote at hym schowen to þenne,
Haled to hym of her arewe3, hitten hym oft;
1456

Bot þe poynте3 payred at þe pyth þat py3t in his schelde3,
& þe barbe3 of his browe bite non wolde,
but they glide off shivered in pieces.

Þa3 þe schauen schaft schyndered in pece3,
Þe hede hypped a3ayn, were-so-euer hitte;
Enraged with the blows,1460

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

Hurte3 hem ful heterly þer he forth hy3e3,
& mony ar3ed þerat, & on-lyte dro3en.
1464

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

As burne bolde vpon bent his bugle he blowe3,
He rechated, & r[ode]1 þur3 rone3 ful þyk,
Suande þis wy[ld]e swyn til þe sume schafted.
and pursues the boar.1468

Þis day wyth þis ilk dede þay dryuen on þis wyse,
Whyle oure luflych lede lys in his bedde,
All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Gawayn grayþely at home, in gere3 ful ryche
of hewe;
1472

Þe lady no3t for3ate,
Com to hym to salue,  
Ful erly ho wat3 hym ate,  
His mode forto remwe.  

1 The MS. is here almost illegible.

XIV.

The lady of the castle again visits Sir Gawayne.1476

Ho commes to þe cortyn, & at þe kny3t totes,  
Sir Wawen her welcumed worpy on fyrst,  
& ho hym 3elde3 a3ayn, ful 3erne of hir worde3,  
Softly she sits by his side,

Sette3 hir sof[t]ly by his syde, & swyþely ho la3e3,  
1480

& wyth a luflych loke ho layde1 hym þyse worde3:  
"Sir, 3if 3e be Wawen, wonder me þynkke3,  
Wy3e þat is so wel wrast alway to god,  
& cone3 not of compaynye þe coste3 vnder-take,  
[Fol. 111]1484

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

Þou hat3 for-3eten 3ederly þat 3ist  
ald-truest token of talk þat I cowþe."  
"What is þat?" quod þe wygh, "I-wysse I wot neu,  
1488

If hit be sothe þat 3e breue, þe blame is myn awen."  
"I taught you of kissing," she says, "that becomes every knight."

"3et I kende yow of kyssyng," quod þe clere þenne,  
"Quere-so countenaunce is couþe, quikly to clayme,  
Þat bicumes vche a kny3t, þat cortaysy vses."  
1492

"Do way," quod þat derf mon, "my dere, þat speche,  
Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden.  
For þat durst I not do, lest I denayed were,  
If I were werned, I were wrang I-wysse, 3if I profered."  
"Ma fay," quod þe mere wyf, "3e may not be werned,  
He is told that he is strong enough to enforce it.1496
3e ar stif in-noghe to constrayne wyth strenkþe, 3if yow lyke3,
3if any were so vilanoþus þat yow denaye2 wolde."
"3e, be God," quod Gawayn, "good is your speche,
Bot þrete is vn-þryuande in þede þer I lende,
The knight replies that every gift is worthless that is not given willingly.1500
& vche gift þat is geuen not with goud wylle;
I am at your comaundement, to kysse quen yow lyke3,
3e may lach quen yow lyst, & leue quen yow þynkke3,
in space."
The lady stoops down and kisses him.1504

Þe lady loute3 a-doun,
& comlyly kysses his face,
Much speche þay þer expoun,
Of druryes greme & grace.
1 sayde (?). 2 de vaye, in MS.

XV.

"I would learn," she says, "why you, who are so young and active,1508
"I woled1 wyt at yow, wy3e," þat worby þer sayde,
"& yow wrathed not þer-wyth, what were þe skylle,
Þat so 3ong & so 3epe, as 3e [ar] at þis tyme,
So cortayse, so kny3tyly, as 3e ar knowne oute,
so skilled in the true sport of love,1512
& of alle cheualry to chose, þe chef þynng a-losed,
Is2 þe lel layk of luf, þe lettrure of armes;
F[or] to telle of þis tenelyng of þis trwe kny3te3,
Hit is þe tytelet, token, & tyxt of her werkke3,
1516
How le[des] for her lele luf hor lyue3 han auntered,
Endured for her drury dulful stounde3,
& after wenged with her walour & voyded her care,
and so renowned a knight,
& bro3t blysse in-to boure, with bountees hor awen.
1520

& 3e ar kny3t com-lokest kyd of your elde,
[Fol. 111b.]
Your worde & your worship walke3 ay quere,
& I haf seten by your-self here sere twyes,
have never talked to me of love.

\[3e t e r d e I n e u e r \text{ of } y o u r \text{ hed helde no worde}3\]

1524

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright euer longed to luf, lasse ne more;\textquoteright}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright You ought to show a young thing like me some token of 'true-love's crafts.'\textquoteright}\)

\[& 3e, \text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright \textquoteleft a so cortay & coyn of your hetes,}\]
\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright Oghe to a 3onke \textquoteleft\textquoteright\textquoteright 3ern to schewe,}\]
\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright & teche sum tokene3 of trweluf craftes.}\)

1528

Why ar 3e lewed, \(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright \textquoteleft alle } \text{\textquoteleft e los welde3,}\)
\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright Oper elles 3e demen me to dille, your dalyaunce to herken?}\)

for schame!

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright I com hider sengel, & sitte,}\)

1532

To lerne at yow \(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright sum game,}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright So teach me of your 'wit' while my lord is from home.'}\)

Dos, teche3 me of your wytte,

Whil my lorde is fro hame."  

1 wolde (?). 2 In (?).

XVI.

"It is a great pleasure to me," says Sir Gawayne, "to hear you talk,

"In goud fayÞe," \textit{quo}d Gawyn, "God yow for3elde,

1536

Gret is \(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright e gode gle, & gomen to me huge,}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright Pat so worpy as } 3e \text{ wolde wyme hidere,}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright & pyne yow with so pouer a mon, as play wyth your kny3t,}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright With any skyme3 countenaunce, hit keuere3 me ese;}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright but I cannot undertake the task to expound true-love and tales of arms.}\)

1540

Bot to take \(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright } \text{\textquoteleft pat toruayle}1\) to my-self, to trwluf expoun,

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright & towche } \text{\textquoteleft pat teme3 of tyxt, & tale3 of arme3,}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright To yow } \text{\textquoteleft pat, I wot wel, welde3 more sly3t}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright Of } \text{\textquoteleft pat art, bi } \text{\textquoteleft pat half, or a hundreth of seche}\)

1544

As I am, \textit{oper euer} schal, \textit{in} erde \(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright pat I leue,}\)

\(\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright Hit were a folfe fele-folde, my fre, by my trawhe.}\)
I will, however, act according to your will,

I wolde yowre wylnyng worche at my my3t,
As I am hy3ly bihalden, & euer-more wylle
and ever be your servant."1548

Be servaunt to your-seluen, so saue me dry3tyn!"
Þus hym frayned þat fre, & fondet hym ofte,
Forto haf womnenn hym to wo3e, what-so scho þo3t elle3,
Thus Gawayne defends himself.

Bot he de fended hym so fayr, þat no faut semed,
1552

Ne non euel on nawþer halue, nawþer þay wysten,
bot blysse;
Þay la3ed & layked longe,
At þe last scho con hym kysse,
The lady having kissed the knight, takes leave of him.1556

Hir leue fayre con scho fonge,
& went hir waye Iwysse.
1 tornayle (?).

Gawayne rises, hears mass, and then dines.

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

& sipen hor diner wat3 dy3t & derely serued.
Meanwhile the lord pursues the wild boar,1560

Þe lede with þe ladye3 layked alle day,
Bot þe lorde ouer þe londe3 launced ful ofte,
Swe3 his vnce lywyn, þat swynge3 bi þe bonkke3,
that bit the backs of his hounds asunder,

& bote þe best of his brache3 þe bakke3 in sunder;
1564

Þer he bode in his bay, tel1 bawe-men hit breken,
& made2 hym, maw-gref his bed, forto mwe vter;
and caused the stiffest of the hunters to start.

So felle flone3 per flete, when þe folk gedered;
Bot 3et þe styffest to start bi stounde3 he made, 1568
Til at þe last he wat3 so mat, he my3t no more renne,
   The boar runs into a hole in a rock by the side of a brook.
Bot in þe hast þat he my3t, he to a hole wynne3,
   Of a rasse, bi a rokk, þer renne3 þe boerne,
Of a rasse, bi a rokk, þer renne3 þe boerne,
Hor he gete þe bonk at his bak, bigyne3 to scrape,
   The froth foams at his mouth.1572
Þe froþe femed3 at his mouth vnfayre bi þe wyke3,
Whette3 his whyte tusche3; with hym þen irked
Alle þe burne3 so bolde, þat hym by stoden,
   None durst approach him,
To nye hym on-ferum, bot ne3e hym non durst 1576
   for woþe;
   He hade hurt so mony byforne,  
   Þat al þu3t renne ful loþe,  
   so many had he torn with his tusks.
Be more wyth his tusche3 torne, 1580
   Þat breme wat3 [&] brayn-wod bothe.
1 til (?). 2 madee, in MS. 3 fomed (?). 4 þo3t (?).

XVIII.

The knight, seeing the boar at bay,

Til þe kny3t com hym-self, kachande his blonk,
Sy3 hym byde at þe bay, his burne3 bysyde,
   alights from his horse,
He ly3t3es luflych1 adoun, leue3 his corsour, 1584
   Brayde3 out a bry3t bront, & bigly forth stryde3,
   Founde3 fast þur3 þe forth, þer þe felle byde3,
   and seeks to attack him with his sword.

Þe wylde wat3 war of þe wy3e with wepen in honde,
Hef hy3ly þe here, so hetterly he fnast,
1588

Þat fele ferde for þe freke, lest felle hym þe worre;
The "swine sets out" upon the man,

Þe swyn sette hym out on þe segge euen,
Þat þe burne & þe bor were boþe vpon hepe,
In þe wy-est of þe water, þe worre hade þat oþer;
who, aiming well,1592

For þe mon merkke hym wel, as þay mette fyrst,
Set sadly þe scharp in þe slot euen,
wounds him in the pit of the stomach.

Hit hym vp to þe hult, þat þe hert schyndered,
& he 3arrande hym 3elde, & 3edou þe water,
1596

ful tyt;
[ Fol. 112b.]

