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TRISTRANT

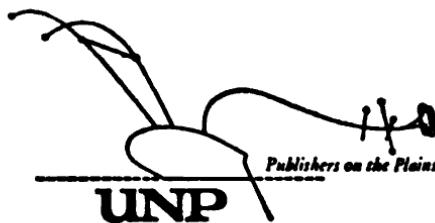
Tristrant

EILHART VON OBERGE'S
= *Tristrant*

TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY
J. W. Thomas

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PREFACE

Of the six major versions of the *Tristfan* story which were composed during the century following its first appearance only the *Tristrant* of Eilhart von Oberge has not been available in English. This is the more surprising since it is the redaction which, according to most scholars, is closest to the lost original and is the only one from the twelfth century that is complete. It is a lively adventure story, seasoned with light humor, but with an undercurrent of sombre implications with regard to man and his fate. One may hope that both the needs of Tristan scholarship and the pleasure of the lay reader will be served by its translation.

I wish to thank the University of Kentucky for a sabbatical leave to complete the project, the staffs of the libraries of the University of Munich and the State of Bavaria for their generous assistance, and my wife, Lina, for her long hours of proofreading.

J. W. THOMAS

INTRODUCTION

Author and Text

Composed some time between 1170 and 1190, the *Tristrant* of Eilhart von Oberge is the earliest complete account of the tragic love story of Tristan and Isolde and the version which, according to many scholars, most closely resembles the lost original.¹ As such, it is an invaluable reference point for all studies of the medieval Tristan material: its origins, as well as its widespread literary exploitation during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, Eilhart's epic poem is also important in its own right and was popular in Germany for some five hundred years, inspiring various works of plastic arts as well as of literature.

We know *Tristrant* through three early manuscripts, three late ones, a Czech translation, and a chapbook. The early manuscripts are from the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century and are fragmentary, containing in all only 1,075 (85 overlapping) verses, or slightly more than one-tenth of the complete work. The later manuscripts, the translation, and the chapbook are all of the fifteenth century, although based on much earlier, presumably thirteenth-century, sources. Two of the later manuscripts are complete, while the third uses Eilhart's version only to fill out the unfinished portion of that of his younger contemporary, Gottfried von Strassburg. The Czech translation appears in almost identical form in two manuscripts and is complete, although three

sections (making up almost half) follow Gottfried and a redaction by Heinrich von Freiberg rather than Eilhart. The chapbook gives the story in prose. All variants of *Tristrant*, including the early ones, are corrupted to the extent that it is impossible to reproduce the exact language of the original, but at the same time there is close agreement with regard to plot, general spirit, and style. One can therefore gain a reliable general acquaintance with the story as Eilhart told it, even though minor details may have been altered.²

The threads which connect the author of *Tristrant* with a historical person are few and tenuous: one of the fifteenth-century manuscripts cites a "von Hobergin her Eylhart" as the poet; ten documents (1189–1207) contain the name of an "Eilardus de Oberg" as a witness and indicate that he was a vassal of Duke Heinrich the Lion; and the manuscripts contain traces of Low German, such as was spoken at the court of Braunschweig and at Oberg, some ten miles to the west. The scholars who identify the author with the Braunschweig nobleman remind us that Heinrich's second wife, Mathilde, was the daughter of Henry II of England and that famous patron of the arts, Eleanore of Aquitaine. They suggest that Mathilde may have brought a French version of the Tristan story with her when she came to Braunschweig and commissioned Eilhart to put it into German verse, or that Eilhart may have accompanied the duke to England, when he was banished, and learned the story there. Other scholars do not accept the Eilardus of the documents as the poet, for various reasons, chief of which is their feeling that the first courtly epic in German must have been composed at a well-known literary center, such as the Wartburg, in Thuringia, and certain courts of the Middle and Lower Rhine area. It has also been suggested that the Eilhart of the manuscript was not the original German poet at all, but a redactor of the early thirteenth century. The majority of scholars, however, believes the Eilhart of the manuscript to be the original poet and identical with the Eilhart of the documents. Nevertheless, some of this group do maintain that, although he may have been born at Oberg and served on occasion at Heinrich's court, he composed *Tristrant* somewhere else. The language of the manuscripts, even the early ones, is of little help in resolving the controversy as to

where the poet lived because of their linguistic corruption and because he may have composed in a normalized Middle German or High German rather than in a specific dialect.³

Scholarly opinion is as divided about the date of composition of *Tristrant* as about the identity of the author and the place where it was written. Those who judge strictly by internal evidence—in this case the most reliable method—point to characteristics of pre-courtly style and the frequent use of assonance instead of pure rhyme and agree on a date of about 1170. Another and smaller group prefers a later date and gives one or more of the following reasons: the Eilhart of the documents first appears with his father, which indicates that he was a young man at the time (1189); Chrétien de Troyes refers repeatedly to Tristan and Isolde in his *Erec*, but Hartmann von Aue in his redaction of the work (about 1190) does not, which means that Hartmann did not know any Tristan story when he was writing it; the monologue of Isalde in *Tristrant* when she has just drunk the love potion resembles one of Lavina's in Heinrich von der Veldeke's *Eneit* (completed about 1185) and must have been borrowed from it. Of these grounds for giving *Tristrant* a later date (1185–90), only that dealing with the Isalde monologue deserves serious consideration, which it has frequently received.⁴ Unfortunately, however, the many discussions have only shown how difficult it is to determine who was the borrower and who the lender when the relative chronology is unknown. The dispute has thus far produced not two, but five different conclusions: (1) *Eneit* is the older work, and Eilhart borrowed from it; (2) *Tristrant* was written first, but a later redactor interpolated an adaptation of passages from *Eneit*; (3) *Tristrant* was written first and influenced Lavina's monologue; (4) there was no borrowing or lending between *Tristrant* and *Eneit*, for the similarities result from an exchange between Eilhart's unknown source and the *Roman d'Enéas*, which was Heinrich's model; (5) there was no exchange on any level, and resemblances between the monologues can be explained by the similarity in the situations of the two heroines and by the prevailing poetic language of love.

The chronological relationship between *Tristrant* and *Eneit* is of considerable significance with respect to the position of the former work in medieval German literature. If Eilhart

wrote before Veldeke—which, all things considered, is most likely—he was an innovator in style, language, and manners, as well as in subject matter. If he wrote after Veldeke, he was outside the mainstream of literary development, presenting his new material in archaic dress. In any event, one can hardly consider a date of composition for *Tristrant* of later than 1190 because both language and script of the early manuscripts are characteristic of the twelfth century.

Eilhart mentions no authors or works by name in his epic, but he does exhibit characteristics of style which resemble those of a number of earlier German writings—*Annolied*, *Kaiserchronik*, *Rolandslied*, and Lamprecht's *Alexanderlied*—and it is assumed that he was influenced by them in a general way. His chief source, however, appears to have been a lost French work which some scholars believe was the earliest written account of the Tristan story and others say was a redaction of this original. The author may have been Chrétien; an otherwise unknown trouvère called La Chèvre; or a third, completely anonymous poet.⁵ It is generally held that Eilhart's source, if not the original work, was very similar to it.

Theme

The account of the most famous lovers of the medieval period has lent itself to greatly differing literary treatments. Even the three earliest versions use the material in quite distinctive and dissimilar ways. Thomas concentrates on the erotic passion itself and the psychological reactions to it of educated and sophisticated members of courtly society. Béroul, on the other hand, tells an uncomplicated adventure story which turns about a feud between Tristan and certain noblemen of the court and employs the love affair primarily as a device to expose the former to danger and intrigue. Eilhart presents a classic tale of a hero's struggle against his fate, always emphasizing the desperate, though sometimes comic, situation of a strong and resourceful man confronted by an enigmatic force which seems bent on his destruction. Where Thomas is

careful to motivate the action and reveal the underlying reasons for emotions and behavior, Eilhart just as consciously points to the irrational or at least inexplicable nature of existence, the working of what might be called either destiny or pure chance. Where Béroul's antagonists are well defined and thoroughly evil, those in *Tristrant* change from episode to episode, and the hero is as likely to be endangered by his friends as by his enemies. Eilhart's version is usually considered the most primitive, which in many respects it is, however its basic assumption—that the course of human events is intrinsically inscrutable—is sufficiently modern to have permeated much of contemporary literature.

Eilhart develops his theme of Tristrant and fate by means of a variety of devices: the repeated use of certain irrational forces to direct the action; frequent references to luck, chance, and destiny; the exploitation of highly paradoxical and ironical situations; and the employment of quite unlikely, but still possible, coincidence. These devices at first produce something of a fairy-tale atmosphere and later perhaps a feeling that the author is manipulating his plot in a rather capricious manner. However, the reader is soon aware that what seemed arbitrary and whimsical is in fact the working of a fate whose intervention in Tristrant's affairs becomes more and more consistent, if not predictable.

The two chief instruments of fate are the sea and the love potion, which are also used as symbols: the sea as the outer, the potion as the inner necessity which determines the hero's destiny. Tristrant was born aboard ship, or rather, it was there that he was cut from his dead mother's womb. In his characteristically terse manner Eilhart does not give the exact cause of death, but does imply that the sea was to blame: perhaps with motion sickness inducing premature labor. The Cae-sarian birth, of course, presages great deeds; that it should occur aboard ship foreshadows the important role the sea was to play in his life. The death of Blankeflur anticipates the seasickness of Isalde, which eventually led also to her death. Tristrant's second voyage—the journey from his homeland of Lohenois to Cornwall—is uneventful, but significant, for it marks the beginning of the heroic life prophesied by the abnormal birth.

The first great exploit is the battle with Morolt, which evokes the first three of many allusions to what may be translated as chance, luck, or fate (*heil*, *unheil*, *gelucke*, *un-gelucke*). When Kurneaval tries to dissuade Tristrant from the undertaking, the latter says, "We could be lucky and win both wealth and honor;" later a Cornish nobleman tells the hero that Morolt will certainly defeat whoever opposes him, and the youth replies, "I'll leave that to chance;" finally Mark's council accepts him as their champion, thinking "that they would leave the victory to fate." It is clear that Tristrant associates chance or fate with the sea, for when he arrives on the small island which is to be the battleground, he at once pushes Morolt's boat away from shore. This symbolic act proves prophetic because soon afterwards Morolt dies of his wounds at sea. The defeat of the huge and powerful veteran by the totally inexperienced youth is clearly an intervention of a supernatural force and was foreshadowed by the references to luck, chance, and fate.

When it becomes apparent that Tristrant's own wound will not heal, he has himself placed in a small boat, which drifts out into the sea, rudderless and completely at the mercy of wind and wave. This picture of a man and his destiny was a literary commonplace in the Middle Ages, and it is obvious that Tristrant is consciously placing himself in the hands of fate. The winds blow him to Ireland, a place of great danger for him as the slayer of its national hero, but also the only place where he can be cured. One begins to wonder whether it is the intent of fate to destroy Tristrant, who after all escapes through his own shrewdness, or save him. And the question as to the nature of this intervening force—malign, benevolent, or indifferent—is never fully resolved. After three voyages, Tristrant returns to Cornwall at the end of exactly a year, the very day on which Kurneaval, according to his lord's orders, was to cease waiting for him and go back to Lohenois. Since winds and waves—the primary factors in determining the length of his absence—have already affected the course of the story in a decisive manner, this "coincidence" reinforces the concept of the sea as a symbol of fate.

Not long afterward Mark sees two swallows fight and let fall a long, beautiful strand of woman's hair. The birds are readily seen as additional instruments of fate, just as in retrospect their struggle appears to be a foreshadowing of the conflict of Mark and Tristrant over Isalde. Mark declares that he will marry only the owner of the hair, and his nephew sets out to find her. This time he is in good health, has a full crew and a rich cargo, and is accompanied by a hundred knights. Still, although determined to avoid Ireland at any cost, he is driven to the very spot at which he had arrived as a helpless invalid, where once more both danger and success wait. The symbolism of the sea as fate is further strengthened, and the conflict between Tristrant and his destiny comes into the open, for, at least on a superficial level, it is his own heroic deed, the killing of the dragon, which saves his life, makes his search successful, and postpones catastrophe. The episode of the beautiful hair and the random search has exposed Eilhart to criticism from his own day to the present for what some have considered a wanton disregard for probability, but unjustly so.⁶ For it is neither carelessness nor naïveté, but the deliberate construction of a metaphysical framework which gives universality to the situation of the hero.

The most important effect of the sea on the story takes place during the return voyage, while Tristrant is bringing Isalde to Cornwall to be Mark's bride. When she gets seasick and the journey is interrupted so that she may recuperate in a harbor, a fatal chain of events is initiated. Brangene goes for a walk along the shore, leaving the love potion unguarded when Tristrant comes to Isalde's cabin to ask if she is ready to continue the journey. It is a hot day, and he asks that wine be brought for him and Isalde. A girl brings the potion, they drink, and destiny in a new form takes control of their lives. Distressed by his sudden passion, Tristrant leaves abruptly, and the confused and frightened Isalde pours forth a lengthy and eloquent protest to a personified Lady Love for having so violently taken possession of her. This monologue is the focal point of the entire work, not because it is a love story—which, of course, it is—but because Lady Love herself is merely a

representative of the destiny which is formed by inner compulsions. It is both interesting and effective that Eilhart should place his lament against an inexorable fate at the point where the tragic situation emerges, rather than at its final resolution, and that he should put it in the mouth of the heroine, rather than that of the narrator. Brangene knows Tristrant and Isalde will die if they do not become lovers and enlists the aid of Kurneval to bring this about. "I'll leave it all to fate," she says. Outer fate has caused them to become subject to an inner fate in a manner quite consistent with modern determinism. From now on the sea, though retaining its symbolic quality, is less of a directing force, and the potion takes over. Its power is such that for four years hero and heroine must remain together or die, and after that period they will still love each other for the rest of their lives.

Most of the episodes which follow are accounts of Tristrant's struggles for life. He knows the power of the potion is irresistible, accepts this fact completely, and is not troubled by feelings of guilt at deceiving Mark. The narrator is also not concerned with the deception—he is no moralist—and his frequent condemnations of the potion are essentially a refrain, a reminder that his hero is caught up in a battle with fate. The potion, like the sea, is ambiguous. Although it is a constant and consistent threat to Tristrant's life, it is also his chief source of happiness. He cannot withstand it directly, but can only make every effort to extricate himself from the perilous situations into which it draws him. He succeeds at times by cleverness, boldness, and the help of friends, at times by the intervention of an opposing and more favorable fortune. His wit saves him in the humorous scene by the linden, and his great strength and daring enable him to leap safely from the chapel, but it is purely by chance (1. 4161: *von geschichte*)⁷ that he then encounters Kurneval with his horse and sword. The narrator does not know why Tristrant placed his bare sword between Isalde and himself while they slept in the wilderness, but it proved very fortunate for him (1.4593: *quam im doch zu heile*). When his coat tears at the athletic contest and compromises his disguise, it is only luck that preserves him (1. 7834: *von gelucke he abir genas*), as was the case when a piece

of the spear Antret throws at him serves as the means of his escape (1. 8306: *daz was ouch sîn gelucke*), and he would not have evaded the nationwide search that followed if he hadn't been lucky (1. 8677: *wen daz es gelucke wîlt*).

Other intrusions of an irrational or superhuman power are suggested by the pronounced irony of certain episodes. One is that in which Tinas, one of Tristrant's best friends, brings the dwarf, his most dangerous enemy, back to the court, where he almost causes the hero's execution. Another occurs at the end of the second war against Count Riele, when Tristrant, the shrewd and skillful general, is permanently disfigured and nearly killed because, quite inexplicably, he neglects to put on his helmet in a minor attack on a tower and is felled by a stone. And much of Tristrant's last adventure is pervaded by a fateful irony, which is seen especially in the fact that the hero receives his mortal wound neither in a great struggle against a national enemy such as Morolt, the dragon, or Count Riele's army, nor as a result of his overwhelming passion for Isalde, but merely as a helper in a petty and transient affair which is essentially a parody of his own deep and lasting love. Fortune turns against him in a series of seemingly chance events: Kehenis's hat blows into Nampetenis's moat; Tristrant forgets the telltale darts in the wall; and the two exhaust their horses in an accidental encounter with a deer which, as bad luck would have it, they couldn't catch (11. 9118–19: *von gelucke ez muste geschîn, daz sie ez nicht enmochtin vân*).

In the skirmish which follows, Kehenis is killed and Tristrant is again wounded by a poisoned spear. When the ship bringing Isalde to heal him is sighted, he asks his wife the color of the sail. She says it is black—meaning that Isalde is not coming—and in despair he lies back and dies. Her words came not from malice or jealousy, it was simply a foolish lie which she instantly regretted, an inexplicable instrument of an inscrutable fate. Eilhart has been censured for not having the falsehood spring from jealousy as Thomas does, but such criticism ignores the fundamental differences between their works.

The final, devastating revelation of the enigmatic nature of the forces which determine Tristrant's destiny is contained in

the lament of King Mark at the death of the lovers. "I would gladly have treated Queen Isalde and my nephew kindly, so that the knight would have stayed with me always," he says sadly, "It was very foolish of them not to tell me that they had drunk the fatal potion." So it was, and their stratagems, sorrow, heroism, and deaths were all unnecessary, but quite believable, for that's how life is. However, the author does not end his story there. Cautiously, even somewhat dubiously, he adds: "I don't know if I should repeat this to you, but I heard say that the king had a rosebush planted over the woman and a fine grapevine over the man and that the two grew so tightly together that they could not be separated without being broken. Indeed, I also heard it said that this was due to the power of the potion." It is just possible, he thus suggests, that there is meaning and even benevolence after all behind that which appears as pure chance. And not just for his hero and heroine, for they now have been generalized to man and woman.

