

SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNY3T.

[FYTTE THE FIRST.]

I.

[Fol. 91a.]

After the siege of Troy

Siþen þe sege & þe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye,
þe bor3 brittened & brent to bronde3 & aske3,
þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wro3t,

4

Wat3 tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe;
Hit wat3 Ennias þe athel, & his highe kynde,
þat siþen deprecd *prouinces*, & *patrounes* bicom
Welne3e of al þe wele *in* þe west iles,

Romulus built Rome, 8

Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis *hym* swyþe,
With gret bobbaunce þat bur3e he biges vpon fyrst,
& neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
Ticius to Tuskan [turnes,] & teldes bigynnes;

12

Langaberde *in* *Lumbardie* lyftes vp homes;

and Felix Brutus founded Britain,

& fer ouer þe French flod *Felix Brutus*
On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he sette3,
wyth wyne;

a land of war and wonder, 16

Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,

Bi syþe3 hat3 wont þer-*inne*,

and oft of bliss and blunder.

& oft boþe blysse & blunder

Ful skete hat3 skyfted synne.

II.

20

Ande quen þis Bretayn wat3 bigged bi þis burn rych,

Bold men increased in the Land,

Bolde bredden þer-*inne*, baret þat lofden,

In mony turned tyme tene þat wro3ten;

Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft

and many marvels happened. 24

Pen 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

Pat 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 toun* herde,

32

with tonge;

As hit is stad & stoken,

In stori stif & stronge,

With lel letteres loken,

36

In londe so hat3 ben longe.

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 *mē*þes;

Per tournayed tulkes bi-tyme3 ful mony,

Iusted ful Iolilé þise gentyle kni3tes,

Syþen 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* coupe a-vyse;

Such glaumande gle glorious to here,

Dere dyn vp-on day, daunsyng on ny3tes,

All was joy in hall and chamber, 48

Al wat3 hap vpon he3e *in* halle3 & chambre3,

With lorde3 & ladies, as leuest *him* þo3t;

With all þe wele of þe worlde þay woned *þer* samen,

among brave knights and lovely ladies,

Þe most kyd kny3te3 vnder kryste seluen,

52

& þe louelokkest ladies þat *euer* lif haden,

& he þe comlokest kyng þat þe court haldes;

For al wat3 þis fayre folk *in* her first age,

on sille;

the happiest under heaven. 56

Þe hapnest vnder heuen,

Kyng hy3est *mon* of wylle,

Hit were¹ now gret nye to neuen
So hardy a here *on* hille.

¹ MS. werere.

IV.

They celebrate the New Year with great joy. 60

Wyle nw 3er wat3 so 3ep þat hit wat3 nwe cummen,
þat day double on þe dece wat3 þe douth serued,
Fro þe kyng wat3 cummen *with kny3tes in* to þe halle,
þe chauntre of þe chapel cheued to an ende;

64

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

Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte;
& syþen riche forth runnen to reche honde-selle,

Gifts are demanded and bestowed.

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

68

Debated busyly aboute þo giftes;
Ladies la3ed ful loude, þo3 þay lost haden,
& he þat wan wat3 not wrothe, þat may 3e wel trawe.

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-noghe*,
þat were enbrawdred & 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 sit 88

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* auenturus þyng an vncouþe tale,
Of *sum* mayn meruayle, þat he my3t trawe,
Of¹ alderes, of armes, of oþer auenturus,

96

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

100

þis wat3 [þe] kynges countenaunce where he in court were,
At vch farand fest among his fre meny,

[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 grayþed, Gwenore bisyde

Agravayn,

& Agraunayn 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 *hym*-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 trumpes,
Wyth mony baner ful bry3t, þat þer-bi hinged,
Nwe nakryn noyse *with* þe noble pipes,
Wylde werbles & wy3t wakned lote,

120

Pat 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,
Pat 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
Per 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 veh wy3e may wel wit no wont þat þer were;

Scarcely had the first course commenced, 132

An oþer noyse ful newe ne3ed biliue,
Pat þe lude my3t haf leue lif-lode to cach.
For vneþe wat3 þe noyce not a whyle sesed,
& þe fyrst *course in þe court* kyndely serued,

when there rushes in at the hall-door a knight; 136

Per hales *in* at þe halle dor an aghlich mayster,
On þe most on þe molde on mesure hyghe;
Fro þe swyre to þe swange so sware & so þik,

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 mynn *hym* to bene,
& þat þe myriest *in* his muckel þat my3t ride;

His back and breast were great,

For of bak & of brest al were his bodi sturne,

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 semblaunt sene;
He ferde as freke were fade,
& ouer-al enker grene.

VIII.

He was clothed entirely in green.

Ande al grayþed *in* grene þis gome & his wedes,

152

A strayt cote ful stre3t, þat stek on his sides,
A mere mantile abof, mensked *with-inne*,
With pelure pured apert þe pane ful clene,
With blyþe blaunner ful bry3t, & his hod boþe,

156

Pat wat3 la3t fro his lokke3, & layde on his schulderes
Heme wel haled, hose of þat same grene,

His spurs were of bright gold.