A hundred hounde hym hent,
The boar is soon bitten to death by a hundred hounds.

Þat bremely con hym bite,
Burne3 him bro3t to bent,
1600

& dogge3 to dethe endite.
1 MS. luslych. 2 freke (?). 3 3ede doun (?).

XIX.

Then was there blowing of horns

There wat3 blawyng of prys in mony breme home,
He3e halowing on hi3e, with haþele3 þat my3t;
and baying of hounds.

Brachetes bayed þat best, as bidden þe maystere3,
1604

Of þat chargeaunt chace þat were chef huntes.
One wise in woodcraft begins to unlace the boar.

Þenne a wy3e þat wat3 wys vpon wod crafte3,
To vnlace þis bor luflfy bigyme3;

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First he hews off the head, then rends him by the back.

Fyrst he hewes of his hed, & on hi3e sette3,

1608

& syþen rende3 him al rogh bi þe rygge after,

He next removes the bowels, broils them on the ashes, and therewith rewards his hounds.

Brayde3 out þe boweles, brenne3 hom on glede,
With bred blent þer-with his braches rewarde3;
Syþen he bryne3 out þe brawen in bry3t brode [s]chelde3,
Then the hastlets are removed.1612

& hat3 out þe hastlette3, as hi3tly biseme3;
The two halves are next bound together and hung upon a pole.

& 3et hem halche3 al hole þe halve3 to-geder,
& kyng an stif stange stoutly hem henges.
Now with his ilk swyn þay swengen to home;
The boar's head is borne before the knight, who hastens home.1616

Þe bores hed wat3 borne bifore þe burnes seluen,
Pat him for-ferde in þe forþe, þur3 forse of his honde,
so stronge;
Til he se3 sir Gawayne,

1620

In halle hym þo3t ful longe,
Gawayne is called to receive the spoil.

He calde, & he com gayn,
His fee3 þer for to fonge.

XX.

The lord of the land is well pleased when he sees Sir Gawayne,

Þe lorde ful lowde wih lote, & la3ed myry,

1624

When he se3e sir G: with solace he speke3;
Þe goude ladye3 were geten, & gedered þe meyny,
He shows him the shields of the wild boar, and tells him of its length and breadth.

He schewe3 hem þe schelde3, & schapes hem þe tale,
Of þe largesse, & þe lenþe, þe liþerne3 also,

1628
Of þe were of þe wylde swyn, in wod þer he fled.
Þat oþer knyȝt ful comly comended his dede, 
& prayed hit as gret prys, þat he proved hade;
    Such a "brawn of a beast," Sir Gawayne says, he never has seen.

For suche a brawne of a best, þe bolde burne sayde,
    1632
Ne such sydes of a swyn, segh he neuer are.
Þenne hondeled þay þe hoge hed, þe hende mon hit praysed,
    [Fol. 113.]
& let lodly þerat þe lorde forte here:
    Gawayne takes possession of it according to covenant,
"Now Gawayn," quod þe god mon, "þis gomen is your awen,
    1636
Bi fyn for-warde & faste, faythely 3e knowe."
"Hit is sothe," quod þe segge, ",& as siker true;
Alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe."
    and in return kisses his host,
He ðent þe hæpel aboute þe halse, & hendely hym kysses,
    1640
& efter-sones of þe same he serued hym þere.
"Now ar we euen," quod þe hæpel, "in þis euen-tide,
Of alle þe couenauotes þat we knyt, syþen I com hider,
    bi lawe;"
    who declares his guest to be the best he knows.1644
    Þe lorde sayde, "bi saynt Gile,
3e ar þe best þat I knowe,
3e ben ryche in a whyle,
    Such chaffer & 3e drowe."

XXI.

    Tables are raised aloft,1648
Þenne þay teldet table3 [on] trestes alofte,
cloths cast upon them,

Kesten cloþe3 vpon, clere lyȝt þenne
    and torches are lighted.
Wakned bi wo3e3, waxen torches
Segge3 sette, & serued in sale al aboute;
With much mirth and glee, 1652

Much glam & gle glent vp þer-inne,
Aboute þe fyre vpon flet, & on fele wyse,
supper is served in the hall,

At þe soper & after, mony aþel songe3,
As coundutes of kryst-masse, & carole3 newe,
1656

With alle þe manerly merþe þat mon may of telle.
and ever our lovely knight by the lady sits,

& euer oure luflych kny3t þe lady bi-syde;
Such semblau3nt to þat segge semly ho made,
who does all she can to please her companion.

Wyth stille stollen countenaunce, þat stalworth to plese,
1660

Þat al for-wondered wat3 þe wy3e, & wroth with hym-seluen,
Bot he nolde not for his nurture nurne hir a-3ayne3,
Bot dalt with hir al in daynte, how-se-euer þe dede turned
to wrast;
When they had long played in the hall, 1664

Quen þay hade played in halle,
As longe as hor wylle hom last,
they proceeded "to chamber."

To chambr he1 con hym calle,
& to þe chem-ne þay past.
ho (?).

XXII.
There they drank and discoursed. 1668

Ande þer þay dronken, & dalten, & demed eft nwe,
To norne on þe same note, on nwe3ere3 euen;
Gawayne begs leave to depart on the morrow.

Bot þe kny3t craued leue, to kayre on þe morn,
For hit wat3 ne3 at þe terme, þat he to1 schulde.
[Fol. 113b.] 1672
Þe lorde hym letted of þat, to lenge hym resteyd,
His host swears to him,
& sayde, "as I am trwe segge, I siker my trawþe,
that he shall come to the Green Chapel on New Year’s morn long before prime.
Þou schal cheue to þe grene chapel, þy charres to make,
Leude, on nw3ere3 ly3t, longe bifoer pryme:
1676
For-þy þow lye i ðy loft, & lach þyn ese,
& I schal hunt in þis holt, & halde þe towche3,
Chaunge wyth þe cheuisaunce, bi þat I charre hider;
For I haf fraysted þe twys, & faythful I fynde þe,
1680
Now þrid tyme þrowe best þenk on þe morne,
Make we mery quyl we may, & myyn epon Ioye,
For þe lur may mon lach, when so mon lyke3."
Þis wat3 grayþely graun ted, & Gawayn is lenged,
Our knight consents to remain for another night.1684
Bliþe bro3t wat3 hym drynk, & þay to bedde 3eden,
with li3t;
Full still and softly he sleeps all night.
Sir G: lis & slepes,
Ful stille & softe al ni3t;
Early in the morning the lord is up.1688
Þe lorde þat his crafte3 kepes,
Ful erly he wat3 di3t.
1 te (?).

XXIII.

After mass, a morsel he take with his men.

After messe a morsel1 he & his men token,
Miry wat3 þe morynýng, his mounture he askes;
Then were all on their horses before the hall-gates.1692

Alle þe hapeles þat on horse schulde helden hym after,
Were bou synkyed on hor blonkke3, bi-fore2 þe halle 3ate3;
It was a clear frosty morning.

Ferly fayre wat3 þe folde, for þe forst clenged,
In rede ruded e vpon rak rises þe sunne,  
    The hunters, dispersed by a wood's side,  

& ful clere coste³ þe clowdes of þe welkyn.  
Hun teres vnhardeled bi a holt syde,  
Rocheres rougen bi rys, for rurde of her hornes;  
    come upon the track of a fox,  

Summe fel in þe fute, þer þe fox bade,  
    1700  

Trayle³ ofte a trayteres⁴, bi traunt of her wyles;  
A kenet kryes þerof, þe hunt on hym calles,  
His fela³es fallen hym to, þat fnasted ful þike,  
    which is followed up by the hounds.  

Runnen forth in a rabel, in his ry³t fare;  
    1704  

& he fyske³ hem by-fore, þay founden hym sone,  
    They soon get sight of the game,  

& quen þay seghe hym with sy³t, þay sued hym fast,  
Wre³ande h[ym] ful [w]eterly with a wroth noyse;  
    and pursue him through many a rough grove.  

& he trantes & tornayee³ þur³ mony tene greue;  
    1708  

Hamlou³e³, & herkene³, bi hegge³ ful ofte;  
[Fol. 114.]  
The fox at last leaps over a spinny,  

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

Went haf wylt of þe wode, with wyle³ fro þe houn des,  
    1712  

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

Þer þre þro at a þrich þrat hym at ones,  
    al graye;  
    However, he slips them,
He bленched a3ayn bilyue,
1716
& stifly start onstray,
With alle þe wo on lyue,
and makes again for the wood.
To þe wod he went away.
1 MS. nnsrel. 2 bi-forere, in MS. 3 caste3 (?). 4 trayveres (?). 5 to, in MS.

XXIV.

Then was it fine sport to listen to the hounds,
Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list to lyþen þe hounde3,
1720
When alle þe mute hade hym met, menged to-geder,
Suche a sor3e at þat sy3t þay sette on his hede,
As alle þe clamberande clyffes hade clatered on hepes;
and the hallooing of the hunters.
Here he wat3 halawed, when haþele3 hym metten,
1724
Loude he wat3 3ayned, wth 3arande speche;
There the fox was threatened and called a thief.

Þer he wat3 þreted, & ofte þef called,
& ay þe titleres at his tayl, þat tary he ne my3t;
Ofte he wat3 ru3nen at, when he out rayked,
But Reynard was wily,1728

& ofte reled in a3ayn, so reniarde wat3 wylé.
and led them astray over mounts.

& 3e he lad hem bi lag, mon, þe lorde & his meyny;
On þis maner bi þe mountes, quyle myd, ouer, vnder,
Meanwhile the knight at home soundly sleeps within his comely curtains.

Whyle þe hende kny3t at home holsunly slepe3,
1732
With-imne þe comly cortynes, on þe colde morne.
Bot þe lady for luf let not to slepe,
Ne þe purpose to payre, þat py3t in hir hert,
Bot ros hir vp radly, rayked hir þeder,
The lady of the castle, clothed in a rich mantle,

In a mery mantyle, mete to þe erþe,
Påt wat3 furred ful fyne with felle3, wel pure,
No hwe3 goud on hir hede, bot þe ha3er stones
Trased aboute hir tressour, be twenty in clusteres;
her throat and bosom all bare,

Hir þryuen face & hir þrote þrowen al naked,
Hir brest bare bifore, & bihinde eke.
comes to Gawayne's chamber,

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

Wayne31 vp a wyndow, & on þe wy3e calle3,

& radly þus re-hayted hym, with hir riche worde3,
"Ah! man, how canst thou sleep,
"A! mon, how may þou slepe,
[Fol. 114b.]
this morning is so clear?"