Structure

Fate provides not only a theme for Tristrant, but also a structure, since the story falls readily into three main parts which coincide with three divisions in the life of the hero with respect to the forces which determine his destiny: the period of the predominant influence of outer fate (symbolized by the sea) and the two periods of the predominant influence of inner fate (symbolized by the potion). These are preceded by an introduction that includes the Rivalin-Blankeflur tale and the hero's birth and followed by a conclusion which tells of the Kehenis-Garole affair and the hero's death. Although the work as a whole has an episodic quality, it is by no means formless. Structural unity is achieved primarily by the use of parallel situations and events, arranged in symmetrical patterns which show similarity, contrast, and continuity. In addition to this geometrical harmony, there is a certain amount of progression from one episode to another, although, in an account of a man

and the irrational or superrational forces which act on him, the author must use restraint in having one incident develop from another by simple logic. When Gottfried tells of the two journeys to Ireland, the hero sails there the first time because Morolt had said that only the Irish princess could cure him. Tristan learns to know and admire her, recommends her to Mark as a bride when he returns to Cornwall, and later sets out again for Ireland to win her for his uncle. A story of an enigmatic fate cannot connect events so simply, even though it too must have unity.

The introduction not only supplies the first intimation of Eilhart's theme, but is also a significant structural element. The Rivalin-Blankeflur-Mark situation in which Rivalin comes to Mark's aid, wins his sister, and takes her away with him is duplicated in the main narrative when Rivalin's son comes to Mark's aid and wins his wife, who finally leaves him to join her dying lover. The highly romantic love of Rivalin and Blankeflur thus serves as a thematic prelude to the Tristrant and Isalde story and contrasts to the Kehenis-Gariole affair in the conclusion, a rather cynically portrayed episode in which Kehenis for years delays the satisfying of his desire, needs the assistance of a clever friend to attain his lady, and is betrayed by the object of his affection. The development is from a simple account of true love, to a story of irresistible and faithful, though adulterous passion, to a tale of casual adultery, with moderate desire and limited loyalty, and then back to the central love story. Tristrant's birth at sea prepares the audience for the voyages of part one, however unmotivated they might be, and finds a certain parallel in the events of the conclusion, when he dies by the sea and his body is transported over it to Cornwall.

The events of part one lead, by means of the potion, to those of part two and are paralleled by those of part three. Sections one and three are filled with journeys. Two of the earlier voyages resemble most of the later voyages in that their goal is Isalde, although Tristrant is not aware of this at the time. However, the two series of voyages are also dissimilar. Those of part one are connected with the service of Mark—the hero goes to Cornwall to serve its king, sails to Ireland as a result of

having fought for him, and sails there again to find a bride for him—while the journeys of part three result in Mark's humiliation. There is also some correspondence with respect to the role the traveler plays. He comes to Cornwall as an anonymous nobleman, to Ireland once as a minstrel-merchant, and a second time simply as a merchant. In the later journeys, he arrives in Cornwall first as an Arthurian knight, with the entire court of Arthur, next in secret but under his own name and accompanied by a king's son and two attendants, a third time with Kurneaval as a pilgrim, a fourth time with Kurneaval as a homeless squire, and finally, all alone, as a fool. The first sequence may show a downward progression, the second one definitely does. It is true that the leper disguise does not fit into the pattern, but this was only an impromptu expedient, the purpose of which was not so much to conceal Tristrant's identity as to convince Isalde of his boundless devotion and remind her of her rescue from the lepers.

The most unusual parallel situations of parts one and three have to do with the two Isaldes: the one of Ireland, who twice saves Tristrant's life, and the less beautiful, less passionate, less clever one of Karahes, who unintentionally causes his death. Tristrant consummates his love to Isalde of Ireland without marrying her and almost is killed as a result. He marries the other but for a long time does not consummate the marriage, which also nearly costs him his life. Since the hero is reunited with the first Isalde after his death, his relation to the second does not establish a downward trend such as that indicated by the disguises.

The central part of the story, part two, consists of the four years of greater force of the potion, the period during which the lovers must be together or die. It is set in Cornwall, first in the royal castle at Tintanjol and later in a desolate wasteland in a remote area of the kingdom. The two settings provide the contrasts and similarities which give form to the work. At the castle the lovers are constantly threatened by the plots of their enemies, and Tristrant shows his cleverness in foiling them while when in the wilderness the lovers are endangered by hunger and cold the hero displays his ingenuity in meeting these perils. At the castle Mark is deceived as to Isalde's

virginity by the substitution of Brangene; in the wilderness he is deceived as to her loyalty by the bare sword lying between her and Tristrant.

When the power of the potion decreases, the sojourn in Cornwall comes to an end, and part three of the story begins. This parallels all that has happened to Tristrant since leaving Lohenois. He travels to a land which desperately needs his help, saves it from its enemies, wins the love of a beautiful Isalde, who has a close relationship to the country's king, and establishes an intimate and permanent connection with her. Tristrant could have been happy and content, but, just as the sea had formerly twice carried him off to the Irish Isalde, so now does the might of the potion repeatedly draw him away to her. However, this last period does not merely duplicate what has gone before, for there is also a clear development toward the concluding episode. The visits to Cornwall become progressively longer, the intervals between them also longer (the last journey after an absence of three years), and the meetings between the lovers increasingly intimate, until at last even Brangene and Kurneaval are gone and Tristrant and Isalde are all alone. These trends, together with that suggested by the disguises, point toward an end to the Tristrant-Isalde relationship and toward the concluding events.

The Kehenis-Gariole episode reflects the basic situation of the Tristrant and Isalde story in that it presents a tale of adultery and stresses the clever means by which the lovers circumvent the precautions of the jealous husband. It therefore might have been used as a sardonic commentary on the preceding narrative and thus have reduced it to the level of an amusing anecdote. But the death for love of the Irish Isalde contrasts so sharply with Gariole's weakness in danger that the intent of the author becomes quite obvious: to emphasize that the love story of Tristrant and Isalde, although containing humorous passages and situations, is not merely an adultery *Schwank* (short, comic narrative), but a thing of dignity and beauty. Tristrant's end is tragic in the classic sense, for he has fought nobly against his fate and bravely succumbed to it.

The fundamental structure of Tristrant consists of three major parts with an introduction and a conclusion. These are

unified by a system of parallel events and situations which pair introduction and conclusion, parts one and three, and part two with itself, so that the second half of the work is carefully foreshadowed by the first. At the same time, events of one part lead thematically to those of the following. The same technique is used, but less consistently, to connect individual episodes within the primary units. The author also employs a variety of other linking devices which tie together events that have no causative relationship. When Isalde hurries to save the life of the injured Morolt, it is obvious that she will be the one to cure the wound of his antagonist, so that the audience is prepared for Tristrant to land in Ireland even though he is driven there by chance winds. And, on the second voyage, Tristrant's warning to his crew to avoid Ireland is an adequate hint of their destination. Soon afterwards Isalde's discovery that the notch in Tristrant's sword matches the splinter she took from Morolt's skull joins all three adventures: the Morolt battle and the first and second voyages. In like manner, the warning given by Isalde's mother to Brangene to guard the potion well so that none but Mark and his bride drink it anticipates the fatal error of hero and heroine, thus connecting the second voyage to the following events.

Several of the subsequent episodes are connected and given a sense of continuity by having them share distinctive settings and secondary characters. Four of the more noteworthy occurrences—the aborted murder of Brangene, the deception of Mark at the linden, the delivery of the priest's letter, and the penultimate meeting of hero and heroine—take place in an orchard with a brook which was right beside the palace at Tintanjol. In the case of two of these events, the orchard also serves as a thematic link, for when Tristrant comes by night to bring Mark the letter telling of his renunciation of Isalde, the sad and defeated hero recalls the many happy nights he had spent there with his loved one and ties his horse to the tree in which Mark was hiding on one of those occasions. Another specific setting is the clump of thorn bushes near the deer stand by the road leading from Tintanjol to Blankenland. Two successive adventures in part three begin at these thorn bushes where, in contrast to the intimate meetings under the

linden, the lovers can communicate only at a distance. The best example of incidents being related to each other by a secondary character is the use of Aquitain, the dwarf, who unexpectedly appears to set the trap by the linden and the one in the king's bedroom, and then drops from the story. Other examples are the two campaigns which Tristrant leads against the same rebel, Count Riole, and the fact that the knight who captured Kehenis in the first campaign is the Nampetenis who kills him in Tristrant's last battle.

Many of the events of part three reveal, in addition to oblique linking devices, direct causal relationships. As a result of the "bold water" episode, Tristrant is forced to take Kehenis to Cornwall to prove that the first Isalde loves him more than does the second. Kehenis lies on this occasion, saying that Tristrant refused a challenge even though it was made in the name of the queen, and Isalde therefore causes her lover to be beaten. Because of her subsequent remorse at this deed, she sends a message begging the hero to come to her so that she can atone for her offense. He does so and, on the way back to his ship, is forced against his better judgment to take part in an athletic contest because he is challenged to do so in Isalde's name: he has to prove that he is incapable of being so unfaithful as Kehenis had said. The causal link between Tristrant's return to Lohenois and his fourth visit to Cornwall is that he is about to lose the service of Kurneaval (who is to govern Lohenois for him) and is afraid he could never again manage to see Isalde without the aid of his friend. The connection between the second campaign against Count Riole and Tristrant's last voyage to Cornwall during his lifetime is simply that he became so disfigured by the falling stone that he has a perfect disguise for the undertaking.

It is clear that the relationship of specific episodes to each other is not nearly as refined as is their connection to the general framework of the story; *Tristrant* does not have a closely knit plot. At the same time, the sequence of events is neither capricious nor awkward, the transitions from one to another are not too abrupt, and there is sufficient anticipation and retrospection to provide at least a minimal sense of unity. In short, the arrangement gives the impression of conscious

artistry. Indeed, some studies have maintained that *Tristrant* was constructed according to an intricate system of numerical composition in which each verse is a part of a mathematically exact, symmetrical structure of verse, verse-groups, group-blocks, and main divisions which is based on both language and plot.⁸ Because of the corruption of the texts this thesis can be neither proven nor disproven. What has been established is that Eilhart, like many other medieval poets, had a strong sense of form and symmetry.

Motifs

Certain motifs contribute to the structural unity of *Tristrant* and, since they also reveal something of the nature of fate, to the thematic unity as well. The most pervasive motif is that of the journey, with which the majority of the adventures begin and end. By putting them into a similar framework, consistency is added to the work as a whole, and, since the hero usually travels by sea, the audience is constantly reminded of the role of fate in his life. A similar unifying effect is exerted by the joy-grief motif, which the narrator stresses in his opening remarks and Isalde expounds upon in her monologue. It reveals itself graphically in the physical pain the hero experiences in his attempts to reach his source of happiness, Isalde; in the anguish both feel when they cannot be together; and in the deprivation they experience in the wilderness when they can be with each other all of the time. The motif is prefigured even before the drinking of the potion by the poisoned wound and the dragon's burns which the hero must endure before his first two contacts with Isalde, and it makes a series of later appearances: Tristrant's leap over the flour to Isalde's bed is so strenuous that old wounds break open and both he and she are covered with blood; for their constant companionship in the wilderness they have to pay with hunger and cold; they share their love on the night after King Arthur's hunting party only after the hero cuts himself on Mark's trap and bleeds "like a stuck pig"; their meeting during the fool episode is made

possible by Tristrant's long sickness and disfigurement; and they are not permanently united until one dies of poison and disappointment and the other of a broken heart. All of this suffering, as well as the constant danger which surrounds them, has a significance beyond the particular circumstances, indeed beyond their individual fates. For it is a reminder that this is the nature of human destiny, that everyone must inevitably pay for joy with sorrow and pain.

A like conclusion can be drawn from the substitute motif, the first three appearances of which center on Isalde. The Irish steward announces that he killed the dragon and attempts to take the place of its real slayer as the husband of the princess. The king learns the truth and awards his daughter to Tristrant who, however, proposes Mark as a substitute. However, on his wedding night, Mark goes to bed with Brangene, who has been prevailed upon to fill in for her mistress. Soon afterwards a dog is killed instead of Brangene and its liver brought to Isalde as that of her lady-in-waiting. When the lovers flee to the wilderness, Mark notices Tristrant's dog and orders that it be hanged in his place. Two years later, Tristrant helps Havelin defeat his enemies and marries his daughter only because her name is Isalde. To show Kehenis why the marriage with his sister was not consummated, the hero takes him to Cornwall, where the latter can see how fondly Isalde caresses Tristrant's dog in his stead. In the following journey to Cornwall, Tristrant and Kurneval are seen and escape only after two errant squires take their places. In one instance, the substitute motif is comic—when Kehenis sleeps with a magic pillow instead of with Gymele—but in the other cases the substitution is a very serious matter. Brangene protests bitterly at being obliged to take Isalde's place, Isalde is grief-stricken at the presumed murder of her friend, the squire is so sympathetic with Tristrant's dog that he risks severe punishment to set it free, Tristrant's marriage to Havelin's daughter and Isalde's demonstration of affection for Tristrant's dog both spring from their deep love for each other, and Tristrant's life depends on the success of the decoys. A constant factor in the motif is that in all seven instances something of lesser value is substituted for something of greater value. The implication is that this is

life. Just as one must always pay dearly for happiness, one must often accept less than that for which one has paid.

From the time at which Mark first becomes suspicious of Tristrant to the end of the story the dominant motif is that of the hunt. It first appears when Mark arranges a large hunting party in order to see if Tristrant will visit Isalde during his supposed absence. It recurs several times while the lovers are in the wilderness: Kurneaval, after having become separated from Tristrant and Isalde, uses Tristrant's dog to track him down; Tristrant shoots game to supplement their meager diet of roots and herbs; Mark is hunting when he finds the lovers. Later, as a guest in Britain, Tristrant helps Gawain drive a deer from King Arthur's lodge to Tintanjol so that he may circumvent Mark and see Isalde. She initiates hunting parties on two further occasions with the same goal in mind. And just before their deaths, Kehenis and Tristrant so exhaust their horses chasing a deer that they themselves are easily overtaken by Nampetenis when he returns from his daily hunt. Sometimes Tristrant is the hunter, but when Mark watches him from the linden, when Utant follows his scent, when Mark finds him in the wilderness, when Mark (during another hunt) almost rides into the thorn bushes where he is hiding, and when Nampetenis catches up with him, he is the hunted, "a beast which was tame" (l. 4489: *eime wilde, daz was zam*). Except in the chase with Kehenis, whenever Tristrant does the hunting or Isalde arranges the hunt, the sport is only a means to an end, for what the hero actually pursues is happiness with his loved one. The hunt motif, therefore, repeatedly calls attention to Tristrant's situation as the persistent hunter of love's joys and the prey of forces determined to destroy him because of this pursuit.

The last motif to be discussed is that of death. It appears at the hero's birth with the tragic demise of Blankeflur and does not recur until Tristrant kills Morolt, an event which, however welcome in Cornwall, brings widespread grief to Ireland. Eight or nine years later, the faithful Brangene dies, and then—at ever-decreasing intervals—Rivalin, Havelin, Kehenis, Tristrant, and (only an hour or so afterwards) Isalde. In almost every instance the deaths are individually significant to the story: that of Blankeflur provides it with a mood and an omen;

the exigencies of the plot require the deaths of Morolt and Kehenis, and those of Brangene and Rivalin serve (in the former case directly, in the latter indirectly) to isolate hero and heroine from their closest companions. However, the death of Havelin, since it is in itself unnecessary, indicates that the author intended to exploit the deaths of the secondary characters for an additional purpose: the establishment of a motif which should point in the most direct manner toward the final catastrophe. At the end, only Tristrant's wife and Isalde's husband remain to mourn and bury the dead.

One may see other motifs in *Tristrant*, but those mentioned are the most important. They help to tie the episodes together and thus contribute to the structural unity of the work. At the same time, the motifs raise questions about the nature of fate which continually reinforce Eilhart's basic theme.

Style

Although the use of motifs is surprisingly consistent, the style in general is highly informal and casual, sometimes repetitive, often deficient in explanatory material, and quite careless with respect to details. The tone and manner of composition are set by a narrator who frequently interrupts his tale with exclamations and comments to his audience and always takes a lively, personal interest in the events. He is not as didactic and digressive as the genial storyteller of *Wirnt von Grafenberg's Wigalois*, nor as ironic and humorous as the irrepressible narrator of *Parzival*. Nevertheless, he has his share of these qualities, and they blend with others to form a distinct personality which, of course, colors the entire account. We make the acquaintance of our reporter at the very beginning when he assails with mock bitterness those who don't want to hear and threatens to have them ejected. Having thus unified his listeners behind him against possible troublemakers, he soon develops a chatty, bantering rapport with them: frequently assuring them of the accuracy of his account, inviting their concurrence with his sentiments, and even

asking their opinions as to how situations can be resolved. It is true that most of the narrator's asides to the audience consist of a single line and thus serve as convenient rhyme fillers, but they also create an intimate atmosphere of dramatic immediacy and establish a specific and consistent outlook.