Pat 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,
Pat were richely rayled *in* his aray clene,

His saddle was embroidered with birds and flies. 164

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

168

Þe pendauntes of his payttrure, þe proude cropure
His molaynes, & alle þe metail anamayld was þenne
Þe steropes þat he stod on, stayned of þe same,
& his arsoun3 al after, & his aþel sturtes,

172

Pat euer glemæred¹ & 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 gret & 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 busk ouer his brest henges,

Pat wyth his hi3lich here, þat of his hed reches,

184

Wat3 eused al vmbe-torne, a-bof his elbowes,

Pat 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 & cemmed 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 toppyng twynnen of a sute,

192

& bounden boþe wyth a bande of a bry3t grene,

Dubbed wyth ful dere stone3, as þe dok lasted,

Syþen þrawen wyth a þwong a þwarle knot alofte,

Per 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 neuer sene *in* þat sale wyth sy3t er þat tyme,

with y3e;

He loked as layt so ly3t,

200

So sayd al þat hym sy3e,

It seemed that no man might endure his dints.

Hit semed as no mon my3t,

Vnder his dyntte3 dry3e.

¹ as as, in MS.

X.

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,
Pat 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, *with* a brod egge,
As wel schapen to schere as scharp rasores;
þe stele of a stif staf þe sturne hit bi-grypte,
[Fol. 94.]

Pat wat³ wounden wyth yrn to þe wande³ ende,
and the handle was encased in iron, curiously "graven with green, in gracious works." 216

& al bigrauen *with* grene, *in gracios*¹ werkes;
A lace lapped aboute, þat louked at þe hede,
& so after þe halme halched ful ofte,
Wyth tryed tassele³ þerto tacched *in-noghe*,

Thus arrayed the Green Knight enters the hall, 220

On botoun³ of þe bry³t grene brayden ful ryche.
þis habel helde³ *hym in*, & þe halle entres,
Driuande to þe he³e dece, dut he no woþe,
without saluting any one.

Haylsed he neu^{er} one, bot he³e he ou^{er} 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 kny³te³ he kest his y³e,
& reled *hym* vp & down,
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 horse 232
Ther wat³ lokyng on lenþe, þe lude to be-holde,

For vch *mon* had meruayle quat hit mene my3t,
Pat a hapel & a horse my3t such a hwe lach,
as green as grass.

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

Pen grene aumayl on golde lowande bry3ter;
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,

Ðer-fore to answare wat3 ar3e mony apel 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 bifore þe hi3 dece þat auenture byholde3,
& rekenly hym reuerenced, for rad was he neuer,
252

& sayde, "wy3e, welcum iwys to þis place,

[Fol. 94b.]
bids him welcome, and invites him to stay awhile.

Þe hede of þis ostel Arthour I hat,
Li3t luflych adoun, & lenge, I þe praye,
& quat so þy wylle is, we schal wyt after."

The knight says that he will not tarry. 256

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

Stifest vnder stel-gere on stedes to ryde,

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 founded *in* fere, *in* fe3tyng wyse,
At home, however, he has both shield and spear. 268

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

Bot if þou be so bold as alle burne3 tellen,
Þou wyl grant me godly þe gomen þat I ask,
bi ry3t."

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

Arthour con onsware,
276

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

XIII.

"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 lykess,
[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,
Elle3 þou wyl di3t me þe dom to dele hym an oþer,
296

barlay;
& 3et gif hym respite,
within a twelvemonth and a day."
A twelmonyth & a day;—
Now hy3e, & let se tite
300

Dar any her-inne o3t say."

¹ MS. fo.

XIV.

Fear kept all silent.
If he hem stowned vpon fyrst, stiller were þanne
Alle þe hered-men in halle, þe hy3 & þe lo3e;
The knight rolled his red eyes about,
Þe renk on his rounce hym ruced in his sadel,
304
& runisch-ly his rede y3en he reled aboute,
and bent his bristly green brows.
Bende his bresed bro3e3, bly-cande grene,
Waving his beard awhile, he exclaimed:
Wayued his berde for to wayte quo-so wolde ryse.
When non wolde kepe hym with carp he co3ed ful hy3e,
308

Ande rimed hym ful richley, & ry3t hym to speke:
"What! is this Arthur's court?"
"What, is þis Arþures hous," quod þe hapel þenne,
"Þat al þe rous rennes of, þur3 ryalmes so mony?
Where is now your sourquydrye & your conquestes,
312

Your gry[n]del-layk, & your greme, & your grete wordes?
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!"
316

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,
320

So did alle þat þer were

Þe kyng 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, "hæpel, by heuen þyn askyng is nys,
324

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

[Fol. 95b.] 328

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 sture3 hit aboute, þat stryke wyth hit þo3t.
332

Þe stif mon hym bifore stod vpon hy3t,
Herre þen ani in þe hous by þe hede & more;

The knight, stroking his beard, awaits the blow, and with a "dry countenance" draws down his coat.