Þis morning is so clere?"

He wat3 in drowping depe,
Bot þenne he con hir here.
1 wayue3(?). 2 bi, à sec. manu.

XXV.

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

In dre3 droupyng of dreme drauled þat noble,
As mon þat wat3 in mornyng of mony þro þo3tes,

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

Bot quen þat comly he keuered his wyttes,
Swenges out of þe sweuenes, & sware3 with hast.
Þe lady luflych com la3ande swete,
who sweetly kisses him.

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

He se3 hir so glorious, & gayly atyred,
So faultes of hir fetures, & of so fyne hewes,
Great joy warms the heart of Sir Gawayne,

Wi3t wallande Ioye warmed his hert;
With smoþe smylyng & smolt þay smeten in-to merþe,

Þat al wat3 blis & bonchef, þat breke hem bi-twene,
& wynne,
þay lanced wordes gode,
Much wele þe þen wat3 þer-inne,
and "great peril between them stood."1768

Gret perile bi-twene hem stod,
Nif mare of hir kny3t mynte.

XXVI.
The knight is sorely pressed.

For þat prynce of pris de-presed hym so þikke.
Numred hym so neþe þe þred, þat nede hym bi-houed,

Oþer lach þer hir luf, oþer lodly re-fuse;
He cared for his cortaysye, lest craþayn he were,
He fears lest he should become a traitor to his host.

& more for his meschef, 3if he schulde make synne,
& be traytor to þat tolke, þat þat telde a3t.

"God schylde," quod þe schalk, "þat schal not be-falle!"
With luf-la3yng a lyt, he layd hym by-syde
Alle þe speche3 of specialté þat sprange of her mouthe.
Quod þat burde to þe burne, "blame 3e disserue,
3if 3e luf not þat lyf þat 3e lye nexte,  
Bifore alle þe wyȝe 3e in þe worlde, wounded in hert,  

The lady inquire whether he has a mistress that he loves better than her.

Bot if 3e haf a leman, a leuer, þat yow lykeȝ better,  
& folden fayth to þat fre, festned so harde,  

[Fol. 115.]1784

Þat yow lausen ne lyst, & þat I leue nouȝe;  
And þat 3e telle me þat, now trwly I pray yow,  
For alle þe lufeȝ vpon lyue, layne not þe soȝe,  

for gile."

Sir Gawayne swears by St. John that he neither has nor desires one.1788

Þe knyȝt sayde, "be sayn Ion,"  
& smeȝely con he smyle,  
"In fayth I welde riȝt non,  
Ne non wil welde þe quile."

XXVII.

1792

"Þat is a worde," quod þat wyȝt, "þat worst is of alle,  
Bot I am swared for soȝe, þat sore me þinkkeȝ;  
She then kisses him, sighing for sorrow.

Kysse me now coraly, & I schal cach heȝen,  
I may bot mouȝne vpon molde, as may þat much louyes."

1796

Sykande ho sweȝe doun, & semly hym kyssed,  
& siȝen ho seueres hym fro, & says as ho stondes,
"Now, dere, at þis de-partyȝng, do me þis ese,  
She desires some gift,

Gif me sumquat of þy gifte, þi gloue if hit were,  
by which to remember him.1800

Þat I may myynne on þe mon, my mouȝnyng to lassen."  
"Now Iwysse," quod þat wyȝe, "I wolde I hade here  
Þe leuest þing for þy luf, þat I in londe welde,  

Gawayne tells her that she is worthy of a better gift than he can bestow.

For 3e haf deserued, forsoȝe, sellyly ofte
More rewarde bi resoun, þen I reche my3t,
Bot to dele yow for drurye, þat dawed bot neked;
Hit is not your honour to haf at þis tyme
A gloue for a garysoun, of Gawayne3 gifte3,

1808

& I am here [on] an erande in erde3 vncoþe,
He has no men with mails containing precious things.

& haue no men wyth no male3, with menskful þinge3;
Þat mislyke3 me, ladé, for luf at þis tyme,²
Iche tolke mon do as he is tan, tas to non ille,

1812

ne pine."
Then says that lovesome,

"Nay, hende of hy3e honours,"
Quod þat lufsum vnder lyne,
"Though I had nought of yours, yet should ye have of mine."

"Þa3 I hade o3t³ of youre3,
1816
3et schulde 3e haue of myne."
¹ of, in MS. ² tyne, in MS. ³ no3t (?).

XXVIII.

She offers him a gold ring,

Ho ra3t hym a riche rynk¹ of red golde werke3,
Wyth a starande ston, stondande alofte,
Þat bere blusschande beme3 as þe bry3t sunne;

1820

Wyt 3e wel, hit wat3 worth wele ful hoge.
but he refuses to accept it,

Bot þe renk hit renayed, & redly he sayde,
[Fol. 115b.]

"I wil no gifte3 for gode, my gay, at þis tyme;
as he has none to give in return.
I haf none yow to norne, ne no3t wyl I take."

1824

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

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

& ho sore þat he forsoke, & sayde þer-after, "If 3e renay my rynk, to ryche for hit seme3, 1828

3e wolde not so hy3ly halden be to me, I schal gif yow my girdel, þat gaynes yow lasse."
Ho la3t a lace ly3tly, þat leke vmbe hir syde3, She takes off her "girdle,"

Knit vpon hir kyrTel, vnder þe clere mantyle, 1832

Gered hit wat3 with grene sylke, & with golde schaped, No3t bot arounde brayden, beten with fyngre3; & þat ho bede to þe burne, & blyþely bi-so3t and beseeches him to take it.

Þa3 hit vn-worþi were, þat he hit take wolde. 1836

& he nay þat he nolde neghe in no wyse, Gawayne again refuses to accept anything,

Nauþer golde ne garysoun, er God hym grace sende, To acheue to þe chaunce þat he hade chosen þere. "& þerfore, I pray yow, displese yow no3t, 1840

& lette3 be your businesse, for I bayþe hit yow neuer to graunte; I am derely to yow biholde, Bi-cause of your semblaunt, but promises, "ever in hot and in cold, to be her true servant."1844

& euer in hot & colde To be your trwe seruaunt.

1 ryng (?). 2 þat þat, in MS.

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

"Now forsake 3e þis silke." sayde þe burde þenne,
"For hit is symple in hit-self. & so hit wel seme3?

Lo! so hit is littel, & lasse hit is worpy;
Whoso knew the virtues that it possesses, would highly prize it.

Bot who-so knew þe costes þat knit ar þer-inne,
He wolde hit prayse at more prys, parauente;
For he who is girded with this green lace,
For quat gome so is gorde with þis grene lace,

While he hit hade hemely halched aboute,
Þer is no haþel vnder heuen to-hewe hym þat my3t;
cannot be wounded or slain."

For he my3t not he slayn, for sly3t vpon erþe."

The knight thinks of his adventure at the Green Chapel.1856

Hit were a Iuel for þe Iopardé, þat hy miugged were,
When he acheued to þe chapel, his chek forto fech;
The lady presses him to accept the lace.
My3t he haf slypped to þe vn-slayn, þe sle3t were noble.
[Fol. 116.]

Þenne ho þulged with hir þrepe, & þoled hir to speke,

& ho bere on hym þe belt, & bede hit hym swybe,
He consents not only to take the girdle, but to keep the possession of it a secret.

& he granted, & [ho] hym gafe with a goud wylle,
& biso3t hym, for hir sake, discueuer hit neuer,
Bot to lelly layne for2 hir lorde; þe leude hym acorde3.

Þat neuer wy3e schulde hit wyt, Iwysse, bot þay twayne,
for no3te;
He þonkked hir oft ful swybe,
Ful þro with hert & þo3t.
By that time the lady has kissed him thrice.1868
Bi þat on þrynne syþe,
He hat3 kyst þe knyþt so toþt.
1 myþt (?). 2 fro (?).

XXX.

Then she takes her leave.

Thenne lachche3 ho hir leue, & leue3 hym þere,
For more myrþe of þat mon mo3t ho not gete;
Gawayne then dresses himself,1872

When ho1 wat3 gon, sir G. gere3 hym sone,
Rises, & riches hym in araye noble,
and conceals the love-lace about his person.

Lays vp þe luf-lace, þe lady hym ra3t,
Hid hit ful holdely, þer he hit eft fonde;
1876

Syþen cheuely to þe chapel choses he þe waye,
He then hies to mass,

Preuely aproched to a prest, & prayed hym þere
Þat he wolde lyfte2 his lyf, & lern hym better,
How his sawle schulde be saued, when he schuld seye heþen.
and shrives him of his misdeeds.1880

Þere he schrof hym schyrly, & schewed his mysdede3,
Of þe more & þe myrþe, & mær ci beseche3,
and prays for absolution.

& of absolucioun he on þe segge calles;
& he asoyled hym surely, & sette hym so clene,
He returns to the hall, and makes himself so merry among the ladies,1884

As dome3-day schulde haf ben diþt on þe morn.
& syþen he mace hym as mery among þe fre ladyes,
with comely carols,

With comlych caroles, & alle kynnes ioye,
As neuer he did bot þat daye, to þe derk nyþt,
1888

with blys;
Vche mon hade daynte þare,
that they said,
Of hym, & sayde Iwysse,
"Thus merry was he never before since hither he came."

\[\text{Þus myry he wat\text{3} neuer are,}\]
1892

Syn he com hider, er ðis.  
\[1\] he, in MS. \[2\] lyste (?).

XXXI.

Gawayne's host is still in the field.

Now hym lenge in þat lee, þer luf hym bi-tyde;
\[3\]et is þe lorde on þe launde, ledande his gomnes,  
He has destroyed the fox.

He hat3 forfaren þis fox, þat he fol3ed longe;  
1896

As he sprent ouer a spennē, to spye þe schrewe,  
[Fol. 116b.]

Þer as he herd þe howndes, þat hasted hym swyþe,  
He spied Reynard coming through a "rough grove,"

Renaud com richchande þur3 a ro3e greue,  
& alle þe rabel in a res, ry3t at his hele3,  
and tried to hit him with his sword. \[1900\]

Þe wy3e wat3 war of þe wylde, & warly abides,  
& brayde3 out þe bry3t bronde, & at þe best caste3;  
& he schunt for þe scharp, & schulde haf arered,  
The fox "shunts," and is seized by one of the dogs.