The narrator's attitude toward his sources varies. Although he often insists on the exact truth of his account, at other times he hedges, saying only, that was what he heard, or, that was what the book said. Sometimes he pretends to be surprised himself at what has happened, and occasionally he allows several of his listeners to express their beliefs as to what took place. All this naturally has nothing to do with the author and his sources, but is one of many devices to produce verisimilitude. The narrator's attitude toward his hero is always the same. He admits that it looked bad for Tristrant to sleep with Isalde on her wedding night, but it did not really show disloyalty to Mark since he could not help it. It was also very stupid for the hero to attempt to go to Isalde when he saw the flour on the floor, but this too was due to the potion. Otherwise he was smart enough to have refrained. However, there are surprisingly few justifications of Tristrant's actions, just as there is little speculation as to the motives of others. The narrator is interested primarily in what happened and how it happened, not why. Perhaps this explains the small number of didactic digressions. For, with the exception of a somewhat lengthy attack on the evil of jealousy and a brief discussion of the futility of keeping watch over one's wife, he has little advice to give his listeners.

The narrator's occasional admission of ignorance as to fact and motives is related to a stylistic device—the controlled or restricted point of view—which is used quite skillfully in *Tristrant* when one considers that this use of point of view was not perfected until the nineteenth century. Usually the effect is to emphasize the role the hero is playing at a particular time or to stress the impression he makes on a certain group. As soon as the young Tristrant arrives incognito at Mark's court, the narrator ceases to refer to him by name, but, except when he is alone with Kurneaval, calls him only *daz kind* (the boy) until shortly before he is knighted. This, of course, is how the court

thinks of him. A similar procedure is followed during Tristrant's second journey to Ireland. When he goes to find the dragon, he is described according to the impression he made on the lord high steward and his men as the one who rode up with spear and shield like a great storm. Later when Isalde and Brangene are seeking the unknown knight who killed the dragon, the narrator does not mention Tristrant's name until he regains consciousness. Then the point of view is shifted from that of the ladies to that of the hero, and he once more becomes Tristrant. There are other examples of this technique, the most consistent of which are seen during Tristrant's last two journeys from Karahes to Cornwall. As soon as he and Kurneaval decide to disguise themselves as errant squires, the narrator begins to refer to them with designations which fit their role: *jungelinge*, *garzune*, *gesellen*, all words for youths. But when they arrive with Tinas and Isalde and reveal their identities to them, the hero is spoken of as Tristrant. Eilhart apparently learned with practice, for the last use of the controlled point of view is the most successful. The hero becomes "the fool" as soon as he arrives in Cornwall so disguised and retains this designation until he reveals himself to Isalde. Thus the narrator sees him only as does the court at Cornwall.

Eilhart's restricted point of view is a development of his use of epithets. However, his epithet is not intended to limit knowledge concerning a person, but only to stress a specific aspect of a character as revealed in a particular situation. Eilhart's epithets, like his asides, frequently serve as rhyme fillers, but they are always appropriate to the individual and his condition. Those referring to Tristrant have a function similar to that of background music in that they help to interpret the successive roles he plays, telling the listeners just how they are to view him at a particular moment and sometimes even giving them a glimpse into the future. An account of the epithets which describe the hero during his early adventures will illustrate their use in general.

As has been said, when Tristrant first comes to Mark's court, he is referred to only as "the boy." However, when he offers to fight Morolt, he becomes "the noble warrior," which is a glance ahead since he has never yet been in a battle. In order to prove

himself worthy of facing such an opponent, the hero has to reveal his relationship to the king and is thereafter repeatedly called "Mark's nephew." This emphasizes both the king's reluctance to let him take so great a risk and the hero's loyalty to his uncle. Just before the battle, while Mark is placing his own armor on Tristrant, the narrator speaks of the latter once more as "the boy" in order to remind the listeners of his disadvantage in size, strength, and experience, after which he confers the epithets "Mark's nephew," "the hero," and "the bold warrior, Tristrant." However, when Morolt sees him, he addresses Tristrant as "handsome and brave boy," so that the disparity between the combatants is again stressed. The fight begins, and the narrator calls the hero "the steady warrior" and "the very bold Tristrant." The epithets given to Morolt throughout the episode—"the strong," "the large," "the bold"—are of a nature to emphasize the danger and bravery of Tristrant. After winning the struggle, the latter becomes sick from the poisoned spear and is called "the sick one" or "the poor sick one" until Isalde's medicine cures him. At the end of the first sojourn in Ireland, the Irish king asks his advice with regard to the famine, and the narrator designates him as "the clever Tristrant," which is again an anticipation, for the hero has as yet done nothing wise or shrewd.

So it is that the hero is accompanied throughout the work by a large number of frequently repeated epithets which, if merely listed by themselves, would almost give a sort of resumé of Tristrant's story. Not only he and Morolt, but also the other prominent characters have their epithets, which are more likely to indicate temporary than permanent attributes. This is especially apparent when Isalde, after planning the murder of Brangene, is called "the treacherous lady." On the other hand, the designation, "the clever Tristrant," is used so often that it becomes a sort of leitmotif, which describes the type of story Eilhart is telling, as well as its hero. The epithets interpret for the listeners and do so much more concisely than would be possible with phrases and clauses, thus contributing to the brevity that characterizes much of Eilhart's expression.

Many elements of Eilhart's style are connected with his passion for brevity. The almost total lack of psychological

motivation fits the theme of an almighty, perhaps capricious, fate and also has a telescoping effect. So does the author's spotlighting technique with which he focuses on the primary actors and situations and does not bring others into the field of vision until or unless they are required. This is seen particularly in the case of Kurneval, who, except for the first voyage to Ireland, is constantly with his lord from Tristrant's childhood almost to his death. Yet at times the squire goes unmentioned for hundreds of verses, during the entire stay at Arthur's court, for example. When he is needed, he steps into the spotlight, and we see that he has been there all along. This method produces some surprises, as during the journey of the hero and Kehenis to Cornwall. They go by ship, hide in the thorn thicket, spend the night with Isalde in Blankenland, and only when they have started for home do we learn that they have been accompanied by Kurneval and Kehenis's squire, who appear because they are needed for the Pleherin incident.

The application of this technique to situations has the effect of putting the entire contents of the work into a single chronological sequence of simple events. This arrangement is seen most graphically in the prevalence of the word "then" (*dô*), which appears almost a thousand times in *Tristrant*, and in a marked inclination to use verbs in a perfective sense.⁹ The latter characteristic causes some problems when the author attempts to describe simultaneous actions, for the reader is likely to assume momentarily that they occurred in sequence. The spotlighting method works best when it contributes to clear-cut situations with symbolic or dramatic impacts. Two incidents will serve as examples, one in the introduction, the other in the conclusion. When Rivalin is in Cornwall, he wins the favor of Blankeflur "with a painful wound" and lies with her. If Eilhart had gone into details as to how he was wounded and how he happened to lie with Blankeflur—as Gottfried does in some 200 verses—the symbolic and prophetic implications for Tristrant would have been obscured. It is enough to say that he won her as a hero, as Tristrant was to win Isalde. A similar and praiseworthy restraint can be seen when Namptetenis, after giving Tristrant a mortal wound, predicts his own death at the hands of the hero's and Kehenis's friends. It is

necessary, of course, that *Tristrant* be avenged, but an account of the battle and the slaying of Nampetenis certainly would have detracted from the crowning event of the story, the final reunion of hero and heroine.

Eilhart does not always condense: the Isalde monologue is about 200 verses long, the account of the first battle against Riole takes some 250 verses (almost twice the number Gottfried uses), and the description of the gala procession past the thorn thicket requires over 100 verses. But these are all dramatic scenes, and the author lets them develop without intrusion or comment to the point where a maximum impact is produced. Then he hurries on to the next scene. His strong interest in dramatic effects is seen especially in the propensity for letting the characters communicate directly to the audience in monologues and dialogues. *Tristrant* contains many monologues (ranging in length from a single verse to two hundred), although not appreciably more than other narrative works of the same general period. Although the nature of the Eilhart monologue is not particularly unique, his dialogues are quite distinctive, primarily for two reasons. The first is the pronounced tendency to pass without warning from indirect to direct discourse, usually after 1 or 2 verses, almost always after 4 or 5.¹⁰ The second is the highly staccato quality of the dialogue in direct discourse, in which the speaker often changes after each verse and sometimes after each half verse. This clipped, rapid-fire exchange, frequently continuing for some time, is perhaps Eilhart's most unusual stylistic feature. It would be interesting to know the extent to which the reader dramatized the work for medieval audiences. Since over one-third of *Tristrant* is in dialogue and even minor characters have speaking roles, it could have been quite a performance.

Another marked trait of Eilhart's style is the frequent foreshadowing of coming events. Sometimes this amounts only to a short, two-line summary of what immediately follows; often it is a brief glimpse into a more remote future.¹¹ The summaries can be effective introductions to new episodes, but occasionally they are a little distracting, for they interrupt the chronological sequence of incidents, and Eilhart does not always do this smoothly. For example, when the priest learned that the hero

was willing to give up Isalde, "he quickly wrote a letter to the king and sent it by Tristrant, since he had no other messenger." One might expect the next statement to tell the king's reaction, but it does not. We hear an account of what was written, how Tristrant started out, and something of his trip to the castle. The duel with Riole is another case in which the audience is likely to mistake the summary for the action itself: "Tristrant rode at him and struck him down, then rode back to him and used force to make him yield." This is followed by a more detailed description of the combat. The short references to occurrences in a more distant future—a common characteristic of medieval heroic narratives—are well done. They help tie the episodes together and stimulate the anticipation of the listeners. As soon as Tristrant is wounded in the battle with Morolt, they are warned that he will be sick a long time because of it. When a piece of his sword remains in his opponent's skull, they are told that later it will be found, and the potion no sooner enters the story than the narrator hints at a fatal mishap to come. Such foreshadowings continue through the work and become more frequent toward the end. The narrator reminds his audience that Kehenis has the keys to Nampetenis's castle and adds that both he and Tristrant suffered later because of this. Tristrant's skill at throwing darts in the castle evokes the comment that it will bring him into mortal danger, and the lie of Tristrant's wife is followed immediately by the observation that she greatly regretted it afterwards. All these comments are to make us apprehensive about the safety of the hero; however, there is one whose purpose is to allay our fears. When, after the stay in the wilderness, Isalde returns to King Mark, who previously had condemned her to death, we are assured that "he kept her fondly for many years."

A final noteworthy characteristic of the style of *Tristrant* is its simple, unadorned language, with few foreign words, similes, metaphors, and poetic exaggerations. Similes like "the king began to glow like a coal" are apt but rare, as are such metaphors as "Brangene brought her a potion she liked" (news that Tristrant was coming), or the designation of Nampetenis's castle as a hermitage because of his wife's confinement there.

With respect to poetic exaggeration, one must admit that in the battle against Riole the blood ran unbelievably deep, but the number of combattants was well within the range one might expect of such a rebellion. As for exaggeration of feeling, Eilhart shows commendable restraint. The grief of King Rivalin and his retinue at the death of Blankeflur is briefly and unpretentiously expressed and does not obscure the tragedy itself. The same is true of the account of the deaths of Tristrant and Isalde: the sorrow of the hero's wife, King Mark, and the people of Karahes is described, but not at great length and without the commiseration of the narrator.

Humor

Although Eilhart's work has a serious theme and a tragic ending, it also contains a good deal of humor, which springs chiefly from the character of the hero, the nature of certain situations, and the ironic comments of the narrator. Because of the time of his appearance, Tristrant shows traits of the old and the new, the Germanic and the Arthurian hero. When he cuts down the fleeing Morolt from behind or massacres the lepers, he is the Germanic berserker, while the courtly manners show particularly in his willingness to face any danger if challenged in the name of his lady. However, there is another, a shrewd and clever, side of his personality which is not emphasized in either tradition and apparently stems both from Eilhart's French source and from a third German stereotype. Thomas, as well as Béroul, presents a clever hero, while there is an indication that the Tristan of the lost work of *La Chèvre* may have been something of a cunning rogue, and when Eilhart looked about for an appropriate German model who was crafty as well as bold, he seemed to have settled on the stock figure of the *spilman*.¹² This was an itinerant entertainer who performed in simple skits, was a juggler or rope dancer, sang to his own accompaniment, and lived by his wits. Various works of the German medieval period, especially *König Rother* and *Salman und Morolf* indicate that at Eilhart's time there was a widespread stereotype of the bold and cunning *spilman*, who may

have contributed to the characters of Volker in the *Nibelungenlied* and Horand in *Kudrun*, as well as that of Tristrant, and would have been a prototype of Hans Sachs's travelling scholar and Grimmelshausen's Simplicissimus.

If Eilhart intends to call attention to the similarity between his hero and the *spilman*, he is encouraging the listeners to see a comic as well as a heroic side to Tristrant's character. In fact, he presents many hints of a likeness: the harp which the sick Tristrant takes with him to Ireland; the story to the Irish king that he had once been a *spilman*; the character of the homeless stranger which the hero takes on by refusing to be Mark's heir, to become a permanent member of the Round Table, or to assume the rule of his own country; the disguises which remind one of the roles the *spilman* plays; the two wandering squires who live by their wits and play so well (and amusingly) the parts Isalde gives them; Tristrant's diverting, but otherwise useless, skill at throwing one dart into another; and most of all the recurring epithet, used at the very beginning of the work, "the clever Tristrant." All this recalls the *spilman*, the professional entertainer.

In addition to relating his hero to a well-known comic figure, Eilhart sometimes places him in situations which were common to the anecdotes of his day. The first might be called the confounding-of-the-cowardly-pretender scene, which we see largely through the eyes of the timid Irish steward. He remembers the stranger who had charged up like a storm and demanded to know where the dragon was. Now he learns that it is not only the dragon slayer, but also the conqueror of the mighty Morolt who is standing before him, displaying the dragon's tongue, and challenging him to mortal combat. The humor of the steward's trepidation, recantation, and flight is both elemental and universal. The second amusing situation treats the substituted wife or bride motif that appears in the third-century *Panchatantra*, as well as in twelfth-century fabliaux and thirteenth-century *Schwänke*. The cuckolded husband is, of course, a frequent source of comedy in medieval literature, and Eilhart's audience probably would have found the description of Mark's wedding night hilarious. For not only does the king consummate his marriage with the wrong woman, but in the same room and at the same time his nephew

entertains himself with the king's bride. The narrator's comment that Tristrant never would have done such a thing were it not for the potion is perhaps no more than a mock excuse, intended to accentuate the slapstick humor of the scene.

The most amusing spectacle in *Tristrant* is that where "the wise king" climbs up in the linden tree to overhear in secret a conversation intended especially for his ears. The dialogue between the banned Tristrant and Isalde, with both saying things they do not mean, is followed the next day by dialogues between Mark and Isalde and later Mark and Brangene in which the ladies continue this policy, arguing against having the hero stay at court and refusing to help the king induce him to do so. However, when Brangene reluctantly agrees to intercede with Tristrant, "it was easy for her to persuade him to stay: she managed it with skill." The final irony is that Mark promises his nephew that he can be with the queen as much as he wants, and Tristrant has his bed moved into the royal chamber, where he can lie with Isalde as often as he wishes. Thus does Mark overcome all protests in achieving his own dishonor.

Certainly the most chaotic of the comic scenes is that in which King Arthur, his knights, and Tristrant spend the night at Mark's castle. When the hero tries to reach Isalde's bed, he cuts his foot on the steel blades which her husband had ordered placed next to it and thus is marked for execution. But on Sir Kay's advice a pandemonium is simulated, with all the Arthurian knights pushing and shoving each other about the hall in the darkness until each is injured and Tristrant's wound is only one of many. The humor of the situation is accentuated by Arthur's apology to his host for the behavior of Europe's most courtly knights: "I can't restrain them. They do this all the time. At home they won't stop either for me or for my wife." Tristrant spends the rest of the night in Isalde's bed, and in the morning, when he sees his guests limping, Mark again feels guilty. Once more it is the victim, rather than the deceivers, who is ashamed. Sir Kay's ruse, the dilution of the evidence, is, of course, a very old one, going back at least to "The Thief of Bagdad."

There are two humorous situations in the episode by the river in Blankenland. In one, Mark has made all of his large hunting party retire early so that neither noise nor visitors will disturb his wife, who is entertaining her lover while they sleep. The other situation resembles that of the *pastourelles* in which a clever shepherdess outwits an amorous knight. Because of the magic pillow, the passionate and rather crude Kehenis drops off to sleep before having satisfied his desire for Gymele and in the morning hears such teasing from her about his most proper behavior that, "if his ears had been cut, no blood would have flowed out." Thus both Mark and Kehenis are duped, the former by the queen, the latter by her lady-in-waiting.

The amusing aspect of the scene where Antret interrogates the wandering squires whom Isalde has substituted for the hidden Tristrant and Kurneval consists of the lively dialogues between the duke and each of his captives in turn. The shrewd and devious Antret tries to trick them into changing their story, but the vagabonds skillfully evade his traps, so that in the end he has to confess to the king that he was wrong when in fact—and this is the funniest part—he was not. The victory of the squires, however, is only partly the result of their quick wits, for the queen has coached them carefully as to what to say and has warned them against the very snares which Antret employs. The interrogation thus is essentially a contest between Tristrant's dearest friend and his most deadly enemy with the hero's life as the prize, which adds some tension to the humor.