Wyth sturne schere¹ þer he stod, he stroked his berde,
& wyth a countenaunce dry3e he dro3 down his cote,
336

No more mate ne dismayd for hys mayn dinte3,
Þen any burne vpon bench hade bro3t 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 kyng he can enclyne,
"I be-seche now *with* sa3e3 sene,
Þis melly mot be myne."

¹ chere (?).

XVI.

"Wolde 3e, worpilych lorde," *quod* Gawan to þe kyng,

He asks permission to leave the table; he says, 344

"Bid me bo3e fro þis benche, & stonde by yow þere,
Þat I wyth-oute vylanye my3t voyde þis table,
& þat my legge lady lyked not ille,
I wolde com to *your* counseyl, bifore *your* cort ryche.

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

For me þink hit not semly, as hit is soþ knawen,

Per such an askyng is heuened so hy3e *in your* sale,
Pa33e 3our-self be talenttyf to take hit to *your*-seluen,
while so many bold ones sit upon bench.

Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten,
352

Pat vnder heuen, I hope, non ha3er er of wylle,
Ne better 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 bounté bot *your* blod I in my bodé knowe;
& syþen þis note is so nys, þat no3t hit yow falles,
& I haue frayned hit at yow fyrst, folde3 hit to me,
360

& if I carp not comlyly, let alle þis cort rych,
bout blame."

The nobles entreat Arthur to "give Gawayne the game."

Ryche to-geder con roun,
& syþen þay redder alle same,
364

To ryd þe kyng wyth croun,
& gif Gawan þe game.

XVII.

[Fol. 96.]

þen comaunded þe kyng þe kny3t for to ryse;
& he ful radly vp ros, & ruchched hym fayre,
The king gives his nephew his weapon, 368

Kneled down bifore þe kyng, & cache3 þat weppen;
& he luflyly hit hym laft, & lyfte vp his honde,
& gef hym godde3 blessyng, & gladly hym biddes
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 after.

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, hapel, how þat þou hattes,
380

Pat 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 kny3t, "Gawan I hatte,
Pat bede þe þis buffet, quat-so bi-falle3 after,
& at þis tyme twelmonyth take at þe anoþer,

384

Wyth what weppen so¹ þou wylt, & wyth no wy3 elle3,
on lyue."

Pat oþer on-sware3 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 kny3t, "*sir* Gawan, melykes,
Pat I schal fange at þy fust þat I haf frayst here;

392

& þou hat3 redily rehersed, bi resoun ful trwe,
Clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kynge asked,
Saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawþe,
Pat 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 douþe ryche."

"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 wro3t,

400

Ne I know not þe, kny3t, 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 trawep."

404

"Pat is in-nogh in nwe 3er, hit nedes no more,"

Quod þe gome 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 smopely hat3 smyten, smartly I þe teche

408

Of my hous, & my home, & myn owen nome,

Ben 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,

412

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,"

416

Quod Gawan; his ax he strokes.

XIX.

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.

420

Let þe naked nec to þe note schewe.

Gauan gripped to his ax, & gederes hit on hy3t,

þe kay fot on þe folde he be-fore sette,

Sir Gawayne lets fall his axe

Let hit doun ly3tly ly3t on þe naked,

424

þat þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones,

and severs the head from the body.

& schrank þur3 þe schyire grece, & scade hit in twynne,

þat 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 lufly hed, & lyft hit vp sone;

& syþen 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.]

Pat vgly bodi þat bledde,

Moni on of hym had doute,

Bi þat his resoun³ were redde.

¹ MS. ho. ² blunk (?).

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 hadde³,

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 knowen me mony;

Fail thou never;

For-þi me forto fynde if þou frayste³, fayle³ þou neuer,

come, or recreant be called." 456

Per-fore com, oþer recreaunt be calde þe be-houeus."

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,

Pat þe fyr of þe flynt fla³e fro fole houes.

460

To quat kyth he be-com, knwe non þere,

Neuermore þen þay wyste fram queþen he wat³ women;
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:

Pa3 Arþer þe hende kyng at hert hade wonder,
468

He let no semblaunt be sene, bot sayde ful hy3e
To þe comlych quene, wyth cortays speche,

"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 la3e & to syng.
Among þise, kynde caroles of kny3te3 & 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 hat3 *in-nogh* hewen."
[Fol. 97b.]

& hit wat3 don abof þe dece, on doser to henge,
Per alle men for *meruayl* my3t 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.
Penne þay bo3ed to a borde þise burnes to-geder,
þe kyng & þe gode kny3t, & kene men *hem* serued
Of alle daynty3 double, as derrest my3t falle,
484

Wyth alle maner of mete & mynstralcie boþe;
Wyth wele walt þay þat day, til worþed an ende,
in londe.

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.