A rach rapes hym to, ry3t er he my3t,  
1904

& ry3t bifoire þe hors fete þay fel on hym alle,  
& woried me þis wyly wyth a wroth noyse,  
The lord takes him out of the hound's mouth.

Þe lorde ly3te3 bilyue, & cache3 by\[1\] sone,  
Rased hym ful radly out of þe rach mouþes,  
1908

Halde3 he3e ouer his hede, halowe3 faste,
& þer bayen hym mony bray\(^2\) hounde3;
   Hunters hasten thither with horns full many.

Huntes hy3ed hem þeder, with horne3 ful mony,
Ay re-chatande ary3t til þay þe renk se3en;
   1912

Bi þat wat3 comen his compeyny noble,
Alle þat euer ber bugle blewed at ones,
   It was the merriest meet that ever was heard.

& alle þise oþer halowed, þat hade no hornes,
Hit wat3 þe myriest mute þat euer men herde,
   1916

Þe rich rurd þat þer wat3 raysed for renaude saule,
   with lote;
The hounds are rewarded,

   Hor hounde3 þay þer rewarde,
   Her\(^3\) hede3 þay fawne & frote,
   and then they take Reynard and "turn off his coat."\(1\)920

& syþen þay tan reynarde,
   & tyrnen of his cote.
   \(^1\) hym (?). \(^2\) braþ (?). \(^3\) Her her, in MS.

XXXII.

The hunters then hasten home.

& þenne þay helden to home, for hit wat3 nie3 ny3t,
Strakande ful stoutly in hor store horne3;
   The lord at last alights at his dear home,1924

Þe lorde is ly3t at þe laste at hys lef home,
Fynde3 fire vpon flet, þe freke þer by-side,
Sir Gawayn þe gode, þat glad wat3 with alle,
   where he finds Gawayne amusing the ladies.

Among þe ladies for luf he ladde much ioye,
   1928

He were a bleaunt of blwe, þat bradde to þe erpe,
His surkot semed hym wel, þat softe wat3 forred,
   & his hode of þat ilke henged on his schulder,
   The knight comes forward and welcomes his host,
Blande al of blauuer were boþe al aboute.

He mete3 me þis god mon in mydde3 þe flore,
& al with gomen he hym gret, & goudly he sayde,
"I schal fylle vpon fyrst ourde forwarde3 nouþe,
[Fol. 117.]
"Pat we spedly han spoken, þer spared wat3 no drynk;"
and according to covenant kisses him thrice.

Þat acoles he [þe] kny3t, & kysses hym þryes,
(See l. 1868.)

As sauerly & sadly as he hem sette couþe.
"By Christ," says the other, "ye have had much bliss!"

"Bi Kryst," quod þat oþer kny3t, "3e cach much sele,
In cheuisaunce of þis chaffer, 3if 3e hade goud chepe3."

"3e of þe chepe no charg," quod chefly þat oþer,
"As is pertly payed þe chepe3 þat I a3te."
"Mary," quod þat oþer mon, "myn is bi-hynde,
I have hunted all day and have gotten nothing,

For I haf hunted al þis day, & no3t haf I geten,
but the skin of this foul fox,

Bot þis foule fox felle, þe fende haf þe gode3,
a poor reward for three such kisses."

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

"I-no3," quod sir Gawayn,
"I þonk yow, bi þe rode;"
He then tells him how the fox was slain.

& how þe fox wat3 slayn,
He tolde hym, as þay stode.

XXXIII.

With much mirth and minstrelsy they made merry,
With merþe & mynstrasye, wyth mete3 at hor wylle,
Þay maden as mery as any men mo3ten,
With la3yng of ladies, with lote3 of bordes;
Gawyn & þe gode mon so glad were þay boþe,
1956

Bot if þe douthe had doted, óper dronken ben óper,
Boþe þe mon & þe meyny maden mony iape3,
until the time came for them to part.

Til þe sesoun wat3 se3en, þat þay seu3er moste;
Burne3 to hor bedde be-houed at þe laste.
Gawayne takes leave of his host.1960

Þenne lo3ly his leue at þe lorde fyrst
Fochche3 þis fre mon, & fayre he hym þonkke3;
and thanks him for his happy "sojourn."

"Of such a sellyly1 soiorne, as I haf hade here,
Your honour, at þis hy3e fest, þe hy3e kyn3 yow 3elde!
1964

I 3ef yow me for on of youre3, if yowre-self lyke3,
For I mot nedes, as 3e wot, meue to morne;
He asks for a man to teach him the way to the Green Chapel.

& 3e me take sum tolke, to teche, as 3e hy3t,
Þe gate to þe grene chapel, as god wyl me suffer
1968

To dele, on nw3ere3 day, þe dome of my wyrdes."
"In god fayþe," quod þe god mon. "wyth a goud wylle;
Al þat euer I yow hy3t, halde schal I rede."
A servant is assigned to him,

Þer asyngnes he a seruau3nt, to sett hym in þe waye,
[Fol. 117b.]1972

& coundue hym by þe downe3, þat he no drechch had,
For to f[e]rk þur3 þe fryth, & fare at þe gaynest,
bi greue.
Þe lorde Gawayn con þonk,
1976

Such worship he wolde hym weue;
and then he takes leave of the ladies,
Than at thè ladye wlonk.
The knyȝt hatʒ tan his leue.
I søllʒ (?).

XXXIV.

kissing them sorrowfully.

With care & wyth kyssynʒ he carppeʒ hem tille,
1980

& fele þryuande þonkkeʒ he þrat hom to haue,
& þay 3eldʒ hym aȝay[n] 3eply þat ilk;
They commend him to Christ.

Þay bikende hym to Kryst, with ful colde sykyngʒeʒ.
He then departs, thanking each one he meets "for his service and solace."

Sþen fro þe meyny he menskly de-partes;
1984

Vþe þone þat he mette, he made hem a þonke,
For his seruyse, & his solace, & his sere pyne,
Þat þay wyth busynes had ben, aboute hym to serue;
& vþe segge as sore, to seuer with hym þere,
1988

As þay hade wonde worþyly with þat wlonk euer.
He retires to rest but sleeps but little,

Þen with ledes & lyȝt he watʒ ladde to his chambre,
& blybely broȝt to his bedde, to be at his rest;
3if he ne slepe.soundly, say ne dar I,
for much has he to think of on the morrow.1992

For he hade muche on þe morn to myyne, 3if he wolde,
in þoȝt;
Let him there lie still.

Let hym lyȝe þere stille,
He hatʒ1 nere þat he soȝt,
Be still awhile, and I shall tell how they wrought.1996

& 3e wyl a whyle be stylle,
I schal telle yow how þay wroȝt.
1 watʒ (?).
[FYTTE THE FOURTH.]

I.

New Year’s Day approaches.

Now ne3e3 þe nw3ere, & þe ny3t passe3,
Þe day dryue3 to þe derk, as dry3tyn bidde3;
The weather is stormy.

Bot wylde wedere3 of þe worlde wakned þeroute,
Clowdes kesten kenly þe colde to þe erþe,
Wyth ny3e\textsuperscript{1} in-nogh of þe norþe, þe naked to tene;
Snow falls.

Þe sname snitered ful snart, þat snayped þe wylde;

Þe werbelande wynde wapped fro þe hy3e,
The dales are full of drift.

& drof vche dale ful of dryftes ful grete.
Þe leude lystened ful wel, þat le3 i
his bedde,
Gawayne in his bed hears each cock that crows.

Þa3 he lowke3 his lidde3, ful lyttel he slepes;

Bi vch kok þat crue, he knwe wel þe steuen.

[Fol. 118.]

De-liuerly he dressed vp, er þe day sprenged,
For þere wat3 ly3t of a lau[m]pe, þat lemed in his chambre;
He calls for his chamberlain, and bids him bring him his armour.

He called to his chamberlayn, þat cofly hym swared,

& sede hym bryng hym his bruny, & his blonk sadel;
Þat oþer ferke3 hym vp, & feche3 hym his wede3,
& grayþe3 me sir Gawayn vpon a grett wyse.
Fyrst he clad hym in his cloþe3, þe colde for to were;

& syþen his oþer harnays, þat holdely wat3 keped,
Boþe his paunce, & his plate3, piked ful clene,
Men knock off the rust from his rich habergeon.
The knight then calls for his steed.

The gayest in to Grece,

II.

While he clothed himself in his rich weeds,

Whyle þe wlonkest wedes he warp on hym-seluen;
His cote, wyth be conysaunce of þe clere werke3,
Ennumed vpon veluet vertuuus\(^1\) stone3,

Aboute beten, & boun\(d\)en, enbrauded seme3,
& fayre furred with-inne wyth fayre pelures.
he forgot not the "lace," the lady's gift,

3et laft he not þe lace, þe ladie3 gifte,
Þat for-gat not Gawayn, for gode of hym-seluen;

Bi he hade belted þe bronde vpon his bald3e haunc3e3,
but with it doubly girded his loins.

Þenn dressed he his drurye double hym aboute;
Swyþe sweþled vmbe his swange swetely, þat kny3t,
Þe gordel of þe grene silke, þat gay wel bisemed,

Vpon þat ryol red cloþe, þat ryche wat3 to schewe.
He wore it not for its rich ornaments,

Bot wered not þis ilk wy3e for wele þis gordel,
For pryde of þe pendau\(nte\)3, þa3 polyst þay were,
& þa3 þe gly\(ter\)ande golde glent vpon ende3,
"but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer."2040
Bot forto sauëu hym-self, when suffer hym by-houed,
To byde bale with-oute dabate, of bronë hym to were,
   oper knyffe;
   Bi þat þe bolde mon boun,
2044

Wyne3 þeroute bilyue,
   All the renowned assembly he thanks full oft.

Alle þe meyny of renoun,
He þonkke3 ofte ful ryue.
   1 vertuous (?)

III.

[Fol. 118b.]
Then was Gringolet arrayed,

Thenne wat3 Gryngolet grayþe, þat gret wat3 & huge,
2048

& hade ben soiourned sauërly, & in a siker wyse,
   full ready to prick on.