As one might expect, several amusing incidents occur while Tristrant is masquerading as a fool: the chase after Antret, the attempt to get the queen to eat the stale cheese, and the intimidation of the chamberlains who had planned to capture him. The important scene, however, is the dialogue between the hero and Mark, in which the fool tells the king of his love for Isalde and the joy and sorrow it has brought him. "Shall I tell you the truth?" he continues, "I became a fool because of her. She is the dearest one in the world to me." It is the well-known, comic situation in which one deceives by telling

the truth and it appears in many works: the fabliau *Le Cuvier*, the *Schwank Von dem ritter mit den nützen*, and Grillparzer's *Weh dem, der lügt*, to mention only a few. Unlike the other comic scenes, this one has both pathos and symbolic overtones. It is pathetic because it is indeed the moment of truth, and Tristrant is so intent on making his uncle understand something of the overpowering force which draws him to the queen and alienates him from Mark that he almost gives himself away. The situation is symbolic in that Tristrant has been, in fact, the fool of love since having drunk the potion. His words at this time, his last visit to Isalde, are a counterpart to those of Isalde's monologue at the beginning of the love affair. Eilhart was neither the first poet nor the last to exploit the poignancy of humor.

A common trait of all the amusing situations is that, unlike many events in the work, none are the product of chance. Each is staged by one or more of the clever people—Isalde, Brangene, Kay, and especially Tristrant—to delude and confound those who stand in their way. In this respect the work is quite typical, for the medieval poet usually associates humor with wit. It is also typical in that most of the cases show varying treatments of the most popular comic theme in medieval literature, that of the deceived husband.

Although such comic situations as those mentioned provide occasional humor throughout the work, the prevailing mood of light amusement is primarily maintained by the many mildly ironic comments of the narrator. When Morolt wounds Tristrant with the poisoned spear, the listeners are asked, "Who wouldn't be annoyed at that?" The hero tries to bribe the Irish marshal with a golden cup, and the latter "showed his courtly manners by accepting." Mark sees Tristrant and Isalde in a passionate embrace and flies into a rage, which evokes the sage comment, "Such kisses bring forth such anger." Describing the life of the lovers in the wilderness, the narrator says, "You will be surprised to hear that their horse had only leaves, grass, and moss to eat." And, speaking of their own meager diet of wild plants, he states: "I'll tell you the truth: they were wise enough to have preferred better food if they had had it." The narrator can also take a slightly superior attitude toward his

source, as when he cites it and says that it "indeed may be telling the truth."

While the hero, disguised as a pilgrim, is trying to slip out of the country unnoticed, he is forced to participate in several contests. When he makes an amazing throw with the javelin, "Tristrant's reward was that everyone came to see it, so that a large crowd collected." He then astonished them with a great leap, which caused his trousers to split, exposing some very expensive underclothing, and made an unheard of cast with the stone, this time ripping his coat and revealing more fine cloth. Whereupon the narrator says, "He hurried away and, I think, was wise to do so." On another occasion Mark decrees that the fugitive Tristrant be captured or killed, and the latter encounters his good friend, the lord high chamberlain, which evokes the equivocal comment: "Truly Tinas—so I've heard—did not take his life." Often the irony is mixed with humorous understatement, as when the narrator tells that Tristrant, disguised as a fool, chased the evil Antret to kill him. "I could easily have recovered from my grief," he adds, "if he had caught Antret." A similar remark is evoked by the arrangements made that evening. Isalde discovers who the fool is and orders a bed prepared for him in her quarters, at which the narrator says dryly, "He was well looked after there."

Sometimes the narrator's characteristic irony slips over, perhaps unintentionally, into the speech of other persons, even of the less clever group. When King Mark discovers Tristrant in bed with Isalde, he shouts to his seven armed guards, "On, good knights, whatever your hopes or fears, forward to battle!" When one considers that Tristrant not only is unarmed, but is not even dressed, this battle cry is amusing, although the hero's situation certainly is not. Later, the night Tristrant brings the letter to Tintanjol, he calls through the window of the king's bedroom, asking if he slept, and gets the sarcastic reply, "Yes, when people let me," an answer which sounds much more like the narrator than like Mark. Tristrant's wife also sounds like the narrator as she insists to Kehenis that she is still a virgin after a year of marriage: "Truly, it is not a lie. Your friend is so well-bred that he has never even placed his hand on my bare knee."

Lightly ironic humor pervades *Tristrant*, leaving only a few consistently serious scenes. The effect is not merely that of comic relief, but also of realism and objectivity. The story is told as the narrator heard it, and, if it is amusing in places, this is because human behavior, particularly in critical situations, is no more rational than the forces which determine it. Certainly the humor does not detract from the tragic impact of the love story and of *Tristrant's* struggle with fate.

Reception and Influence

As the first Arthurian novel in German, one would expect *Tristrant* to attract considerable attention and have a significant effect on the literature of the period. It appears to have done so, but, because of the inability of scholars to agree on its date of composition, there naturally are conflicting opinions with regard to its influence during the years 1170–90. The relationship to Veldeke's *Eneit* has been mentioned. A similar situation exists with the fragmentary novel, *Graf Rudolf*, and the Strassburg *Alexanderlied*, a redaction of Lamprecht's work. A fairly large number of verses in both works sufficiently resemble ones in *Tristrant* to make probable a connection to it, but do not answer the question as to which was the borrower and which the lender.¹³ In Ulrich von Zazikhoven's *Lanzelet* *Tristrant* of Lohenis appears as a minor character and Isalde is mentioned. While it is quite possible that Ulrich may have found them in his French source the forms of their names and the name of the knight's homeland point to Eilhart. Since *Lanzelet* was written after 1194, there is no question of precedence.

There is stronger evidence of an Eilhart influence on the epic verse of the early thirteenth century. One notices a marked similarity between his narrator and that of Wirnt von Grafenberg, in their lighthearted manner and habit of mildly humorous comment on the action, as well as in certain specific remarks. Both, for example, begin by attacking potential troublemakers who may not want to listen, and both are at

times dubious with regard to the accuracy of their sources. The closest resemblance of *Wigalois* to *Tristrant*, however, is seen in the circumstances connected with the death of Wirnt's chief antagonist. Roaz of Glois is so jealous of his wife that he will not allow any of his vassal knights in his castle, depending for its defense almost entirely on its unusually strong fortifications. Still, Wigalois manages to enter, and in the ensuing duel Roaz is killed. His wife, who despite his fears has always been faithful, takes him in her arms and dies of grief. Whereupon the narrator delivers a long elegy, stressing her loyalty and reminding his listeners that true love is often pain and sorrow. Wigalois, who had fainted from wounds and exhaustion, becomes conscious and voices his love and longing for his sweetheart Larie in a lengthy monologue which frequently addresses a personified Lady Love. Since only the duel itself appears in any of the English, French, or Italian variants of Wirnt's work, it may be assumed that the rest was his own invention. His inspiration probably came from Eilhart. Roaz's jealousy and his castle without men reminds one of the Namptenis episode; the death of Roaz's wife recalls the death of Isalde. The narrator's elegy and Wigalois's monologue resemble in tone and often in particular expression the monologue of Isalde.

The earliest narrative work to refer to characters in *Tristrant* other than the two lovers is *Parzival*, in which Gariole, Gymele, both Isaldes, Kehenis, Kurneval, Rivalin, and Tinas are mentioned and Morolt plays a minor role. Wolfram shows such a detailed knowledge of Eilhart's work that the question naturally arises as to whether he was influenced by it in those places where he deviates from Chrétien's novel and parallels *Tristrant*. One thinks at once of the Gachmuret story, which introduces the main work—as the Rivalin episode does *Tristrant*—rather than being revealed in retrospect, as in *Perceval*. More important is the possibility that the exceptional training which Eilhart's hero received from Kurneval may have caused Wolfram to compose much more of an education novel than Chrétien did. These questions cannot be answered. In any case, it seems likely that one episode in *Parzival*, that dealing with Liaz, was inspired by Tristrant's meeting with the second

Isalde.¹⁴ Moreover, whether or not Wolfram was influenced by Eilhart, his references to the latter's characters at least imply that they were well known.

It is not surprising that the most significant influence of *Tristrant* during the early thirteenth century should be on Gottfried's *Tristan und Isold*. The younger poet mainly followed Thomas who, he maintained, presented the true account of the famous lovers, but he sometimes added or substituted material of his own invention and occasionally borrowed from Eilhart. Most of the *Tristrant* matter appears in the first half of Gottfried's work. It can be seen in proper names, the education of the hero, the dialogue with Morolt just before the battle, the Irish king's decree that anyone who came from Cornwall should be killed, certain aspects of the journey of the hero and Mark's bride to Cornwall, and many other details, including some verbal similarities. Since Gottfried's conception of the story was quite different from that of Eilhart, he was not affected by either the theme or the style of the earlier work.¹⁵

The two conclusions for Gottfried's incomplete work, which were composed by Ulrich von Türheim (ca. 1230) and Heinrich von Freiberg (ca. 1290), both use *Tristrant*. Ulrich follows Eilhart quite closely; his changes, omissions, and additions are all of a minor nature and do not indicate that the author had an additional source. For his much longer conclusion, Heinrich apparently used the Ulrich version as well as that by Eilhart. Whether he had additional sources is a matter of dispute.¹⁶

That Gottfried's version, although quite popular, did not eclipse Eilhart's can be seen in the comic novel, *Frauendienst* (1255), by Ulrich von Liechtenstein. One of the many lyric poems included in it mentions Tristram and Isalde; a knight of Ulrich-Arthur's Round Table takes on the name Tristram; and the central episode was inspired by one in *Tristrant*. At the end of Ulrich's colorful journey in the service of his lady, she finally agrees to a rendezvous, under certain conditions. He is to come in ragged clothing, disguised as a leper, and join the lepers in front of her castle who live from food she sends out to them. He follows the instructions, but the lady lets him spend two days with his revolting, partly decomposed companions and a night in the open, suffering from the cold rain and the attacks of

hordes of body lice, before she lets him enter her chamber, where his lusty expectations are disappointed. Ulrich is finally dropped unceremoniously down the wall and nearly drowns himself in shame and rage. It is clear that these events were inspired by Tristrant's experience in the leper disguise, especially the beating he received on orders of Isalde after he refused to leave her presence. When one of Ulrich's lepers catches a glimpse of the hero's fine underclothing beneath the rags, one thinks of the rich underclothing which Tristrant exposed while he was disguised as a pilgrim.

A final epic work of the medieval period to show marked similarities with Eilhart's work is the verse tale "Tristan als Mönch," which was composed at about the same time as *Frauendienst*. It tells of a clever stratagem by which the hero manages to circumvent the surveillance of Mark and the court by making them think the dead body of an unknown knight to be his. The stranger is buried with great sorrow, and Tristan, in the guise of a monk, is assigned to Isalde as doctor and spiritual counselor, which enables the lovers to be with each other as much as they wish. The uncourtly manner of narration and the emphasis on situation and action point to Eilhart, rather than Gottfried, as a source, although there is little of the former's brevity and emotional restraint. Mark's regretful lament at the assumed death of his nephew also recalls *Tristrant*.¹⁷

It is possible that Eilhart's work also left its imprint on Middle High German lyric verse, specifically through the influence of the Isalde monologue on those *Minnelieder* (songs of courtly love) in which the singer reflects at length on his or her emotions and on the nature of love. Similarities in style, conceits, and language to the monologue are seen especially in songs by Friedrich von Hausen and Reinmar, but also in lover's plaints by Hartmann von Aue, Rudolf von Fenis, Heinrich von Morungen, Walther von der Vogelweide, and others. Characteristics of syntax and poetic technique; peculiarities in the use of synonyms, antithesis, repetition of like thoughts, and anaphora; and verbal parallels in some of the verse of these poets are strongly reminiscent of Isalde's lament.¹⁸ These similarities, however, could be explained by the fact that both

Eilhart and the minnesingers may have drawn from a store of lyric devices which had already become somewhat stylized.

That *Tristrant* was popular even where it was not noticeably influential is indicated by the relative frequency with which the names of its hero and heroine occur in the literature and documents of the German Middle Ages. In addition to the narrative works already mentioned, their names appear in *Die Krone*, *Die Nibelungenklage*, *Die gute Frau*, *Von dem üblen Weibe*, *Der jüngere Titurel*, *Mai und Beastror*, *Der Renner*, and *Friedrich von Schwaben* and in songs by Heinrich von Veldeke, Bernger von Horheim, Reinmar von Zweter, Der Marner, and Tannhäuser, as well as in several lyric poems of unknown authorship. The names of the lovers and Gawain, in Eilhart's form of Walwan, also occur rather frequently outside of literature as given names and, in the case of the two men, eventually as family names. Walwan appears in a late twelfth-century document, and the names of all three appear in the early thirteenth century. They continue to be found up into the modern period in all German-speaking areas.¹⁹ Attempts have been made to trace the spread of the popularity of *Tristrant* by charting the geographical incidence of the names, with inconclusive results. Considering the widespread familiarity with his work, it is interesting to note that Eilhart himself is mentioned by none of his colleagues.

The influence of Eilhart's novel can be seen in the plastic arts of medieval Germany, as well as in its literature and the names of its nobility. The Tristan and Isolde story was a favorite of the artists of Western Europe from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, and scenes from it were depicted on combs, cups, bedspreads, jewel boxes, writing tables, pew carvings, tapestries, floor mosaics, murals, and corbels.²⁰ Most of this art originated in France and was no doubt inspired by Thomas, Béroul, and the French *Prose Tristan*, as was perhaps also that of England, Flanders, and Italy. German artists likewise illustrated the story in a variety of mediums, but most significantly in tapestries, the majority of which relate to Eilhart's version. The best known are three (dating from about 1300, 1330, and 1360) in the former Cistercian monastery at Wienhausen, near Celle. Both scenes and inscriptions connect them with *Tristrant*. A fourteenth-century Erfurt tapestry pre-

sents twenty-six scenes from Eilhart's work, and a late tapestry (dated 1539) in the church at Schwarzenberg, near Zwickau, has twenty-one pictures, apparently inspired by the chapbook, which illustrate the story up to the drinking of the potion. There are other Tristan tapestries at Lüneberg, Regensburg, and Würzburg, but it is not clear whether the artists had in mind the Eilhart or the Gottfried version.

Several additional works of art deserve at least passing mention. A series of ten murals (ca. 1385) which treat the famous lovers is at Runkelstein Castle in South Tirol. One depicts a scene described in Gottfried's version, but not in Eilhart's; another seems to follow the older poet more closely than the younger. The rest could have been inspired by either. It is quite possible that the painter was familiar with both versions. Another set of illustrations is contained in the fifteenth-century Heidelberg Manuscript of *Tristrant*, which has ninety-one pen sketches to accompany the text. Further sets appear as woodcuts in the early editions of the chapbook, one of which has seventy.

As a final note on the reception of *Tristrant* in the Middle Ages, it is interesting to find that the work left its mark not only on literature and art, but also on medicine. For among the many pharmaceutical substances in use was a "Tristrant's Water," made from spices and wine, which was taken as a sort of general medicine to keep one healthy, as well as for certain specific diseases and ailments.²¹ The name may be connected with the cooling water in which Tristrant lay down after his fight with the dragon.

The existence of four fifteenth-century manuscripts of *Tristrant* (including the Czech translation) indicates that the old verse novel still enjoyed a certain popularity at the end of the medieval period. Its fame in modern times, however, rests largely on a prose version in early New High German which was first printed in 1484 and has gone through twenty-two subsequent editions. A tally of these by centuries gives some idea as to the chapbook's varying fortunes up to the present: two editions appeared at the end of the fifteenth century, ten in the sixteenth, three in the seventeenth, none in the eighteenth, five in the nineteenth (including a Danish translation), and three in the twentieth.

It is generally believed that the source of the chapbook was not that of the later manuscripts, but the differences between the prose and verse versions are less the result of differing sources than of the treatment of his material by the chapbook's author. Not only does he modernize the story by transferring it to a modern idiom, prose, but he also adapts it in many other ways in order to cater to a contemporary (and less sophisticated) audience. Much of that which presents a courtly mode of living—detailed descriptions of fine clothing, festive and colorful processions, hunting and jousting, battle tactics and maneuvers—is condensed or omitted, and Eilhart's relatively few foreign words are dropped. On the other hand, the prose writer adds passages to smooth transitions between one idea or event and another, to expand motivations, to fill lacunae in the plot, and to clarify (sometimes erroneously) the ambiguities arising from the compressed, staccato style of his source. Occasionally he tries to give the story more unity by supplying additional glances backward and forward, reminding the reader of what has happened and anticipating what is to come. He is more pious than Eilhart, seasoning his narrative with religious expressions, and more inclined to exaggerate both numbers and emotions: in their last battle Tristrant and Kehenis fight against not nine, but a hundred men, and scenes of grief and lamenting are considerably extended.