Hym lyst prik for poyn3, þat proude hors þenne;
De wy3e wyne3 hym to, & wyte3 on his lyre,
& sayde soberly hym-self, & by his soth swere3,
2052

"Here is a meyny in þis mote, þat on menske þenkke3,
   Gawayne returns thanks for the honour and kindness shown to him by all.

Þe mon hem maynteines, ioy mot þay haue;
De leue lady, on lyue luf bir bityde;
3if þay for charyté cherysen a gest,
2056

& halden honour in her honde, þe hapel hem 3elde,
   þat halde3 þe heuen vpon hy3e, & also yow alle!
   & 3if I my3t lyf vpon londe lede any quyle,
   I schuld rech yow sum rewarde redyly, if I my3t."
   He then steps into his saddle,2060

Þenn steppe3 he in-to stirop, & stryde3 alofte;
His schalk schewed hym his schelde, on schulder he hit la3t,
Gorde3 to Gryngolet, with his gilt hele3,
   and "starts on the stone" without more delay.
& he starte3 on þe ston, stod he no lenger,
       2064

to prau3ce;
     His hæpel on hors wat3 þenne,
     Þat bere his spere & launce.
     "This castle to Christ I commend; may he give it ever good chance!"

"Þis kastel to Kryst I kenne,
       2068
     He gef hit ay god chaunce!"

IV.

The gates are soon opened.

The brygge wat3 Brayde dou3, & þe brode 3ate3
     Unbarred, & born open, vpon boþe halue;
     The knight passes thereout,

Þe burne blessed hym bilyue, & þe brede3 passed;
       2072

Prayses þe porter, bифore þe prynce kneled,
     Gef hym God & goud day, þat Gawyn he saue;
     and goes on his way accompanied by his guide.

& went on his way, with his wy3e one,
     Þat schulde teche hym to tourne to þat tene place,
       2076

Þer þe ruful race he schulde re-sayue.
     Þay clomben bi clyffe3, þer clenge3 þe colde;
     Þe heuen wat3 vp halt, bot vgly þer vnder,
       2080

Mist muged on þe mor, malt on þe mounte3,
     where each "hill had a hat and a mist-cloak,"

Vch hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge;
     Broke3 byled, & breke, bi bonkke3 aboute,
     Schyre schaterande on schore3, þer þay doun schowued.
       [Fol. 119.]2084
Welawylle wat þe way, þer þay bi wod schulden, 
until daylight.

Til hit wat þe sone sesoun, þat þe sunne ryses, 
þat tyde; 
They were then on a "hill full high."

Þay were on a hille ful hy3e, 
2088

Þe quyte snaw lay bisyde; 
The servant bade his master abide, saying,

Þe burne þat rod hy3m by 
Bede his mayster abide.

V.

"I have brought you hither, 
"For I haf wonen yow hider, wy3e, at þis tyme, 
2092

& now nar 3e not fer fro þat note place, 
ye are not now far from the noted place.

Þat 3e han spied & spuryed so specially after; 
Bot I schal say yow for soþe, syþen I yow knowe, 
& 3e ar a lede vpon lyue, þat I wel louy, 
2096

Wolde 3e worch bi my wytte, 3e worþed þe better. 
Full perilous is it esteemed.

Þe place þat 3e prece to, ful perelous is halden; 
The lord of that 'waste' is stiff and stern.

Þer wone3 a wy3e in þat waste, þe worst vpon erþe; 
For he is stiffe, & sturne, & to strike louies, 
2100

& more he is þen any mon vpon myddelere, 
His body is bigger 'than the best four in Arthur's house.'

& his body bigger þen þe best fowre. 
Þat ar in Arþure3 hous, Hestor' oþer oþer. 
He cheue3 þat chaunce at þe chapel grene;
None passes by the Green Chapel, 'that he does not ding to death with dint of his hand.'

Für passes non bi þat place, so proude in his armes,
Þat he ne dynne3 hym to deþe, with dynt of his honde;
For he is a mon methles, & mercy non vses,
For be it churl or chaplain, monk, mass-priest, 'or any man else,' he kills them all.

For be hit chorle, oþer chaplayn, þat bi þe chapel rydes,
2108

Monk, oþer masse-prest, oþer any mon elles,
Hym þynk as queue hym to quelle, as quyk go hym seluen.
For-þy I say þe as sope as 3e in sadel sette,
Com 3e þere, 3e be kylled, [I] may þe kny3t rede,
2112

Trawe 3e me þat trwely, þa3 3e had twenty lyues
to spende;
He has lived there full long.

He hat3 wonyd here ful 3ore,
On bent much baret bende,
Against his dints sore ye may not defend you.2116

A3ayn his dynte3 sore,
3e may not yow defende."
1 Hector (?).

VI.

Wherefore, good Sir Gawayne, let this man alone.

"For-þy, goude sir Gawyn, let þe gome one,
& got3 a-way sum oþer gate; vpon Godde3 halue;
Go by some other region,2120

Cayre3 bi sum oþer kyth, þer Kryst mot yow spede;
& I schal hy3 me hom a3ayn, & hete yow fyrre,
[Fol. 119b.]
I swear by God and all His saints, that I will never say that ever ye attempted to flee from any
man."

Þat I schal swere bi God, & alle his gode hal3e3,
As help me God & þe halydam, & oþe3 in-noghe,
2124

Þat I schal lelly yow layne, & lance neuer tale,
"Pat euer 3e fondet to fle, for freke þat I wyst."
"Grant merci;" quod Gawyn, & gruchyng he sayde,
"Wel worth þe wy3e, þat wolde3 my gode.

2128

& þat lelly me layne, I leue wel þou wolde3!
Gawayne replies that to shun this danger would mark him as a "coward knight."

Bot helde þou hit neuer so holde, & I here passed,
Founded for ferde for to fle, in fourme þat þou telle3,
I were a kny3t kowarde, I my3t not1 be excused.
To the Chapel, therefore, he will go,2132

Bot I wy1 to þe chapel, for chaunce þat may falle,
& talk wyth þat ilk tulk þe tale þat me lyste,
Worþe hit wele, oþer wo, as þe wyrde lyke3
hit hafe;
though the owner thereof were a stern knave.2136

Þa3e he be a sturn knape,
To sti3tel, & stad with staue,
"Full well can God devise his servants for to save."

Ful wel con dry3tyn schape,
His seruaunte3 forto saue."

1 mot, in MS. 2 & &, in MS.

VII.

"Mary!" quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life,2140

"Mary!" quod þat oþer mon, "now þou so much spelle3,
Þat þou wylt þyn awen nye nyme to þy-seluen,
& þe lyst lese þy lyf, þe lette I ne kepe;

take thy helmet on thy head, and thy spear in thy hand, and ride down this path by yon rock-
side,

Haf here þi helme on þy hede, þi spere in þi honde,

2144

& ryde me dow þis ilk rake, bi 3on rokke syde,
till thou come to the bottom of the valley;

Til þou be bro3t to þe boþem of þe brem valay;
look a little to the left,

Þenne loke a littel on þe launde, on þi lyfte honde,
and thou shalt see the Chapel itself and the man that guards it."

& þou schal se in þat slade þe self chapel,

2148

& þe borelych burne on bent, þat hit kepe3.
Now fare3 wel on Gode3 half, Gawyn þe noble,
For alle þe golde vpon grounde I nolde go with þe,
Ne bere þe fela3schip þur3 þis fryth on fote fyrre."  
Having thus spoken the guide takes leave of the knight.

2152

Bi þat þe wy3e in þe wod wende3 his brydel,
Hit þe hors with þe hele3, as harde as he my3t,
Lepe3 hym ouer þe launde, & leue3 þe kny3t þere,  
al one.
"By God's self," says Sir Gawayne, "I will neither weep nor groan.

2156

"Bi Godde3 self," q uod Gawyn,
"I wyl nauþer grete ne grone,
To God's will I am full ready."

To Godde3 wylle I am ful bayn,  
& to hym I haf me tone."

VIII.

[fol. 120.]
Then he pursues his journey,

2160

Thenne gyrde3 he to Gryngolet, & gedere3 þe rake,
Schowue3 in bi a schore, at a scha3e syde,  
rides through the dale, and looks about.

Ride3 þur3 þe ro3e bonk, ry3t to þe dale;  
& þenne he wayted hym aboute, & wylde hit hym þo3t,
He sees no sign of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks.

2164

& se3e no syngne of resette, bisyde3 nowhere,
Bot hy3e bonkke3 & brent, vpon boþe halue,  
& ru3e knokled knarre3, with knorned stone3;  
Þe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued1 hym þo3t.

2168

Þenne he houed, & wyth-hylde his hors at þat tyde,  
& ofte chaunged his cher, þe chapel to seche;  
No chapel could he discern.

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He sees no such a hill by the side of a stream;
At last he sees a hill by the side of a stream.

A bank, by a bonne, the bryme by-syde,
Bi a for of a flode, fat ferked þære;
Þe borne blubred þer-inne, as hit boyled hade.

thither he goes,

Þe kny3t kache3 his caple, & com to þe lawe,
Lithis and fastens his horse to a branch of a tree.

Li3te doun luflyly, & at a lynde tache3
Þe rayne, & his riche, with a ro3e braunche;
He walks around the hill, debating with himself what it might be,

Þen[n]e he bo3e3 to þe ber3e, aboute hit he walke,
D[e]batande with hym-self, what hit be my3t.

Hit hade a hole on þe ende, & on ayþer syde,
& outer-grown with gresse in glodes ay where,
& al wat3 hol3 in-with, nobot an olde caue,
and at last finds an old cave in the crag.

Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he couþe hit no3t deme

with spelle,
"We,2 lorde," quod þe gentyle kny3t,
"Wheþer þis be þe grene chapelle;
He prays that about midnight he may tell his matins.

He my3t aboute myd-ny3t,
He prays that about midnight he may tell his matins.

[þ]e dele his matyunes telle!"
1 skayned (?). 2 wel (?)

IX.

"Truly," says Sir Gawayne, "a desert is here,

"Now i-wysse," quod Wowayn, "wysty is here;
Þis oritore is vgly, with erbe3 outer-grown;

a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions in devil fashion.'
Wel biseme3 þe wy3e wruxled in grene

2192

Dele here his deuocioun, on þe deuele3 wyse;
Now I fele hit is þe fende, in my fyue wytte3,
Þat hat3 stoken me þis steuen, to strye me here;
   It is most cursed kirk that ever I entered."