The greatest change is in the character of the narrator. The new one has little sense of humor, no objectivity, and a strongly didactic bent. Instead of amusingly ironic asides, there are moral reflections, and the impersonal comments on the action are replaced by a pronounced subjectivity. The plot itself remains unchanged, and indeed there is no indication that the prose writer intended to do more than simply translate the Middle High German verse into New High German prose. Nevertheless, he translates the spirit as well: medieval love of magic to Renaissance rationality, courtly pomp and splendor to a more bourgeois simplicity, a struggle with a mysterious fate to an unproblematic series of adventures. Although the result is less artistic and imaginative than the work revealed by the manuscript versions, it is still interesting and in places holds the attention even of the reader of today. One can readily see

why it should be Eilhart's novel, rather than Gottfried's, which was adapted to a late fifteenth-century audience. For if one were to remove Gottfried's more subtle art from his story, there would be little left to entertain the reader.

In spite of the popularity of the prose *Tristrant* in the period of humanism and Reformation—as indicated by the appearance of twelve editions before 1600—it seems to have had little impact on the literature. Only Hans Sachs used it as a source, and his interest was of short duration. He learned to know the work from an edition of 1549 or 1550 and, during one week of December, 1551, composed six mastersongs about its hero. Slightly more than a year later he completed the first dramatic treatment of the story in Germany, the *Tragedia mit 23 personen, von der strengen lieb herr Tristrant mit der schönen königin Isalden, unnd hat 7 actus*. In a *Knüttelvers* (a type of doggerel) which somewhat resembles the prosody of the twelfth-century fragments, he presents most of the episodes and with few changes, although some are greatly condensed. The drama ends with a warning against such irregular love affairs, which can bring one nothing but sorrow and grief. Judging from the mastersongs and the tragedy, we can assume that Hans Sachs knew no other version of the story except Eilhart's, and his only through the chapbook.

It was more than a century after the *Tragedia* before *Tristrant* appeared again in literature, and then only in passing, when its hero was mentioned along with other legendary figures in the *Horribilicribrafax* of Andreas Gryphius. After that, Eilhart's work, together with almost the entire corpus of medieval secular writing, sank into oblivion and did not emerge until the time of the rediscovery of the Middle Ages by the German romanticists. Strangely enough, however, the initial reappearance of the work may have had nothing to do with these poets and scholars, since it first revealed itself in the plot and general content of a Danish novel, the earliest extant edition of which was printed in 1792. This surprising story changes the scenes and the names of all the characters except that of the hero, now Tistrand of Burgundy. The heroine is Indiana, daughter of the Great Mogul of India; the second Isolde is Inanda, daughter of King Dagobert of France; Mark

has become King Alfonso of Spain; Morolt, the son of the emperor of China. The love story takes place against a background of power politics. Some incidents of the chapbook have been dropped, many have been greatly altered, and several have been added from Gottfried's version.²² However, the basic dependence on the prose *Tristrant* is unmistakable. The Danish novel inspired an Icelandic verse narrative on the same subject but had no influence on the Danish translation of the chapbook, which was completed much later.

Although a collection of Middle High German literature containing Gottfried's *Tristan und Isold* was published in 1784–85, the love story did not inspire a German work until 1800—six years after the appearance of the Danish novel—when August Wilhelm von Schlegel composed ninety-one stanzas of a version which remained a fragment. It used Gottfried's account and would have continued with that of Heinrich von Freiberg if it had been completed. The large majority of the many subsequent German treatments have employed the same sources. A few, however, have followed Eilhart's narrative as revealed in the prose *Tristrant*, at least to some extent. It was the source of an uncompleted drama on which August von Platen worked from 1825 to 1827 and of one of the seven Tristan poems that the Germanist, Wilhelm Wackernagel, published the following year in his *Gedichte eines fahrenden Schülers*. It was one of the two sources (Gottfried's work was the other) for Karl Immermann's verse novel, *Tristan*, which appeared as a fragment in 1841, and for Friedrich Roeber's *Tragödie in Arabesken* (1854). In 1844, when Hermann Kurz made the first complete translation of Gottfried's *Tristan und Isold* into modern German, the chapbook, together with the continuations by Ulrich von Türheim and Heinrich von Freiberg and the Middle English *Sir Tristrem*, was used to form a conclusion. Perhaps the most recent work to show the influence of Eilhart is Ernst Hardt's drama, *Tantris der Narr* (1909), which also borrows from Gottfried.

There are perhaps other modern German treatments of the Tristan story which drew from Eilhart, but certainly not many, and, considering the large number of such works—lyric poems,

short stories, novels, dramas, operas, symphonic poems, choruses—it is apparent that his influence on modern literature has been slight compared to that of Gottfried. There are several reasons for this: one is that the latter's refined artistry, complex symbolism, and emphasis on psychological reactions appealed to the romanticists and their successors, much as Eilhart's objectivity and conciseness had attracted the readers of the sixteenth century; another has to do with available texts. The 1785 edition of Gottfried's novel was followed by three more during the first half of the nineteenth century and several since then, some of which have been frequently reprinted. And after the Kurz translation came New High German versions by Karl Simrock, Wilhelm Hertz, and others, so that a contemporary redaction has always been at hand. The situation with regard to Eilhart has been much less favorable. The seven editions of the chapbook which have appeared since 1809 are certainly enough to save it from oblivion, but this work, although nearly as old as the two complete manuscript versions, lacks much of their charm and medieval flavor. The latter have never been printed in full and are generally available only through Franz Lichtenstein's *Eilhart von Oberge* (1877), which contains a reconstruction of the thirteenth-century version that was their common source. This text has not been translated into modern German and is therefore accessible only to Germanists.

The English *Tristrant* which follows is based primarily on Lichtenstein's text, although in a few instances it substitutes the language of the Dresden and Heidelberg manuscripts which appears in his footnotes. Occasionally the interpretation of a phrase was influenced by the 1484 edition of the chapbook. The translation was undertaken in the belief that Eilhart's work, even in a somewhat corrupted form, has true literary merit and will appeal to modern readers. The translation will fill a significant lacuna, since *Tristrant* previously was the only one of the six major versions composed during the early years of the love story (1170–1230) which was not available in English.²³

NOTES

1. Among these are Friedrich Vogt, *Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Literatur*, 3d. ed., *Grundriss der deutschen Literatur*, no. 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1922), 1: 117; Arthur Witte, "Der Aufbau der ältesten Tristandichtungen," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 70 (1933): 162; Maurice Delbouille, "Le premier *Roman de Tristan*," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 5 (1962): 286; Karl Otto Brogsitter, *Artusepik*, Sammlung Metzler, no. 38 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965), p. 99; Gerhard Schindele, *Tristan: Metamorphose und Tradition*, Studien zur Poetik und Geschichte der Literatur, no. 12 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971), p. 13; and especially Gertrude Schoepperle, *Tristan and Isolt: A Study of the Sources of the Romance*, 2d ed. (New York: Franklin, 1960), 1:8. A smaller number of scholars believes either the version of Thomas or that of Béroul to be closer to the original.

2. Most Eilhart research has dealt with the relationships and reliability of the various texts. The latest work to describe and evaluate the texts is Hadumod Bussmann's *Eilhart von Oberg: Tristrant: Synoptischer Druck der ergänzten Fragmenten mit der gesamten Parallelüberlieferung*, Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, no. 70 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), which also presents in parallel columns the texts of the old fragments and the corresponding sections of the later manuscripts. One can readily see that there are few significant differences in content.

3. The various attempts to identify the original language of *Tristrant* have been summarized by Gerhard Cordes, *Zur Sprache Eilhards von Oberg*, Hansische Forschungen: Arbeiten zur germanischen Philologie, no. 1 (Hamburg: Wachholtz, 1939). About half of the scholars believe it was written in Middle Franconian; others assume it was a normalized Middle or High German. Cordes thinks the language was basically Thuringian.

4. Careful analyses of the Eilhart-Veldeke relationship and surveys of the preceding scholarship on the subject are found in Jan van Dam, *Zur Vorgeschichte des höfischen Epos: Lamprecht, Eilhart, Veldeke*, Rheinische Beiträge und Hülfsbücher zur germanischen Philologie und Volkskunde, no. 7 (Bonn and Leipzig: Schroeder, 1923), and Hadumod Bussmann, "Der Liebesmonolog im fröhköfischen Epos. Versuch einer Typbestimmung am Beispiel von Eilharts Isalde-Monolog," *Werk-Typ-Situation: Studien zu poetologischen Bedingungen in*

der älteren deutschen Literatur, ed. Ingeborg Glier et al. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1969), pp. 45–63.

5. Delbouille, "Le premier *Roman de Tristan*," p. 434, believes that Eilhart's source was that of all the *Tristan* versions. Schoepperle, *Tristan and Isolt*, 1:8, 108, thinks it the source of all versions except the continuation of *Béroul* and the French prose romance, but the majority of scholars maintain that Eilhart's source was one step removed from that of Thomas. The fifteenth-century verse redactions mention a book from which the author got his story, but the references are supported neither by the early fragments nor by the chapbook and may have been only a literary device. Bodo Mergel, *Tristan und Isolde: Ursprung und Entwicklung der Tristansage des Mittelalters* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1949), p. 70, suggests that Eilhart's source was the lost *Tristan* story which Chrétien at the beginning of *Cligès* mentions as one of his first works. Other scholars are inclined to accept the trouvère with the amusing pseudonym, La Chèvre, who is mentioned in a miracle play as the author of a *Tristan* work, as Eilhart's immediate, though perhaps not ultimate source. Kurt Wagner, "Wirklichkeit und Schicksal im Epos des Eilhart von Oberg," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen* 170 (1936): 182–83, theorizes that Eilhart's source was written by a cleric of northern France. Roger Sherman Loomis, "Bleheris and the *Tristan* Story," *Modern Language Notes* 39 (1924): 321, and "Problems of the *Tristan* Legend," *Romania* 53 (1927): 102, says that Eilhart's chief source, although perhaps not his immediate one, was a French-speaking Welshman named Bleheris. An extensive review of the scholarship on this question is found in Rosemary Picozzi, *A History of *Tristan* Scholarship*, Canadian Studies in German Language and Literature, no. 5 (Berne and Frankfurt: Lang, 1971), pp. 11–59.

6. Gottfried ridicules such coincidences in the old story (probably referring to Eilhart's account) in his *Tristan und Isold*, 14th ed., edited by Friedrich Ranke (Dublin and Zurich: Weidmann, 1969), lines 8601–28.

7. All line references are to Franz Lichtenstein, ed., *Eilhart von Oberge, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Culturgeschichte der germanischen Völker*, no. 19 (Strassburg: Trübner, 1877).

8. Hans Eggers, "Der Liebesmonolog in Eilharts *Tristrant*," *Euphorion* 45 (1950): 275–304, and "Vom Formenbau mittelhochdeutscher Epen," *Der Deutschunterricht* 11 (1959): 81–97; C. A. Robson, "The Technique of Symmetrical Composition in Medieval Narrative Poetry," *Studies in Medieval French: Presented to Alfred Ewert in Honour of his Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), pp. 53–64; Danielle Buschinger, "La Structure du *Tristrant* d'Eilhart von

Oberg," *Études Germaniques* 27 (1972): 1–26, and "La Composition numerique du *Tristrant d'Eilhart von Oberg*," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 16 (1973): 287–94.

9. Daniel-Hermann Schorn, "Die Zeit in den Tristandichtungen Eilharts und Gotfrids: Studie zur Wirklichkeitsauffassungen in mittelalterlichen Dichtungen" (Ph. D. diss., University of Cologne, 1952), pp. 124–25.

10. The shift from indirect to direct discourse in the middle of a statement appeared in German literature with the "Hildebrandslied," but by the time the courtly novel developed it was somewhat rare.

11. Heinz Stollte, *Eilhart und Gottfried: Studie über Motivreim und Aufbaustil, Sprache, Volkstum, Stil: Forschungen zur deutschen Literaturgeschichte und Volkskunde*, no. 1 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1941), p. 33, includes the summaries in his concept of *Motivreim*.

12. A La Chèvre is mentioned as the author of a Tristan story not only in a miracle play, but also (about 1176) in a version of the *Roman de Renart*. W. A. Tregenza, "The Relation of the oldest Branch of the *Roman de Renart* to the Tristan Poems," *Modern Language Review* 19 (1924): 301–5, calls attention to a series of interesting parallels between the characters and situations of the two works and suggests that the author of *Renart* may have implied a similarity between his hero and La Chèvre's.

13. The relationship of *Tristrant* to the Strassburg *Alexanderlied* has been treated among others by Lichtenstein, *Eilhart*, p. CLIV, and "Zu den deutschen Dichtungen von Tristan und Isolde," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 26 (1882): 13–18; W. Wilmanns, "Der Strassburger *Alexander* und Eilharts *Tristrant*," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 27 (1883): 294–98; and Erich Gierach, *Zur Sprache von Eilharts Tristrant: Lautlehre, Formenlehre und Wortschatz nach den Reimen*, Prager Deutsche Studien, no. 4 (Prag: Bellmann, 1908), p. 253. The *Tristrant-Graf Rudolf* relationship is discussed by Johannes Bethmann, *Untersuchungen über die mhd. Dichtung vom Grafen Rudolf*, Palaestra, no. 30 (Berlin: Mayer, 1904), pp. 163–66, and Joseph Strobl, in his review of Lichtenstein's *Eilhart*, *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum* 5 (1879): 236.

14. Hans Eggers, "Literarische Beziehungen des *Parzival* zum *Tristrant* Eilharts von Oberg," *Beiträge* (Halle) 72 (1950): 39–51, presents the most important study of the Eilhart influence on Wolfram.

15. Johannes Gombert, *Eilhart von Oberg und Gottfried von Strassburg: Beitrag zur Tristanforschung* (Rotterdam: Nijgh and van Ditzmar, 1927), denies that Gottfried was influenced by Eilhart and explains the similarities in their works by maintaining that the thirteenth-century redactions of *Tristrant* contain later interpolations

from *Tristan und Isold*. This view has been effectively rebutted by several scholars. The fullest treatments of the Eilhart-Gottfried relationship are by F. Piquet, *L'originalité de Gottfried de Strasbourg dans son poème de Tristan et Isolde: Étude de littérature comparée*, Travaux et Mémoires de l'université de Lille, n.s., 1, Law-Letters, fascicle 5 (Lille: University of Lille, 1905); "Le problème Eilhart-Gottfried," *Revue Germanique* 20 (1929): 119–32, 242–54; and a review of van Dam's book, *Revue Germanique* 15 (1924): 336–42; and by van Dam, *Zur Vorgeschichte des höfischen Epos*, and in a review of Gombert's book, *Archiv* 156 (1929): 108–14.

16. Eberhard Kurt Busse, *Ulrich von Türheim*, Palaestra, no. 121 (Berlin: Mayer, 1913, pp. 43–61, compares the versions of Ulrich and Eilhart closely and concludes that the former's only source was *Tristrant*. This opinion is also held by other scholars, with one exception. W. Lutoslawski, "Les Folies de Tristan," *Romania* 15 (1886): 511–33, believes that both Ulrich and Heinrich had additional sources. Friedrich Wiegandt, *Heinrich von Freiberg in seinem Verhältnis zu Eilhart und Ulrich* (Rostock: Bolt, 1879), pp. 41–42, believes that Heinrich knew Ulrich's version, one similar to Eilhart's, and a third, which might have been Chrétien's lost work. Wolfgang Golther, *Tristan und Isolde in den Dichtungen des Mittelalters und der neuen Zeit* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1907), p. 90, maintains that Heinrich got all his material from Ulrich and Eilhart.

17. H. Paul, in his introduction to *Tristan als Mönch*, Sitzungsbericht der philosophisch-philologischen und der historischen Classe der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München, vol. 3 (Munich: Akademie, 1895), thinks it possible that the anonymous author knew *Tristrant*.

18. Konrad Burdach, *Reinmar der Alte und Walther von der Vogelweide*, 2d ed. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1928), p. 120, says that Friedrich von Hausen and Reinmar were influenced by the monologues of Isalde and Lavina. Ernst Lesser, "Das Verhältnis der Frauenmonologe in den lyrischen und epischen deutschen Dichtungen des 12. und angehenden 13. Jahrhunderts," *Beiträge* 24 (1899): 361–83, thinks the other poets were also affected and makes detailed comparisons. Heinz Fischer, however, *Die Frauenmonologe der deutschen höfischen Lyrik* (Mainz: Schneider, 1934), pp. 6–20, maintains that the lyric tradition was older and was not influenced by either of the epic monologues.

19. Paul Piper, *Höfische Epik: Die ältesten Vertreter ritterlicher Epik in Deutschland*, Deutsche National-Litteratur, vol. 4, sect. 1, pt. 1 (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1890), pp. 16–17; Lichtenstein, *Eilhart von Oberge*, pp. CXCIII–CCIII (gives specific documentation); Kurt Wagner, ed., *Eilhart von Oberge: I. Die alten*

Bruchstücke, *Rheinische Beiträge* and *Hülfsbücher zur germanischen Philologie und Volkskunde*, no. 5 (Bonn and Leipzig: Schroeder, 1924), pp. 8*-10*. The above list does not include works in which the reference seems to be to Gottfried's characters. For the names of the lovers and Gawain, in nonliterary documents, see Ernst Kegel, *Die Verbreitung der mittelhochdeutschen erzählenden Literatur in Mittel- und Niederdeutschland nachgewiesen auf Grund von Personennamen*, Hermaea, no. 3 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1905), pp. 108-19; Kurt Wagner, *Eilhart von Oberge*, pp. 8*-17*.

20. Information on the representation of the Tristan and Isolde story in the plastic arts of the medieval period is contained especially in I. V. Zingerle, "Die Fresken im Schlosse Runkelstein," *Germania* 2 (1857): 467-69; Jürgen Ricklefs, "Der Tristanroman der niedersächsischen und mitteldeutschen Tristanteppiche," *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung* 86 (1963): 33-48; Doris Fouquet, *Wort und Bild in der mittelalterlichen Tristantradition: Der älteste Tristantteppich von Kloster Wienhausen und die textile Tristanüberlieferung des Mittelalters*, Philologische Studien und Quellen, no. 62 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1971); Hella Frühmorgen-Voss, "Tristan und Isolde in mittelalterlichen Bildzeugnissen," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 47 (1973): 645-63; and Hermann Dunger, "Der Tristantteppich von Schwarzenberg," *Germania* 28 (1883): 1-9.

21. Joachim Telle, "'Tristrants Wasser' und 'Morolfs Wein': Zur Verwendung von Personennamen in mittelalterlichen Fachtemini zusammengesetzter Arzneimittel," *Beiträge zur Namenforschung*, n.s. 6 (1971): 72.

22. A summary of the novel appears in Wolfgang Golther, *Tristan und Isolde*, pp. 248-54.

23. The fragmentary Tristan versions by Thomas, Béroul, and Gottfried have been available in English for some time. The Norse saga and the French prose romance appeared in English only recently, in excellent translations by Paul Schach (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1973) and Norman Spector (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1973), respectively.

Tristrant

Since I am to tell a story to these people (because they requested it, I shall gladly do my best), I would like to know right now if there is anyone around who doesn't want to listen. I would put up with him, but, if one were to let him stay, he would quickly conceal himself with evil intentions, and the number of those who get bored might easily rise to more than four. They shall get no pleasure from having mean spirits, for they shall have to leave us against their will. One can consider them worthless and indeed tell them so, because they deserve to suffer for it. I'm warning them now to give up this bad habit for a while and restrain their poor manners. Who disturbs a story which others like to hear, which is useful, and which may even be a real help to good people has the mind of a child. If you will keep quiet, I'll tell you the very truth without any lies, just as I found it in the book: how Sir Tristrant first came into this world and how he left it, what wondrous things he was always doing and how he did them, how the clever man won the Lady Isalde and how she died because of him—for he was her death as she was his. Hear a story, just as I tell it, of both joy and grief. No one ever knew a better tale of worldly feats, of manhood, and of love, and therefore you should listen all the more carefully.

Once there reigned in Cornwall a king named Mark who was warring fiercely against another mighty king (said to rule in Ireland) and wanted to get some help. He therefore sent to the neighboring lands for many fine warriors. They came to his aid because his enemy was arrogant, had a large army, and often sailed across the sea with comrades to do him great harm. A great king learned of this and also journeyed to Tintanjol, in knightly manner with a retinue prepared for battle. His name

was Rivalin, and his land was Lohenois. He had heard that Mark's realm had suffered in many places and went there and served him openly, just as if he were his vassal, because he wanted Mark's sister. He won her favor with a painful wound, lay with her, and became so dear to the beautiful lady (Blanke-flur by name) that she left with him when the war was over. The lady was with child when the journey began and at sea became so sick because of it that she died. They cut from her womb a son whom the king brought back to his country and named Tristrant. There was great distress at the lady's death; everyone was sad. The women took her ashore where, with much lamenting, she was buried. King Rivalin could not have been more grief-stricken. He wrung his hands and wept bitterly, as did all who were there with him. Standing by the bier, they cried out and wept, and one could indeed see that they grieved for the lady.

When this came to an end, King Rivalin turned the dear baby over to a wet nurse, who cared for it and raised it well until the day it could ride. Shortly thereafter the noble king took pains to place the boy in the charge of a squire named Kurneaval, who could indeed give him the stamp of courtly manners. Neither before nor since has a child been better trained; nothing which would bring him honor and praise was forgotten. Kurneaval taught the boy to play the harp and other stringed instruments. He let him romp and play enough with other children, but also taught him great skill of hand and foot in manly sports: to hurl a stone, to run and leap, to wrestle cleverly, and to throw a spear. He bade him be kind and showed him how to use a shield in a knightly joust and wield a sword in battle. The squire also taught him to speak politely and never break his word, saying that, if he did so, he would become a liar and quite worthless. He also admonished him to be faithful, to behave with ever-new virtue in a courtly manner, and to act with wise tact. He bade him place arm and wealth willingly in the service of women and ladies. "Learn carefully," he said, "always to show good breeding." He was also to take to heart the best things he heard from others wherever he might be. He taught him many courtesies and made wantonness offensive to him. Why say more? He taught virtue and honor, for Kurneaval was himself so disposed that he would rather do two good deeds than an evil one. He forced the boy, whether he would or not, to be the same way, and

it was not long until the latter shunned all meanness. He was indeed such a good pupil that he did whatever his teacher said.

Kurneaval raised the boy until the latter was strong enough to bear easily both pain and hardship and then said, "My noble prince, you should ask your father—now listen very carefully—to let you go to see foreign countries. You know his lands well, and they all serve you gladly, but you should not miss learning about others too." The handsome child at once went to the king, and spoke to him very politely, "Dear father, permit me to go on a journey. I want to see foreign lands, and it would not be good for me to delay longer. Not many people have learned to know me except those of your court, who all gladly do my will. Just think now if I would not gain by this. I would learn much from strangers if I were to see many of them at work and at play, and it could do me no harm to endure hardships now and also see in my youth what fine manners there are in foreign realms. So do it, dear father, grant me willingly what I ask and help me depart, for I am too close to you here."

Then King Rivalin said, "My dear son, I shall gladly do what you wish." He spoke to the steward and ordered him if he valued his favor to get Kurneaval whatever he wanted. The steward sent the squire and the boy all they needed. Kurneaval then chose from the king's court eight squires and two fine, young noblemen and bade them go with the boy, so they too got ready for the journey. A pack horse was loaded with whatever Kurneaval wanted of silver and gold, which the king could well afford, and he took along another with clothing and all sorts of finery—this was his wish and his way. He ordered a ship prepared which was solid, well decked with skillfully joined boards, and had good rooms. He had a stall built into which horses were led so that when the sea voyage was over and they came to the shore they could take them out and ride over land. When all was prepared, Sir Tristrant and his retainers took leave of Rivalin and boarded the ship. The sail was then turned in such a way that the wind which took them from land would not drive them astray. Thus the little company set out from Lohenois over sea to Cornwall, where no one knew them.

Later when as strangers they started to ride into King Mark's realm, Sir Tristrant very pleasantly got all his retainers to agree not to tell his family or the land from which they came. He

gave strict orders that, whatever one might charge them with, they should be silent as to their origins, saying, "I don't want anyone here to know who I am." With such a scheme Sir Tristrant rode to where the king was. When he went before him, the king received him well. The boy thanked him and politely spoke thus, "Sir, I would like to stay here with you if you will permit me. I want to take up service with you, for I have heard of the excellence of your court."

"Well, I welcome you with God," said the mighty king and quickly sent for his lord high steward.

When he came, the king commended the boy to his protection, and the good lord took the boy by his white hand, went all over the court, and ordered the officials to embrace him. He commanded the marshall to take better care of him than of anyone else. The lord's courtliness was seen in this—I don't believe that he forgot the boy. The king was fond of the lord high steward. He never carried in the dishes except at great festivals, and the king was glad to allow this, for his steward was a high-born nobleman. He had been chosen by the king to wield the latter's might and preserve his country and his honor. He was named Tinas, was a prince of that country, and was in charge of everything at the court; his castle was called Litan. He always did what was best, was courteous, and was powerful, as he often showed in his kindness to the boy. He asked the retinue to be good to him and protect him from all distress and promised to reward them for this. The excellence of the boy also became known, because, early or late, he would never miss a chance to do something good for any reason. So the youth grew up with honor and in praiseworthy manner at Mark's court until he thought himself ready to be knighted.

At that time there was a lord in Ireland named Morolt who had the strength of four men. Now listen and take note: he was quite fearful and had killed many of his enemies. His sister's husband was the king of Ireland, a splendid and blameless hero, and Morolt had forcibly subdued the lands all around for him. There was no country near which the champion had not compelled to give tribute, except only Cornwall; he had conquered all the other lands. The young King Mark paid no heed to him, which angered Morolt, who thought he would be disgraced if he did not make Mark a vassal. Therefore he decided to cross the

sea at once with a mighty army, invade Mark's land, conquer it, and bring back tribute to his king. He gathered the many bold warriors he needed and, when about to set out, spoke to the king: "I am greatly annoyed that Mark has not sent you tribute from his land, and I shall cause wives to lament throughout his whole realm or lose my life. He will send it to you, in shame and whether he wants to or not, or I'll play such a spiteful trick on him that he will wish he had been paying tribute for many years." I tell you truly, he was really angry. Then he sailed across the sea.

When he landed, he sent a messenger to demand that Mark pay the tribute from his land which he had been so rash as to neglect for more than fifteen years. And he told the messenger to say in truth that, if Mark had a man "who is my peer in nobility and dares meet me in combat, I'll fight with him and thus prove that my lord has a right to the tribute. And, if Mark objects, I'll give him another choice: leave his country or fight me with his army. If he can defend himself, I'll leave him alone and go back home. You should also tell him what I want as tribute: every third child born in his land in the past fifteen years. Tell him that if he doesn't give them to me I'll soon take them myself: girls and boys, laity and clergy, poor and rich. The boys shall be my bondsmen, and I'll put the girls in my own whorehouse to earn silver and coins for me early and late."

When the messenger told this to Mark, the latter sadly raised his eyes to God and sorely lamented the great outrage. He sent messengers far and wide, telling them to ride quickly to the princes of the country. Hardly had he summoned them than they came to his court and heard straight from him of his concern and Morolt's fearful message. While this was going on, Tristrant spoke to Kurneaval: "Hear me, dear teacher, for now I indeed need your advice about this matter. I don't like the arrogance of the mighty man, and if no one else will confront him I'll fight him myself. May God help me to gain justice. How shall I begin?" The squire replied with good sense: "If my advice would help, I surely would rather give it to you than anyone else; I think it would be a good idea to forget the combat."

"No, my dear teacher, you shall not talk me out of it. We could be lucky and win both wealth and honor. And we could never live down the shame if he should go away unchallenged."

"I would be glad to give permission," said the squire, "if I could be sure that you would win. But, since I know your mind, I'll help you if I can whatever happens, good or bad. May God, Who created night and day, help you carry out your will! If you take my advice, since I can't dissuade you, you will ask the king to make you a knight, according to his custom." This was very welcome counsel for the boy, so he followed it up with the deed.

Sir Tristrant then took the lord high steward by the hand and went to stand before the king. "With your help," he said, "I would like to become my own man." The king replied, "It's too soon. You still have a year to wait."

"Lord, I tell you truly that it's not too soon. You can be sure of this, if I am ever to win fame, I must begin early and persist for a long time. I long so much for a sword and can't give up if it's possible to get my wish."

Then the king gave him what he should have and let him decide whom he wanted to take the sword with him; he could choose them all. The young hero ordered that sixty squires be knighted with him, and within seven days the princes too brought many fine warriors. Then Tristrant rode to court with all the young knights. When he came into the hall, everyone said that there could be no dispute about it, he was the most handsome.

The king had sent for the noblest men in the land. When they all arrived at the large gathering, Mark told them of his distress at what he had heard and spoke thus: "You have come so that I may find out what you want to do. I'll help as best I can with anything you undertake. I have never heard news that pained me so. If there is a man here who wants to face Morolt, he will get such a reward that he will always be rich."

They went forth at once to take counsel, and each spoke, but there was no one among them who wanted to undertake the combat. Then Tristrant came and asked them what such a large council was about. A prince said, "We can find in all this retinue no knight so bold as to confront Morolt—and there are many strong people here—for he fights with such fury that whoever faces him will lose badly and can easily come to harm."

"I'll leave that to fate," said Sir Tristrant, "and fight him at once if I am allowed to be your champion. Maybe God will let me

quiet his insolence so that he gets enough of fighting before he takes my life." Then he asked them all to help him with the king so that he could fight against the brave warrior, as he should. If the king would permit it, he would prove on Morolt's body that he wasn't afraid of him. They were pleased with his words and yet worried about turning over such an important matter to the youth. But they decided that they would rather do it at this time than keep quiet about the offer and thought they would leave the victory to fate. "Things will go well for us," said Tristrant, "and I myself am sure he won't harm me. But don't tell my lord about me too soon, not until he promises that whoever wants to fight the warrior will be allowed to do so." When they heard his request, they went to the king and surrounded him in council. They said, "Lord, there is a man who will challenge Morolt for us if permitted. You might well grant him this."

"Whatever he wishes that is lawful he will receive," spoke the king and asked who it was.

Then an important prince said, "Give us a full promise that he may be sure you will let him fight if he is a nobleman."

"I promise by all that is right that I shall gladly do this. Moreover, he shall have my help and be most dear to me." At this, they delayed no longer, but told him at once that it was his friend, Sir Tristrant.

The messengers quickly said that their lord would fight only his peer. This did not bother the bold Tristrant, who spoke: "Take note of who I am. Blankeflur, my mother, was of free nobility, and my father's name is Rivalin. I was born a prince of Lohenois and am the son of Mark's sister." The king was both pleased and pained: pleased to know that it was his sister's son, deeply pained that he, so young, wanted to brave such great peril. The good king said to his dear nephew, "For my sake you must give up this battle so you won't be harmed."

"For what reason, uncle?"

"I'll tell you: why should it trouble you if they think the people in this land are cowards?"

"It would pain me."

"You will cause me great distress by this."

"How is that? Are you ashamed to have me as a champion?"

"Yes, I am."

"You will have no dishonor here in your land because of me."

"What is more, it does not concern you."

"I can't separate myself from the matter."

"Yes, you can indeed."

"I can't."

"Oh, that I ever gave you the sword!"

"Do you regret that?"

"Truly I do."

"Why?"

"I'm sorry I ever promised it to you!"

"But you did."

"And I shall hold to it, but give up the battle."

"No, I shall not do that whatever happens to me." With a brave spirit the hero thus refused to change his mind. No matter how one pleaded, it was a waste of time. At last the king became vexed at his nephew's stubborn refusal, looked at him angrily, and spoke forcefully: "Indeed, you are not going to fight."

Then the hero reminded the king of the vow to his friends that he should meet Morolt in single combat. He also firmly reminded the prince who had received the promise, and so he got his way after all and was permitted to fight. "It is a strange thing," said the king to his nephew, "that you want to lose your life now and don't even know for what."

"If he kills me, that will be reason enough. Sir, I shall win honor or die."

"You could still save your life."

"Even if I knew for sure that I would lie dead before him, I would go through with it rather than have him gain so much without anyone daring to fight him."

"Let that be my concern," said the king.

"No, truly," replied Tristrant, "he will get a battle from me, and nothing else will do."

What choice did the king have then? He sent a message telling Morolt to come to an island close to the shore, for he would indeed get what he wanted: Tristrant would fight him on the third day hence. He was to be told that the tribute also would be brought for him to see, and if he wanted to get it and take it away, either by threat or friendly agreement, Tristrant would answer him.

The messengers were unhappy at the king's words. They departed and went to where they were to meet Morolt. Now you can hear what the lord said when he saw them coming.

"How does the king answer me?"

"Only with a challenge."

"Is that true?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Where shall it be?"

"Close by. The combat takes place tomorrow morning."

"Who will fight me?"

"King Mark's nephew, who has just been knighted."

These words pleased him, he felt hate without anger for the one who dared fight him. The prince prepared himself with great pains and early on the third morning rode up with a mighty army to the place which Mark had proposed. They dismounted and set up their tents on a field by the seashore. Then the king ordered that his steel armor (of which he was very fond) be brought, and he gave it to Sir Tristrant, tying it on the youth with his own royal hands. These were very friendly acts and showed his great affection. He also gave him his horse, a noble Castilian, which was large, strong, and handsome and was decked out in a fine covering. On it was placed a saddle trimmed with Veronese gold and a silver bridle adorned with red gold. The king presented these to his dear nephew together with a sword, of just the right breadth, which would cut any steel whenever it was swung fiercely. He also bade him carry before him a new shield which was wrought with great care.

After Sir Tristrant was so finely equipped by the king and was about to start out, the latter kissed and embraced him, saying, "May the good God in mercy protect you, strike down your enemy, and send you back unharmed." They all prayed that our Lord would help him. With that, the hero took up his sword and shield, seized his horse by the bridle, went to the boat, and set out alone for the island. The great Morolt—as you may already have heard—came toward him down to the strand. Tristrant tied his boat firmly and then pushed Morolt's out into the sea with his spear. "Warrior, why did you do that?" demanded the fearful man. "I'll tell you why," the other replied. "We both came here for the profit and loss we are to gain, and one boat will be

enough to take back him who wins the victory here." Morolt was pleased at his words and said, "Come with me to my country, I urge you, and I shall share my fiefs and family lands with you. If you will change your mind and let the battle go, I shall always risk life and property for you. Think of yourself, who looks so handsome to me! Happy, charming youth, consider this while there is time and save your life. I tell you truly that I shall make you rich and give you half of my inheritance. It would be a pity for me to destroy you, so give up the idea of fighting." To this the steadfast warrior answered, "I would be glad to do it if you would give up your demands on the king."