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

2196

Hit is þe corsedest kyrk, þat euer i com inne!"
   [Fol. 120b.]

With he3e helme on his hede, his launce in his honde,
   Roaming about he hears a loud noise,

He rome3 vp to þe rokke of þo ro3 wone3;
Þene herde he of þat hy3e hil, in a harde roche,
   from beyond the brook.2200

Bi3onde þe broke, in a bonk, a wonder breme noyse,
   It clattered like the grinding of a scythe on a grindstone.

Quat! hit clatered in þe clyff, as hit cleue schulde,
As one vpon a gryndelston hade grounden a syþe;
   It whirred like a mill-stream.

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

2204

What! hit rusched, & ronge, rawþe to here.
Þenne "bi Godde," quod Gawyn, "þat gere as I trowe,
Is ryched at þe reuerence, me renk to mete,
   bi rote;

2208

Let God worche we loo,
   "Though my life I forgo," says the knight, "no noise shall terrify me."

Hit helppe3 me not a mote,
My lif þa3 I for-go3,
Drede dot3 me no lote."  
   1 at, in MS.

X.
Then cried he aloud,

Then ne þe kny3t con calle ful hy3e,

"Who dwells here discourse with me to hold?"

"Who sti3tle3 in þis sted, me steuen to holde?

Now is the good Gawayne going aright

For now is gode Gawyn goande ry3t here,

If any wy3e o3t wyl wynne hider fast,

Oþer now, oþer neuer, his nede3 to spede."

He hears a voice commanding him to abide where he is.

"Abyde," quod on þe bonke, abouen ouer his hede,

"& ou schal haf al in hast, þat I þe hy3t ones."

3et he rusched on þat rurde, rapely a þrowe,

& wyth quettyng a-wharf, er he wolde ly3t;

Soon there comes out of a hole, with a fell weapon,

& syþen he keuere3 bi a cragge, & come3 of a hole,

Whyrlande out of a wro, wyth a felle weppen,

a Danish axe, quite new,

A dene3 ax nwe dy3t, þe dynt with [t]o 3elde

With a borelych bytte, bende by þe halme,

Fyled in a fylor, fowre fote large,

Hit wat3 no lasse, bi þat lace þat lemed ful bry3t.

the "knight in green," clothed as before.

& þe gome i3n þe erene gered as fyrst,

& þe lyre & þe legge3, lokke3, & berde,

Saue þat fayre on his fote he fou3n on þe erþe,

Sette þe stele to þe stone, & stalked bysyde.

When he reaches the stream, he hops over and strides about.

When he wan to þe watter, þer he wade nolde,

He hypped ouer on hys ax, & orpedly stryde3,
Bremly broþe on a bent, þat brode wat3 a-boute, 
on snawe.
[Fol. 121.]
He meets Sir Gawayne without obeisance.

Sir Gawayn þe kny3t con mete.

He ne lutte hym no þyng lowe, 
The other tells him that he is now ready for conversation

Þat oþer sayde, "now, sir swete, 
Of steuen mon may þe trowe."

XI.

"God preserve thee!" says the Green Knight,

"Gawayn," quod þat grene gome, "God þe mot loke!

I-wysse þou art welcom, wy3e, to my place, 
"as a true knight 'thou hast timed thy travel'

& þou hat3 tymed þi trauayl as true² mon schulde; 
Thou knowest the covenant between us,

& þou knowe3 þe couenaunte3 kest vus by-twene, 
At þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat þe falled, 
that on New Year's day I should return thy blow2244

& I schulde at þis nwe 3ere 3eplu þe quyte. 
Here we are alone,

& we ar in þis valay, veraylyoure one, 
Here ar no renkes vs to rydde, rele as vus like3; 
Have off thy helmet and take thy pay at once."

Haf þy³ helme of þy hede, & haf here þy pay; 

Busk no more debate þen I þe bede þenne, 
"When þou wypped of my hede at a wap one." 
"By God," quoth Sir Gawayne, "I shall not begrudge thee thy will."

"Nay, bi God," quod Gawayn, "þat me gost lante, 
I schal gruch þe no grwe, for grem þat falle3;
Botstytel þe vpon on strok, & I schal stonde stille,
& warp þe no wernynge, to worch as þe lyke3,
no whare."

Then he shows his bare neck,

He lened with þe nek, & lutte,
2256
& schewed þat schyre al bare,
& lette as he no3t dutte,
and appears undaunted.

For drede he wolde not dare.
1 welcon, in MS. 2 truee in MS. 3 MS. þy þy.

Then the man in green seizes his grim tool.

Then þe gone in þe grene grayþed hym swyþe,
2260
Gedere3 yp hys grymme tole, Gawyn to smyte;
With all his force he raises it aloft.

With alle þe bur in his body he ber hit on lofte,
Munt as ma3tyly, as marre hym he wolde;
Hade hit dryuen adou, as dre3 as he atled,
2264
Þer hade ben ded of his dynt, þat do3ty wat3 euer.
Bot Gawyn on þat giserne glyfte hym bysyde,
As it came gliding down,

As hit com glyande adou, on glode hym to schende,
Sir Gawayne shrank a little with his shoulders.

& schranke a lytel with þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrne.
2268
Þat oþer schalk wyth a schunt þe schene wythhalde3,
The other reproved him, saying,

& þenne reprieued he þe prynce with mony prowde worde3:
"Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed,
"Thou art not Gawayn," quod þe gome, "þat is so goud halden, 
þat neuer ar3ed for no here, by hylle ne be vale,
[Fol. 121b.]
for thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm.2272

& now þou fles for ferde, er þou fele harme3;
Such cowardise of þat kny3t cowþe I neu3er here.
I never flinched when thou struckest.

Nawþer fyked I, ne fla3e, freke, quen þou myntest,
Ne kest no kauelacion, in kynge3 hous Arthor,
My head flew to my foot, yet I never fled,2276

My hede fla3 to my fote, & 3et fla3 I neu3er;
& þou, er any harme hent, ar3ei in hert,
wherefore I ought to be called the better man."

Wherfore þe better burne me burde be called 
þer-fore."
"I shunted once," says Gawayne, "but will no more.2280

Quod G;: "I schunt one3,
& so wyl I no more,
Bot pa3 my hede falle on þe stone3,
I con not hit restore.

XIII.

Bring me to the point; deal me my destiny at once."2284

Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, & bryng me to þe poyn3t,
Dele to me my destiné, & do hit out of honde,
For I schal stonde þe a strok, & start no more,
Til þyn ax haue me hitte, haf here my trawþe."
"Have at thee, then," says the other.2288

"Haf at þe þenne," quod þat óper, & heue3 hit alofte, 
& wayte3 as wroþely, as he wode were;
With that he aims at him a blow.

He mynte3 at hyrn ma3tyly, bot not þe mon ryue3,1
With-helde heterly h[i]s honde, er hit hurt my3t.
Gawayne never flinches, but stands as still as a stone.2292

Gawayn grayþely hit byde3, & glent with no membre,
Bot stode stytle as þe ston, óper a stubbe auþer,
Þat raþeled is in roche grounde, with rote3 a hundreth.

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"Now," says the Green Knight, "I must hit thee, since thy heart is whole." 2296

"So now þou hat3 þi hert holle, hitte me bihou[es];
Halde þe now þe hy3e hode, þat Arþur þe ra3t,
& kepe þy kanel at þis kest, 3if hit keuer may."
G: ful gryndelly with greme þenne sayde,

"Thrasch on," says the other. 2300

"Wy þresch on, þou þro mon, þou þrete3 to longe,
I hope þat þi hert ar3e wyth þyn awen seluen."
"For soþe," quod þat oþer freke, "so felly þou speke3,
I wyl no lenger on lyte lette þin ernde,
2304

ri3t nowe."
Then the Green Knight makes ready to strike.

Þenne tas he2 hym stryþe to stryke,
& frounes boþe lyppe & browe,
No meruayle þa3 hy3m myslyke,
2308

Þat hoped of no rescowe.
1? ryne3 = touches. 2 he he, in MS.

XIV.

He let fall his loom on the bare
He lyftes ly3tly his lome, & let hit doun fayre,
[Fol. 122.]

neck of Sir Gawayne.

With þe barbe of þe bitte bi þe bare nek
Þa3 he homered heterly, hurt hym no more,
2312

Bot snyrt hym on þat on syde, þat seuered þe hyde;
The sharp weapon pierced the flesh so that the blood flowed.

Þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þur3 þe schyre grece,
Þat þe schene blod over his schulderes schot to þe erpe.
When the knight saw the blood on the snow,

& quen þe burne se3 þe blode blenk on þe snawe,
2316
He sprit forth spenne fote more þen a spere lenþe,
Hent heterly his helme, & on his hed cast,
Schot with his schuldere his fayre schelde vnder,
    he unsheathed his sword, and thus spake:

Brayde3 out a bry3t sworde, & bremely he speke3;
2320

Neuer syn þat he wat3 burne borne of his moder,
Wat3 he neuer in þis worlde, wy3e half so blyþe:—
"Cease, man, of thy blow.

"Blynne, burne, of þy bur, bede me no mo;
I haf a stroke in þis sted with-oute stryf hent,
    If thou givest me any more, readily shall I requite thee.2324

& if þow reche3 me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,
& 3elde 3ederly a3ayn, & þer to 3e tryst,
    & foo;
    Our agreement stipulates only one stroke."

Bot on stroke here me falle3,
2328

Þe couenaunt schop ry3t so,
[Sikered]1 in Arþure3 halle3,
& þer-fore, hende, now hoo!"
1 Illegible.

XV.

The Green Knight rested on his axe,
The haþel heldet hym fro, & on his ax rested,
2332

Sette þe schaft vpon schore, & to be scharp lened,
    looked on Sir Gawayne, who appeared bold and fearless,

& loked to þe leude, þat on þe launde 3ede,
How þat do3ty dredles deruely þer stonde3,
Armed ful a3le3; in hert hit hym lyke3.
2336

þen he mele3 murly, wyth a much steuen,
    and addressed him as follows: "Bold knight, be not so wroth,
& wyth a r[a]ykande runde he to þe renk sayde,  
"Bolde burne, on þis bent be not so gryndel;  
No mon here vn-mannerly þe mys-boden habbe,  
  2340

Ne kyd, bot as couenaunde, at ky[n]ge3 kort schaped;  
  I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it, be satisfied.

I hyȝt þe a strok, & þou hit hat3, halde þe wel payed,  
I releece þe of þe remnaunt, of ryȝtes alle oþer;  
  3it1 I deliuer had bene, a boffet, paraunter,  
  I could have dealt worse with thee.2344

I couþe wroþeloker haf waret, [&] to þe haf wroȝt ang[er].2  
Fyrst I mansed þe muryly, with a mynt one,  
  I menaced thee with one blow for the covenant

& roue þe wyth no rof, sore with ryȝt I þe profered,  
  [Fol. 122b.]  
  between us on the first night.

For þe forwarde that we fest in þe fyrst nyȝt,  
  2348

& þou trystyly þe trawþe & trwly me halde3,  
Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon shulde;  
  Another I aimed at thee because thou kissedst my wife.

Þat oþer munt for þe morne, mon, I þe profered,  
Þou kyssedes my clere wyf, þe cosse3 me raȝte3,  
  2352

For boþe two here I þe bede bot two bare myntes,  
  boute scaþe;  
  A true man should restore truly, and then he need fear no harm.

Trwe mon trwe restore,  
Þenne þar mon drede no waþe;  
  Thou failedst at the third time, and therefore take thee that tap. (See l. 1861.)2356

At þe þrid þou fayled þore,  
& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.  
  1 uf, in MS. 2 This word is doubtful.

XVI.

For my weed (woven by my wife) thou wearest.
For hit is my wede þat þou were3, þat ilke wouen girdel,
Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel forsoþe;
   I know thy kisses and my wife's wooing.2360

Now know I wel þy cosses, & þy costes als,
& þe wowyng of my wyf, I wro3t hit myseluen;
   I sent her to try thee, and faultless I found thee.

I sende hir to asay þe, & sothly me þynkke3,
On þe fautlest freke, þat euer on fote 3ede;
   2364

As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,
So is Gawyn, in god fayth, bi ðer gay kny3te3.
   But yet thou sinnedst a little,

Bot here you lakked a lyttel, sir, & lewte yow wonted,
Bot þat wat3 for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
   for love of thy life."2368

Bot for 3e lufed yo3ur lyf, þe lasse I yow blame."
Pat oþer stif mon in study stod a gret whyle;
So agreuéd for grreme he gryed with-inne,
   Gawayne stands confounded.

Alle þe blode of his brest blende in his face,
   2372

Þat al he schrank for schome, þat þe schalk talked.
Þe forme worde vpon folde, þat þe freke meled,—
   "Cursed," he says, "be cowardice and covetousness both!"

"Corsed worth cowarddyse & couetyse boþe!
In yow is vylany & vyse, þat vertue disstrye3."  Then he takes off the girdle and throws it to the knight.2376

Þenne he ka3t to þe knot, & þe kest lawse3,
Brayde broþely þe belt to þe burne seluen:
"Lo! þer þe falssyng, foule mot hit falle!
   He curses his cowardice,

For care of þy knokke cowardyse me ta3t
   2380

To a-corde me with couetyse, my kynde to for-sake,
Þat is larges & lewte, þat longe3 to kny3te3.
   and confesses himself to have been guilty of untruth.
Now am I fawty, & falce, & ferde haf ben euer; 2384
Of trecherye & vn-trawþe boþe bityde sor3e

& care!
[Fol. 123.]

I bi-knowe yow, kny3t, here style,
Al fawty is my fare,
Lete3 me ouer-take your wylle,

& efle I schal be ware."

XVII.

Then the other, laughing, thus spoke:

Thenne lo3e þat oþer leude, & lufllyly sayde,
"I halde hit hardily' hole, þe harme þat I hade;
"Thou art confessed so clean,
Þou art confessed so clene, be-known of þy mysses,

& hat3 þe penaunce apert, of þe poyn[t] of myn egge,
that I hold thee as pure as if thou hadst never been guilty.

I halde þe polysed of þat ply3t, & pured as clene,
As þou hade3 neuer forfeted, syþen þou wat3 fyrst borne.
I give thee, sir, the gold-hemmed girdle,

& I gif þe, sir, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;

For hit is grene as my goune, sir G:, 3e maye
Þenk vpon þis ilke þrepe, þer þou forth þrynge3
Among prynces of prys, & þis a pure token
as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel.

Of þe chaunce of þe grene chapel, at cheualrous kny3te3;
Come again to my abode, and abide there for the remainder of the festival."2400

& 3e schal in þis nwe 3er a3ayn to my wone3,
& we schyn reuel þe remnauþt of þis ryche fest,
ful bene." Þer laþed hy3m fast þe lorde,
& sayde, "with my wyf, I wene,
We schal yow wel acorde,
Þat wat3 your enmy kene."
    1 hardlyly, in MS.

XVIII.

"Nay, forsooth," says Gawayne,
"Nay, for soþe," quod þe segge, & sesed hys helme,
2408

& hat3 hit of hendely, & þe haþel þonkke3,
"I have sojourned sadly, but bliss betide thee!
"I haf soiorned sadly, sele yow bytyde,
& he þe lede hit yow 3are, þat 3arkke3 al menskes!
Commend me to your comely wife and that other lady who have beguiled me.
& comaunde3 me to þat cortays, your comlych fere,
2412

Boþe þat on & þat oþer, myn honoured ladye3.
Þat þus hor kny3t wyth hor kest han koyntly bigyled.
    But it is no marvel for a man to be brought to grief through a woman's wiles.
Bot hit is no ferly, þa3 a fole madde,
& þur3 wyles of wymen be wonen to sor3e;
    Adam, Solomon, Samson, and David were beguiled by women.2416
For so wat3 Adam in erde with one bygyled,
& Salamon with þe lele sere, & Samson eft sone3,
Dalyda dalt hym hys wyrde, & Dauyth þer-æfter
Wat3 blended with Barsabe, þat much bale þoled.
    How could a man love them and believe them not?2420
Now þese were wrathed wyth her wyles, hit were a wymne huge,
To luf hom wel, & leue hem not, a leude þat couþe,
[Fol. 123b.]
For þes wer forne1 þe freest þat fol3ed alle þe sele,
Ex-ellently of alle þyse oþer, vnder heuen-ryche,
2424

þat mused;

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& alle þay were bi-wyled,
With wyynnemen þat þay vsed,
Though I be now beguiled, methinks I should be excused.

Þa3 I be now bigyled,
2428

Me þink me burde be excused."  
1 forme (?) 2 with wyth, in MS.

XIX.

But God reward you for your girdle.

"Bot your gordel," quod G: "God yow for-3elde!  
Þat wyl I welde wyth good wyle, not for þe wynn golde,
Ne þe saynt, ne þe sylk, ne þe syde pendaundes,
2432

For wele, ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk werkke3,
I will wear it in remembrance of my fault.

Bot in syngne of my surfet I schal se hit ofte;
When I ride in renown, remorde to myseluen
Þe faut & þe fayntyse of þe flesche crabbed,
2436

How tender hit is to entyse teches of fylþe;
And when pride shall prick me,
& þus, quen pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
a look to this lace shall abate it.

Þe loke to þis luf lace schal leþe my hert.  
Bot on I wolde yow pray, displeses yow neuer;
2440

Syn 3e be lorde of þe 3onde[r] londe, þer I haf lent inne,
Wyth yow wyth worschyp,—þe wyþe hit yow 3elde
Þat vp-halte3 þe heuen, & on hy3 sitte3,—
But tell me your right name and I shall have done."

How norne 3e yowre ry3t nome, & þenne no more?"
2444

"Pat schal I telle þe trwly," quod þat oþer þenne,
The Green Knight replies, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert, through might of Morgain la Fey, the pupil of Merlin.

"Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat in þis londe, Þur3 my3t of Morgne la Faye, þat in my hous lenges, & ^1 koynytse of clergye, bi craftes wel lerned, 2448

Þe maystres of Merlyn, mony ho^2 taken; For ho hat3 dalt drwry ful dere sum tyme, With þat conable klerk, þat knowes alle your kny3te3 at hame; 2452

Morgne þe goddes, Þer-fore hit is hir name; She can tame even the haughtiest.

Welde3 non so hy3e hawtesse, Þat ho ne con make ful tame. 1 in (?). 2 ho hat3 (?). XX.

It was she who caused me to test the renown of the Round Table,2456

Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to your wynne halle, For to assay þe surquidre, 3if hit soth were, Þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table; Ho wayned me þis wonder, your wytte3 to reue, [Fol. 124.]

hoping to grieve Guenever and cause her death through fear.2460

For to haf greued Gaynour, & gart hir to dy3e. With gopnyng^1 of þat ilke gomen, þat gostlych spaked, With his hede in his honde, bifore þe hy3e table. Þat is ho þat is at home, þe au3cian lady; She is even thine aun3t.2464

Ho is eu3n þyn aun3t, Arþure3 half suster, Þe duches do3ter of Tyntagelle, þat dere Vter after Therefore come to her and make merry in my house."

Hade Arþur vpon, þat aþel is nowþe. Þerfore I eþe þe, haþel, to com to þy nau3t, 2468
Make myry in my hous, my meny þe louies,
& I wol þe as wel, wy3e, bi my faythe,
As any gome vnder God, for þy grete traþe."

Gawayne refuses to return with the Green Knight.

& he nikked hym naye, he nolde bi no wayes;
2472

Þay acolen & kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer opðer
To þe prynce of paradise, & parten ry3t þere,
on cooîde;
On horse full fair he bends to Arthur's hall.

Gawayn on blonk ful bene,
2476

To þe kynges bur3 buske3 bolde,
& þe kny3t in þe enker grene,
Whider-warde so eu3r he wolde.
1 glopnyng (?).

XXI.

Wild ways now Gawayne rides.

Wylde waye3 in þe worlde Wowen now ryde3,
2480

On Gryngolet, þat þe græce hade geten of his lyue;
Oft he harboured in house and oft thereout.