"No, that can't be," said Morolt, "I won't free King Mark of tribute; that would be a mistake. All who heard of it might think I did it out of fear. I can't accept this sort of advice; all my lord's lands would rise up against me." Then Tristrant spoke once more, "I take back my offer; I would rather die at your hand than ask this of you." They waited no longer, for they wanted to get at each other. As soon as the bold heroes mounted, they lowered their spears, fixed them under their arms, and the horses brought them together. They pierced each others' shields with such force that the shafts in their hands broke. Sir Tristrant was wounded through the steel mail. He was sick a long time because of this.

Now that the bold warriors had charged each other, there could be no quarter, for Tristrant was wounded with a poison spear; who wouldn't be annoyed at that? Each broke another spear, and Tristrant got revenge by knocking Morolt from his horse. The latter at once sprang on his feet, Tristrant dismounted, and the two rushed at each other. They fought furiously and struck deep wounds in each other. They thought with their hands: it was the fiercest battle ever fought by two men before or since. The struggle became more grim, and hot sparks kept flashing out of their fine helmets from the blows. Tristrant denied the tribute manfully, and Morolt fought as savagely as a wild boar. Tristrant showed the other what a good sword he had by cutting up his shield, but his own also suffered. Often they swung their swords so that they rang out loudly. Then the mighty man struck the youth so hard below the knee that he went down, but Tristrant recovered and caught his

opponent's hand with such a blow that it fell off, taking the sword with it. At this he lost heart and fled, for it was useless to try to fight. Tristrant ran after him like a seasoned warrior, and his bold hand struck a large, deep wound through the other's helmet, so that he fell at Tristrant's feet. And, since I must tell you just how it was, in the wound remained a piece of the sword, which broke off with the blow and later—most unfortunately—was found. Tristrant spoke scornfully: "That's all the tribute you will get. The arrogance which was your guide has greatly deceived you. I tell you truly that you will leave my lord free whether you like it or not."

So the battle ended. They came to get Tristrant with joy and song. Morolt's men also did not wait long, for it would have been shameful to have left him lying there. Weeping with grief, they took the warrior away, saying, "Oh what loss and dishonor we have suffered here!" They quickly set out for home and at once sent messengers to the princess of the land, telling her that if she wanted to see their lord alive she should come to him as soon as possible; there was no time to waste. Isalde was her name, and she was a noble maiden, whose fame was widespread. Moreover, she knew more medicine than any man in the country. She was very sad when she heard the message and, weeping, set out to sea to join him. She was sure that if she found him living she would quickly help him out of his distress and cure him, but when she arrived, he was dead. It was then that she put her snow-white hand into his wound and found the splinter from Tristrant's sword. In tears, the beautiful and noble girl looked at it and saved it. They sailed home with great sorrow and buried Morolt as befitted his station. Isalde wept, as did many a high-born lady and all who were present, both friends and relatives. The king fell on his grave in tears and spoke these words: "I could never get over your death if I should live forever"; then there was distress and lamenting among the retinue. The king sent forth throughout the land a decree that the warriors take pains to see that anyone who came from Cornwall be killed.

He also asked his good friends not to let any who were captured go free, but to hang them or slay them with the sword, quickly and without trial. Many innocent people were killed.

Later those who knew have said (if I have heard rightly) that it was because of Tristrant that no one could come from Cornwall except those who came by ship. But then the king ordered that they too be captured and put to death. All this was due to his fierce anger at having lost the bold Morolt.

However, the latter had revenged himself with a large wound which greatly troubled Tristrant, for no doctor could heal him, and he almost died. There was no one anywhere who could cure poison but Isalde, who would gladly have seen him buried. He had caused her grief she could hardly bear, for he had killed the dearest man in all the world to her, the bold Morolt. She hated him for taking from her uncle both life and honor. The maiden's father was the noble king of Ireland. Where would one ever find her like in any land? She was widely known and greatly praised: wherever one spoke of noble ladies, she was extolled above all others. She was pleasant and wise, beautiful in every part, and well knew how to gain what was honorable and good. She was joyful, but proper. The whole realm got advice from her, and she was the best doctor in the country. Through her wisdom she could help many very sick men recover.

Tristrant was in great distress and could neither eat nor drink. At last the poison in the wound made him stink so that no one could come near him. Then he bade Kurneaval ask the king for God's sake to have a temporary dwelling built for him outside the city, by the sea. For he was so sick that, though he were to stay with the people in the city, he still could not recover. At Kurneaval's request, the king ordered that the dwelling be set up at once where Tristrant wanted it, and the sick man was borne there with much loud and silent lamenting. Bright eyes became dull with weeping as they carried him from the city to the house. Many people followed, all sorely grieved that they had lost the warrior thus. His wound stank so that everyone avoided him except the king, the lord high steward Tinas, and Kurneaval. They took care of the poor, sick man and came each day to see if he had died—a prospect which dismayed both men and women.

Tristrant then decided that he wanted to set forth on the sea and did not care if he never came to land unless he improved. He asked to be placed in a small boat by himself to die, for he

would rather perish alone on the water than endanger all the people with his stench: these were his thoughts. He spoke thus to his squire: "You are to wait a year for me with my dear lord—nothing can trouble you here—and if I live, believe me, I shall return to you before the year is up. If I do not come, seek your own fortune. Go back home and tell my father to reward you well, take you as his son in my place, and let you wear the crown after his death. You may be sure that I would rather it be you than anyone else." Kurneaval quickly forgot crown and wealth and wept bitterly. The others there did likewise, and all, rich and poor, pitied Tristrant; there was great mourning when they carried him to the sea. The noble man asked (as I have heard) that only his harp and sword be put on the ship with him. They did this and pushed the craft from shore. Nothing so painful had ever happened to the mighty King Mark before. He was filled with grief when he saw his dear nephew floating away alone and (you can believe me) followed him with tearful eyes. The boat went far out on the wild sea. The wind caused the sick man great distress. It drove him here and there, and, without a helmsman, he had to go as it wished, but he no longer cared where the ship sailed.

At last a gale seized him, drove him to Ireland, and threw him up on the sand in front of a castle of the king. When Tristrant saw where he was, he was sure that he would die. Now hear how he escaped. The king saw the boat and sent a messenger to find out what was in it. The messenger came to where Tristrant lay near death and hurried back to say that in the boat was a sick man, who unfortunately was sorely wounded in the side. The king at once went down to the shore, ordered that he be carried into a house, and asked him who he was. The question was a difficult and troublesome one for Tristrant, who feared for his life. He answered, "Sir, my name is Pro, and I live in Jemsetir. I was once a minstrel, but now I travel as a merchant. I came to harm on the sea, was robbed of a great deal of goods and sorely wounded. Now, as God would have it, the wind has driven me here." When the king saw his plight, he ordered that Tristrant be given good care and quickly sent word to his daughter, asking if she would oblige him by sending a plaster and several kinds of salves for a very sick

man. However the plaster he got from her did no good. The lady was displeased at this and sent another, but no more than seven days later she was told that the salve had done more harm than good. The beautiful Isalde thought about this and spoke: "The wound has poison in it." She quickly sent a plaster that worked and soon caused the sick man to get well. So it was that the lady with great kindness healed him without his having seen her.

At the time the young nobleman recovered from his illness there was great hunger everywhere in Ireland because of him, since ships did not dare approach its coasts. The king sent for his princes and asked them for good counsel as to what he should do about the famine. "Many of my people have died," said the king, "now tell me, all of you, on what should we agree?" But no one could advise him. "Why are you silent?" asked the king and sent at once for the wise Tristrant. When he came, the king asked him what should be done. Tristrant answered, "May God reward you, sir, with a heavenly crown for the kindness you have shown me. If you want the best advice I can give, it is this: send sailing vessels to England for food. I'll show them the way and help as much as I can to buy food with coin."

"I like this counsel," said the king to the princes, "By his own choice Pro is to journey across the sea and send us the food. We shall turn the money over to him." They all promised to do so.

When the king said this and could see that they were pleased with the proposal, he ordered as many sailing vessels prepared as would be needed—for he was greatly afraid of the famine—and sent Sir Tristrant to England for the food. Taking his harp and sword, the hero said goodbye to everyone at court, hurried aboard ship, and sailed for England, as the king had directed. On arriving, he hired a merchant who got the food for him. In a short time the noble and wise Tristrant sent those with him to where the grain was and bade them load it in the ships. The purchase in which he represented them amounted to 1,000 marks. They thanked him heartily and sailed home, leaving Tristrant standing on the shore. He was glad of this; now listen and you will hear why. He boarded another ship, one which

was from Cornwall. When he learned this from the crew, he returned in it to the country where he longed to be and was well received there.

The bold hero landed at Tintanjol exactly a year to the day since he had last been there. He had now fully recovered from his illness and was well and happy. Kurneaval caught sight of him walking alone from the ship and recognized him at once. Was he pleased? Yes! I'll tell you something: the faithful Kurneaval was so glad from the bottom of his heart that he wept for joy. He forgot all sorrow now that his dear lord had come. A messenger ran to the king (so I have read), saying that Tristrant had come and was given such a reward for the news that he was rich the rest of his life. The king came to meet Tristrant in stately splendor with a great throng, welcomed him, and praised the Lord God that he had recovered so well. The loyal cupbearer, Tinas, received him warmly, and all those in the country who had known him, both men and women, were happy at his arrival.

The noble Tristrant became a man blessed with many talents, and whatever success he had in tournaments and in battle was praised afar. He was so dear to the king that, for his sake, the latter did not want to marry but wished to have the young man as a son and heir to his realm. This began to lower the esteem of the king's closest relatives, and they started to urge him to take a royal wife. He answered that he didn't want one, and so Tristrant was bitterly hated through no fault of his own. They also made no attempt to conceal their feelings, but spoke them out for him to hear. A few even thought the king was acting on Tristrant's advice, and yet he had done nothing wrong.

Taking Tristrant with them, Mark's friends and vassals, the foremost in the land, once went before the king and counselled him to marry. He set a time at which he would give them an answer. They were all pleased that he should speak so, since before he had often flatly declared that he would not. When the day came for him to announce his will, the king was sitting in his hall with great concern. He had been trying very hard to think of some prudent way to get them to give up the request

and leave him in peace, because, whether they liked it or not, he didn't want a wife. Then two swallows began to fight in the hall and drew the attention of the king, who watched them carefully. Listen to this, for it is true: they let fall a beautiful, long hair. The king decided to look at it. "This came from a lady," he said to himself, "and I'll use it in my defense. I'll demand her as my wife, and they won't be able to produce her. How could I protect myself better? They hate my nephew because he is so capable, but I'm sure this won't harm him. He shall have my realm anyhow, and they will become his subjects." See, there came Tristrant and all the lords with him! A prince spoke for them all and asked the king to tell them how he intended to preserve the honor of the realm. "Here I have the hair of a lady," replied the noble king, "and I tell you truly that I shall take her as a wife if I can. But—know my will in this—if she cannot be mine, there is no one in the world I will have. I would rather live in hell forever; believe this once and for all."

When the king said this, the lords became uneasy and asked who she was, to which the king replied that he did not know. They spoke among themselves, "He wants to trick us into letting the matter drop," and added that it was Tristrant's fault and would not have been thus if the king were not fond of him, that it was very wrong of him not to let the king have what his honor and best interest required. They all wanted to learn where the hair came from, but could not find the words to ask. Then Tristrant spoke up: "Dear sir, why do you act like this? It is the sorrow of my life that you do not marry and is a danger to me. Your relatives say that you refuse because of me, and you should let them know now that I never gave you such advice. Be she maiden or married woman, if the lady you spoke of is dear to you, let a ship be loaded for me with the things I shall need. For your sake I shall seek her afar, no matter what happens to me, in the hope that God will permit me to find her somewhere. Therefore give me the hair so I may know her by it if I ever come to where she is. Your honor is dearer to me than that of anyone else, be sure of this, and I shall be happy to suffer for you."

"May God repay you," said the noble king and ordered that a good ship be quickly prepared for him with everything it should have. Tinas, the lord high steward, had armor for a hundred knights carried into the ship, as well as much gold and clothing. Then Tristrant sailed away and with him one hundred of the king's vassals.

It was youthful folly that he should go to such trouble for nothing. They set out to sea and sailed a month without seeing more than sky and water. They were brave and endured great hardships. Tristrant sent word to the helmsman to avoid Ireland if he didn't want to die. He said, "I have heard indeed that we shall lose our lives if we sail there. We are looking for a woman and must seek out all the lands to which we can get by ship or by horse until we find her." Soon a terrible storm came up, seized the ship, drove it violently toward Ireland, and that same night threw it up on the sand in front of the castle where Tristrant had been healed. What a fearful journey it was! When he looked around, Tristrant spoke to his men: "I was healed right here. I'm afraid we are condemned to suffer as much grief in this place as I then won in happiness. For this is indeed the castle of the king of Ireland, and we shall need sharp wits to get away. Now do this for me: all of you be silent and let me do the talking. I'll see if cunning will save our lives."

When the king heard that the sailing vessel lay so near, he became very angry. He told his marshal that the latter was not to tolerate it, but should cut off the strangers' heads. The marshal dared not fail to do this, whether he liked it or not, so he went to the ship and told the lords at once that he was to execute them. "That wouldn't become you at all," said Tristrant and quickly offered him a fine golden cup if he would go back to the castle and bring his sad story to the king, and let them live in the meantime. The marshal, a cultured man, granted his request. The cup was brought forth, and the marshal showed his courtly manners by accepting it. Then Sir Tristrant spoke: "Tell the king that I and twelve comrades, the best of merchants, came to this land from England. We heard that there was great hunger here, so we loaded twelve sailing

vessels with food (which we have brought you) and set out, hoping to gain both profit and honor. There were people fleeing from here who had almost been hunted down, and one of them told us that whoever came to this land would lose his life. We sorely lamented the bad news we had heard, for we couldn't go back with this cargo. In order to decide the matter, we took counsel and cast lots—which I sorely regret—to see who should sail his ship on and find out whether we would be allowed to bring our wares here. I became the messenger, and my comrades remain out at sea. Now ask the mighty king to spare our lives, and in a short time we shall bring him all these good provisions. Also tell him my name, Tanris."

The marshal believed the story and repeated it to the king, just as the merchant had told it. Death's coming was thereby delayed. Worried, the strangers lay there before the castle until noon. Listen to what they said to each other: "If anyone of us lives through this, he will always be a prisoner in Ireland." Then a man came who told Tristrant of a dragon which was doing great harm to the country. And he stated as truth that, if someone were to fight the dragon and by God's grace kill it, the king would surely give him his daughter. Once more Tristrant showed that he was a bold warrior. He resolved to risk his life to win the lady and save his comrades, and he thought he would rather be killed by a dragon than die without a fight.

Early the next morning he armed himself carefully and rode forth to win great fame. He saw five men stop at a lookout post in a field and went along the road toward them at a fast trot. Then he saw one of them flee in great haste, as fast as he could. Tristrant raced after him, seized him by the hair, and bluntly asked who was chasing him. The man quickly said that it was a dragon which had burned up many people in the country. "It is coming in a rage and wants to kill me. Sir, let me get away that God may forever reward you!" Tristrant bade him good speed and asked where the dragon was. The youth told him. Soon Tristrant could easily make out the dragon's course. He rode into a gully and kept still until it was passing right by him. Then he charged and broke off his spear against the dragon, which didn't harm it a bit. Now listen to how he fought. The dragon burned his horse to death under him, but

the noble hero had his sword in hand even before the spear broke, and he ran at the beast to kill it. In a rage, he swung a blow at it that nothing could withstand and defeated the huge dragon. But all which he was later to gain by this was bought very dearly, for he was almost burned to death. After winning the victory with manly courage, he cut out the dragon's tongue and stuck it inside his armor next to the skin (if you are in good spirits, you might want to take note of it). This done, he went to a nearby marsh to cool off, for he was as black as charred wood. He soon found a cool spring and lay down in it. Sir Tristrant lay there in terrible pain and thought he would die, his iron armor had burned him so.

Now hear who those were who had stopped at the lookout post and what they did then. It was the lord high steward of the country, and whoever wants to listen can find out what he and his servants dared to claim. He was taking counsel with them when the man came riding up so fast with shield and spear, just like a great storm, and turned his face toward the beast who lay concealed. Fearfully they crept quietly after him and unexpectedly came upon the dead dragon. "Now say that I killed it," spoke the lord high steward to his men, "and you will be well off for life: I'll make you all rich." They said they would be glad to do so. The men thought it wise to look for Tristrant and would have shamefully killed him, but they couldn't find him. Soon they said, "Sir, he is surely dead." The coward fancied he had overcome all his troubles at once and quickly rode to the king and told him something very foolish, that he had slain the dragon. After these false words he told the king that he should have his daughter. "I cannot take back my offer without acting wrongly," was the reply, "but I would like to be more certain as to who killed the dragon."

"It would be most unseemly for me to presume to lie about it," said the lord high steward, and nearly fooled the king into thinking the story was true. The latter himself told his daughter how the steward had bravely won her at the risk of his life and declared that he would give her to him and that she should be happy about it since he had killed the dragon. "Father, believe me," replied the lady at once, "he didn't tell you the truth. He has never done anything brave, and where

would he get the courage now to fight the dragon? Give up this plan and find out the real truth; tell the nobleman he must wait until tomorrow morning."