Ofte he herbered in house, & ofte al þeroute,
& mony a-venture in vale, & venquyst ofte,
Þat I ne ty3t, at þis tyme, in tale to remene.
The wound in his neck became whole.2484

Þe hurt wat3 hole, þat he hade hent in his nek,
He still carried about him the belt,

& þe blykkande belt he bere þeraboute,
A belof as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde,
Loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace, with a knot,
in token of his fault.2488

In tokenyng he wat3 tane in tech of a faute;
Thus he comes to the Court of King Arthur.
& þus he commes to þe court, kny3t al in sounde.
Great then was the joy of all.

Þer wakned wele in þat wone, when wyst þe grete,
Þat gode G: wat3 commen, gayn hit hym þo3t;
The king and his knights ask him concerning his journey.2492

Þe kynng kysse3 þe kny3t, & þe whene alce,
& syþen mony syker kny3t, þat so3t hy3m to haylce,
Gawayne tells them of his adventures,

Of his fare þat hym frayned, & ferlyly he telles;
Biknowo3 alle þe costes of care þat he hade,—
2496

Þe chaunce of þe chapel, þe chere of þe kny3t,
[Fol. 124b.]
the love of the lady, and lastly of the lace.

Þe luf of þe ladi, þe lace at þe last.
Þe nirt in þe nek he naked hem schewed,
He showed them the cut in his neck.

Þat he la3t for his vnleute at þe leudes hondes,
2500

for blame;
He tened quen he schulde telle,
He groaned for grief and shame, and the blood rushed into his face.

He groned for gref & grame;
Þe blod in his face con melle,
2504

When he hit schulde schewe, for schame.

XXII.

"Lo!" says he, handling the lace, "this is the band of blame,

"Lo! lorde," quod þe leude, & þe lace hondeled,
"Þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere [in] my nek,
Þis is þe laþe & þe losse, þat I la3t haue,
a token of my cowardice and covetousness,2508

Of couardise & couetyse, þat I haf ca3t þare,
Þis is þe token of vn-trawlpe, þat I am tan innæ,
I must needs wear it as long as I live."

& I mot nede3 hit were, wyle I may last;
For non may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit,
    2512
For þer hit one3 is tachched, twyne wil hit neuer."
The king comforts the knight, and all the court too.

Þe kyng conforte3 þe kny3t, & alle þe court als,
La3en loude þer-at, & luflyly acorden,
ðat lordes & ladis, þat longed to þe Table,
    Each knight of the brotherhood agrees to wear a bright green belt,2516
Vche burne of þe broþer-hede a bauderyk schulde haue,
A bende, a belef hym aboute, of a bry3t grene,
    for Gawayne's sake,
& þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.
For þat wat3 acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table,
    who ever more honoured it.2520
& he honoured þat hit hade, euer-more after,
As hit is breued in þe best boke of romauence.
    Thus in Arthur's day this adventure befell.

Þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,
Þe Brutus bokees þer-of beres wyttenesse;
    2524
Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, bo3ed hider fyrst,
After þe segge & þe asaute wat3 sesed at Troye,
    I-wysse;
Mony auntere3 here bi-forne,
    2528
Haf fallen suche er þis:
     He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to His bliss!
Now þat bere þe croun of þorne,
     He bryng vus to his blysse! AMEN.

______________________________

NOTES.
Line 8  
Ricchis turns, goes,  
The king ...  
*Ricchis* his reynys and the Renke metys:  
Girden to gedur with þere grete speires.—T.B. l. 1232.

37  
*pis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse.*  
*Camalot,* in Malory's "Morte Arthure," is said to be the same as Winchester. Ritson supposes it to be *Caer-went,* in Monmouthshire, and afterwards confounded with *Caer-wynt,* or *Winchester.* But popular tradition here seems the best guide, which assigned the site of Camalot to the ruins of a castle on a hill, near the church of South Cadbury, in Somersetshire (Sir F. Madden).

65  
*Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte.*  
Christmas celebrated anew, mentioned full often.  
Sir F. Madden leaves the word *nayted* unexplained in his Glossary to "Syr Gawayne."

124  
syluener = syluern, i.e. silver dishes.

139  
lyndes = lendes, loins.

142  
in his muckel, in his greatness.

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

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

244-5  
*As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor lote3*
As all were fallen asleep so ceased their words
in haste (suddenly).

Sir F. Madden reads slaked horlote3, instead of slaked hor lote3, which, according to his
glossary, signifies drunken vagabonds. He evidently takes horlote3 to be another (and a
very uncommon) form of harlote3 = harlots. But harlot, or vagabond, would be a very
inappropriate term to apply to the noble Knights of the Round Table.
Moreover, slaked never, I think, means drunken. The general sense of the verb slake is to let
loose, lessen, cease. Cf. lines 411-2, where sloke, another form of slake, occurs with a
similar meaning:
— layt no fyrr; bot slokes.
— seek no further, but stop (cease).

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

286  Brayn. Mätzner suggests brayn-wod.

296  barlay = par loi. This word is exceedingly common in the T. Book (see l. 3391).
     I bid you now, barlay, with besines at all
     þat ye set you most soverainly my suster to gete.—T.B. l. 2780.

394  siker. Sir F. Madden reads swer.

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

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

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

629 & ay quere hit is *endele3*, etc.
And everywhere it is *endless*, etc.
Sir F. Madden reads *emdele3*, i.e. with equal sides.

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

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

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

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

957 *pat ober wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer be swyre*.
The *gorger* or *wimple* is stated first to have appeared in Edward the First's reign, and an example is found on the monument of Aveline, Countess of Lancaster, who died in 1269. From the poem, however, it would seem that the *gorger* was confined to elderly ladies (Sir F. Madden)

968 *More lykker-wys on to lyk,*
*Wat3 pat scho had on lode.*
A more pleasant one to like,
Was that (one) she had under her control.

988 *tayt* = lively, and hence pleasant, agreeable.
1015 \( \textit{in vayres}, \text{in purity.} \)

1020 \( \text{dut} = \text{dunt} (?) = \text{dint} (?) \), referring to \textit{sword-sports}.  

1022 \( \text{sayn[t]} \text{ lone3 day}. \) This is the 27th of December, and the last of the feast. Sometimes the Christmas festivities were prolonged to New Year's Day (Sir F. Madden).

1047 \( \text{derne dede} = \text{secret deed}. \) I would prefer to read \text{derue dede} = \text{great deed}. Cf. lines 558, 564.

1053 \( \text{I wot in worlde}, \text{etc.} = \text{I not} \text{ (I know not) in worlde}, \text{etc.} \)

1054 \( \text{I nolde, bot if I hit negh my3t on nw3eres morne,} \)
\( \text{For alle þe londe in-wyth Logres, etc.} \)
I would not [delay to set out], unless I might approach it on New Year's morn, for all the lands within England, etc.

1074 \( \text{in spenne} = \text{in space} = \text{in the interval} = \text{meanwhile}. \) See line 1503.

1160 \( \text{slentyg of arwes}. \) Sir F. Madden reads \textit{sleutyng}.  
"Of drawyn swordis \textit{sclentyn} to and fra,\)
\( \text{The brycht mettale, and othir armouris seir,} \)
\( \text{Quharon the sonnys blenkis betis cleir,} \)
\( \text{Glitteris and schane, and vnder bemys brycht,} \)
\( \text{Castis ane new twynklyng or a lemand lycht.}" \)
\( \text{(G. Douglas' Æneid, Vol. i, p. 421.)} \)

1281 \( \text{let lyk} = \text{appeared pleased.} \)
Pa3 I were burde bry3test, pe burde in mynde hade, etc.
The sense requires us to read:
Pa3 ho were burde bry3test, pe burne in mynde hade, etc.
i.e., Though she were lady fairest, the knight in mind had, etc.

Long sythen [seuered] for þe sounder þat wi3t for-olde
Long since separated from the sounder or herd that fierce (one) for-aged (grew very old).
"Now to speke of the boore, the fyrste year he is
A pygge of the sounder callyd, as haue I blys;
The secounde yere an hogge, and soo shall he be,
And an hoggestere, whan he is of yeres thre;
And when he is foure yere, a boor shall he be,
From the sounder of the swyne thenne departyth he;
A synguler is he soo, for alone he woll go."
(Book of St. Alban's, ed. 1496, sig. d., i.)

totes = looks, toots.
Sho went up wightly by a walle syde.
To the toppe of a toure and tot ouer the water.—T.B. l. 862.

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

fnasted, breathed.
These balfull bestes were, as the boke tellus,
Full flaumond of fyre with fnastyng of logh.—T.B. l. 168.

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

bi lag = be-lagh(?) = below (?).
1719 Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list, etc.
Should we not read:
Thenne wat3 hit list vpon lif, etc.
i.e., Then was there joy in life, etc.

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

1869 Ho hat3 kyst þe kny3t so to3t.
She has kissed the knight so courteous.
Sir F. Madden explains to3t, promptly. To3t seems to be the same as the
Northumbrian taght in the following extract from the "Morte Arthure":
"There come in at the fyrste course, before the kyng seluene,
Bare hevedys that ware bryghte, burnyste with sylver,
Alle with taghte mene and towne in togers fulle ryche."—(p. 15.)
The word towne (well-behaved) still exists in wan-ton, the original meaning of which was ill-
mannered, ill-bred.

1909 bray hounde3 = brap hounde3, i.e. fierce hounds.

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

2160 gedere3 þe rake = takes the path or way.

2167 Pe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued hym þo3t.
The shadows of the hills appeared wild (desolate) to him. Sir F. Madden reads skayned, of
which he gives no explanation. Skayued = skayfed, seems to be the N. Prov. English scafe,
wild. Scotch schaivie, wild, mad. O.N.skeifr. Sw. skef, awry, distorted.

2204 ronge = clattered.
2211  *Drede dot3 me no lote =*  
No noise shall cause me to dread (fear).

2357  *& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.*  
And therefore take thee that tap.  
*ta þe = take thee.*  
Sir F. Madden reads *tape = taketh.*  
See l. 413, where *to be* rhymes with *sothe.*  
We have no imperatives in *th* in this poem.

2401  *We schyn reuel, etc.*  
Sir F. Madden reads *wasch yn reuel.*  
But *schyn = shall.*  
See Glossary to "Alliterative Poems."

2474  *on-coolde = on-colde = coldly = sorrowfully.*

2489  *in-sounde = soundly, well.*  
Cf. *in-blande = together; in-lyche, alike; inmydde3, amidst.*