"I'll do that," said the king.

When the lord high steward heard this, he became very impatient indeed. He at once admonished his lord, the king, to carry out what he had solemnly promised. Listen to how clever Lady Isalde was in finding out who killed the dragon. She asked Perenis, the chamberlain, to bring the horses quietly at dawn and told Brangene, her lady-in-waiting, that she wanted to take a quick look at the dragon's wound. Early in the morning Perenis brought her the horses, and they mounted and hurried away. The lady soon saw the tracks of Tristrant's horse and said to Brangene, "See how that horse was shod! It carried the hero who killed the dragon. Notice carefully the skill; horses are not shod here in the way shown by that track. He who rode along here is the dragon-slayer, you can be sure of that." With this, the ladies came upon the dead dragon and found a bloody shield which was so scorched that they could not make out the colors, although it had once been bright and splendid. They also found a horse, partly consumed by fire, which they examined carefully and could still easily tell that it had not been foaled or raised in those lands (as I read in the book and also heard tell). "Oh, where did the hero go who rode here on this horse?" cried the lovely lady. "I wish I knew so I could find him. The murderers have killed him, and he is buried someplace near."

The lady asked Perenis to look for the grave and promised him a hundred marks if he found the warrior. They didn't search long. Brangene came to the marsh where he lay, saw his helmet shining like glass, and hurried to him. It seemed to her that he moved. "I've found the hero, very badly hurt," she called to the lady, "Come quickly and see if you can save him." The lady was pleased when she caught sight of the man, came at once, and untied his helmet. Sir Tristrant heard women's voices. He looked at them and asked who had come to take off his helmet. "Have no fear, sir," answered the lady, "you will get it back." She sat down beside him, saying, "I'll take good care of him." She removed his armor at once, but did not let

him lie there any longer. She told Perenis to bring the man, she herself took the helmet and sword. Brangene carried the hauberk, and they rode quickly to the city. The royal maiden ordered a bath prepared very secretly and bathed the hero herself. She revived him, rubbing very good salve all over him so that he regained his color and was really handsome.

As soon as the bold Tristrant recovered, he became certain that this was the lady he sought. He looked very carefully at her hair, in search of which he had journeyed long, but not in vain, and began to smile to himself. The lady noticed this and thought, "I have done something that seems foolish to him, but I can't think of anything, unless it is that he wants me to clean his sword. The warrior surely deserves that." The noble lady began to scrub the sword and saw by the notch that it was Tristrant's; overcome with grief, she sat down on the grass. Then she went to her chest, took out the fragment, and fitted it into the place where it had once been. She became very angry and said, "You are Tristrant, and your killing the dragon won't help you to get away from here alive. You will surely pay for my uncle's death, for I shall reveal you to my father, the king."

"Lady, you would be doing wrong."

"You wronged me."

"Not I."

"I say you did! You killed my uncle."

"I had no choice."

"Well, just know this: you will pay for him."

"With what?"

"With your life."

"It's not proper that one should give life for life. No, lovely, charming lady, must I learn such a custom?"

"Yes, you."

"I wouldn't like to at all."

"I'm sure of that."

"Then spare me."

"No, I shall avenge my uncle."

"Noblewoman, don't do a thing like that."

"Oh, but I'm angry at you!"

"Are you?"

"Yes."

"I'm sorry to hear it."

"Why?"

"I'll tell you."

"Go ahead. Speak."

"Because that is why I shall perish."

"It isn't."

"It is indeed."

"I am certain that nothing could help you."

"Yes, there is something."

"What?"

"If you were not angry, you would think, he is in my care and I shall punish the one who slays him. Remember that you brought me here yourself."

"I've thought of all that but, however shameful it may seem, I shall get revenge on you for the wrong done me and shall tell my father that you are here. Your cleverness won't help you. You will pay for my uncle."

Just as she was leaving in tears to tell her father, God's servant, Brangene, ran to her and spoke with fervor: "If the man is killed now, you will have to become the wife of your father's cupbearer, and what honor would you gain from this? That's what I want to prevent. Tristrant is a noble man, known everywhere as a fine warrior. Now consider this carefully: if he had slain all of your family, you could bear it more easily than marriage to such a thief, who is not one to bring you honor."

When Brangene said this, the lady thought for a moment and again became kind to him. The inner turmoil left her, and, forgetting her deep grief, she ordered that new clothes of red samite be brought for him. She placed him in the care of Brangene, who took him the clothing. When the hero put it on, he was so handsome that the lady kissed him on the lips. She went at once to her father and told him that she had learned who had killed the dragon.

"You have?"

"Yes, I have. That coward of yours never touched it."

"But he did."

"Not he."

"He has witnesses."

"Who?"

"Four of his men."

"Are they dependable?"

"All I know is that they are his servants."

"Are you going to leave it up to them? They'll do whatever he tells them. I say he never touched the dragon."

"Do you know that?"

"Yes, I know for sure. And the one who did kill it deserves your favor."

"Truly, he does. Where is he now?"

"Close by, where I can find him."

"Then have him brought to me."

"Will he receive your favor?"

"Yes, whatever he may have done to me will be forgiven because of this."

"Kiss me, father, for the warrior, and make a complete and lasting peace with him."

"I forgive anything he has done to me."

"Now kiss me in his place."

"What else do you want me to do?"

"Have you fully pardoned him now?"

"Yes, as of this day."

"Then he can indeed come forth. But put that off until tomorrow morning. Have your vassals with you, and I'll bring the hero. If you want to watch the contest, he will make the lord high steward admit before your court of law that he was not present when the dragon died and does not know how it was killed."

"I promise him a trial," said the king and waited no longer but sent messengers to the princes of the land, to counts and dukes. When the news came flying to the noblemen, they all, free men and vassals, made like haste to appear. The lord high steward also sent for his friends, because he thought the king was going to give him his daughter. Early the next morning many bold warriors were there. Meanwhile, Tristrant was concealed in the women's quarters, where he was well taken care of. He wanted to speak secretly with Kurneaval and asked Perenis to hurry to the ship, call for Kurneaval, and bring him; but the rest of his men and the others were to remain where they were. Perenis did as Sir Tristrant asked, and Kurneaval

came at once to talk with his lord. Tristrant told him to go back with a message bidding all his companions come in the morning to the court of law in the king's great hall, dressed in their finest clothes, and sit all together on one bench. No matter what was said there, they were to remain silent until they saw him coming. "I understand," said Kurneaval, "and we shall carry out here the purpose for which we have been summoned."

When Kurneaval returned and the entire company heard the lord's message, they gave heartfelt thanks to God and made careful preparations. Early the next morning the warriors put on clothing of beautiful, costly silks and of furs, ermine and others, with broad borders of sable, of which they had brought much from Mark's land; the downy furs were well lined with splendid samite. Truly the lords wore many broad furs, dyed blackberry color (which they all liked), and every kind of finery one can imagine—gold-embroidered silk, excellent wool, samite, precious stones, gold—the very best things to be found anywhere. They had brought them from Cornwall to do honor to themselves. With great secrecy they sent Tristrant such splendid clothing that the lords of that land who later saw them declared that there had never before been garments like these in Ireland. Then the strangers came to the castle, sat down on a bench, and were careful not to forget what their lord's messenger had told them. Whatever went on there, they sat stiffly in their places and did not get up.

The king asked about the warriors: "Are they from this country?" but no one knew. Then the king sent word to his daughter to come at once and bring the hero. The noble lady took Tristrant firmly by the hand and led him to her father. When he entered the hall, all those who had sat so still before sprang up and went to him. Everyone could indeed see that they were his supporters. The king asked who he was, but the young princess said that he should first kiss the hero. The king was quite willing and did as his daughter requested; he granted a firm pardon to him and all his family. "Now I'll let you know who he is," said the lady, "if you can be trusted to observe the pardon which you granted the hero and which he can well earn. He killed the finest man on whom the sun ever shone: my dear uncle."

"God knows, Sir Tristrant," spoke the king, "if that had not been pardoned, you would be treated with scorn, but what you have done against me is fully forgiven." The lady said that this was only right, "for he is a noble warrior who has won great honor. He killed my uncle unwillingly; there was no other way to save his uncle's land from the tribute. Now he has journeyed across the sea to show you a kindness: he fought the dragon single-handed and slew it. This was a great service to us all."

The lord high steward asked how Tristrant could claim to have killed the dragon—which was most unseemly—and reminded the king of what he had promised on his honor. The words offended Tristrant, and he spoke up angrily, "Sir, he lies, and if he is enough of a nobleman to meet me in single combat, I shall kill him or die at his feet. Sir King, if need be, I can easily prove that I am telling the truth: by four of his friends, if they will admit it, who were with him when (unluckily for him) he galloped up to me and also by this tongue which I cut from the dragon. Moreover, I promise to show, with the help of my lady, that he didn't dare even watch when I slew the dragon." This seemed to be enough for those present and too much for the lord high steward: the matter was getting serious. The foolish man told his friends that he would like to talk with them about this; it seemed unavoidable.

They went aside, and one of his kin said, "If you should accept combat, you would lose, for Tristrant is bold and has often showed himself to be an excellent warrior. If you didn't kill the dragon, don't fight him. That's what I advise you, cousin. Should you do so, it will go badly."

"I didn't kill it," said the coward, "and I don't want to fight with Tristrant." Then he declared in front of everyone that he had not slain the dragon and that Tristrant should have the lady. "You should have admitted this sooner," spoke the king, and all who were there became angry with the coward for having publicly made such a claim. I suppose he still regrets ever having thought of it. His blunder cost him all his honors; he had to leave and never came back. As for me, I don't care where he went. God's scorn be on him!

Tristrant then reminded the king of his promise concerning the beautiful maiden. The king did not refuse him, the daughter was greatly pleased, and no one else objected. Tristrant

said, "Sir, you should know why I want the maiden, for it will bring you honor. I wish to journey with her at once to Cornwall and give her to Mark, my dear uncle. He is a famous king and, besides, I am too young to take a wife."

"I'll let you," said the king, "since you desire it so much."

"Christ knows I do, sir. I shall give her to him most gladly."

"Without doubt, he should be the one to have her, for you have caused her much grief, and I am afraid that, if she should begin to brood about this, you two would not live as you should. Good lord, I shall indeed send her to your uncle." The king placed her in Tristrant's charge on the latter's oath that he would care for the beautiful maiden well and honorably and bring her to his uncle. Thereupon Tristrant took the maid by her white hand, and the mighty king sent her away in splendid fashion, as indeed befits a monarch.

Her mother brought a potion to Brangene and said, "Dear, as a favor to me, take this along—be careful that no one but you touches it. When you arrive and my daughter and her husband go to bed together, give them this to drink. Tell them to drink it all and be sure not to let anyone else taste it." (These directions were neglected during the journey.) The potion was of such a nature that any man and woman who drank it together could by no means leave each other for four years. However much they might want to refrain, they had to love each other with their whole being as long as they lived, but for four years the passion was so great that they could not part for half a day. Who did not see the other all day became sick, and if they should not speak to each other for a week, they both would die: the drink was so brewed and of such strength. Remember this! While the mighty king was sending his daughter forth with great wealth, Sir Tristrant took fond leave of the queen mother. The sails were raised, and the flying winds soon drove them away.

Lady Isalde and her retinue were well situated in a room at the end of the ship, and they got whatever she wanted. However, she was not used to journeying by sea and said that it made her sick to travel so fast. The mariners ran to the helmsmen and, when they saw land, lowered the sail and made it fast to the mast. Then the wind became calmer, as they had hoped.

They came to a harbor, where they rested: all went ashore and joyfully took their ease, although it was very hot. After they had walked back and forth along the shore for some time, Tristrant went to his lady to see if she dared journey on. He became very thirsty and asked for a drink, but the cupbearer was not there. A courtly maiden spoke up, "Sir, I think there is some wine here." He bade her bring it, which she did: this portended evil. However, Tristrant had no thought that the wine would harm him and drank it with a light heart. He liked it and offered some to his lady. As soon as she drank, both felt as if they were surely losing their minds. They had to fall in love, but neither knew about the other's sudden passion until later. Without knowing it, they at once became both pale and red under the eyes. The love between them was so great that they thought they would die because of each other. They did not want this; it was the potion. The lady was ashamed at having fallen in love with Tristrant so quickly, and he was seized with deep sorrow. So both were in great distress, much more than they were used to; they became hot and cold, and their appearances and actions became confused. They were very worried because of their affection for each other, and neither knew how much the other was tormented by this, though not admitting it. They almost died. Tristrant was so oppressed that he couldn't remain there any longer. Both were sick at heart and went to bed. They told no one what ailed them, but carefully kept it a secret. Tristrant and his lady suffered great distress day and night.

"Oh, dear Lord," said the maiden, "how my heart pains because of this charming, hateful man. But how do I dare speak so? I would be filled with joy if he wanted me to love him. I can't live without him: I can't eat or drink and shall soon become so weak I shall die. What am I, a poor, sinful woman, to do? I'm afraid he doesn't even think of me. How can I be fond of him? Fond? Why do I say that? How could I dislike him or ever be angry at him? Between heaven and earth there is no one better than he. He is a very bold warrior—as he has often proven—and dares do alone anything a hero should. Well do I know his virtues: he is honest and noble, handsome and cheerful, truthful and well-bred. Never misled, he likes to strive for

honor. What more can he do? He is the strongest man a lady ever loved and is full of every fine trait, so I've often heard. He compares to other people as gold to lead. Is he dear to me? Yes! Because of his excellence, he is joy without sorrow to me.

"Lord God, what has happened to me that, after having seen him so often, he should all at once seem so fine? Oh, heart and mind, when will you turn away from him?"

"Now who is going to teach us that?"

"I don't want to."

"We haven't the courage to learn it."

"Why?"

"Lady Love has taught us such feelings that we must think of him and dare not offend her with any other thought."

"Yes, Love has attacked me so fiercely. I never had any idea that she would cause such real pain. Poor me! What have I ever done to her that she should hurt me so? I have often heard many nice things about her. Yes, poor me, I was sure she was gentle and sweet. Now, sad to say, she has become a burden to me and sour as vinegar. Oh, Dame Amour, when will you be so sweet to me that I shall have to praise you? Cupid, god of love," she said, "if I have ever in any way broken one of your commandments and if I, poor Isalde, have ever done something to you that I should have shunned, you have avenged it in full measure. You have almost broken my heart and, if you do not grant me your favor, I can never recover. If you are unkind to me, my misery will increase. Lady Love, be more tender to me so that I can bear you. What have I ever done to you? You aren't so harsh to all women. You cause me more grief and pain than I can say, however much I lament. I think it an outrage for you to attack me so roughly that I am losing my mind. I have become a queen without knowing anything of you. You have captured me with your cunning, and now something strange has come over me, followed by an inconstant spirit. I am now hot, now cold as ice, now feel such heat that sweat drips from my whole body; and this has lasted so long that I shall die if I don't soon get relief."

"Oh, Lady Love, by what folly have I lost your favor that you so vent your wrath on me? You cause me, poor woman, far too much pain. Love, this is not just a game. You rage at me

unjustly because of the noble knight, for I love him more than he does me. Love, be merciful! Mighty Lady Love, you have a right to be angry at him, for I am devoted to him and, truly, he cares nothing for me. Love, I shall serve you, and in justice you should befriend me because I love as no other woman has loved a man before. What more will you do to me? Mind, honor, and life I risk for you, Love, so have pity on me! Love, you pain my heart greatly. Love, your great power makes me hot and cold. Love, I am your subject, be gracious to me. Love, I throw myself at your feet, asking relief from my trouble. Love, if you are not kind to me, I shall go mad; if you hate me, what shall I do? Love, show mercy in time, before I perish. Love, you do me harm and will cause your servant's death. Love, if you do not help in my distress, I shall soon die. What sorrow you bring me when you should give pleasure! Lord God," Isalde continued, "How did I happen to fall in love with one who was never inclined to love me? When my father would have let him have me as a wife, the handsome warrior did not want me and gave me up. Now I must try to turn my thoughts away from him.

"Heart, you are not to think of the noble hero any longer, for I want to put him out of my mind. How could I manage to leave him? I'm afraid that would not help, even if I wanted to try it. It is better to love him than to lose my life, and if I do not become his I shall surely die. Oh, if he only knew how I long for his love! What shall I do that he may learn of my distress? I suppose I must tell him, but, oh, how can I do that? What if he thinks badly of me, as he well may? Then I'll not win him now or ever. I think I would be risking my good name," said the beautiful woman, "I'll die before I say anything to him. No, that would be a great shame because life is so dear to me. He is not hardhearted. If he hears that I love him so much, he will be a little fond of me too. I'll leave that to fortune and tell him how I feel—but what if he is angry?" Thus spoke the lovely maiden. She was sorely oppressed by care and remorse and could not turn her heart from him, but he was seized by the same passion. He thought of the beautiful lady night and day and could do nothing else. Both of them suffered greatly.

For three and a half days they lay in bed without eating or drinking. They were, unwillingly, almost dead of hunger, but

no bread or wine could have helped them. Both had to be very sick. Brangene and Kurneaval discovered this and were distressed. They said to each other: "What shall we do? One can readily see that it will be a great loss to us if we lose our lord and lady." Then the maiden thought of the potion and hurried to the room where she had kept it. When she did not find it, she beat her hands together and wept: "Oh, dear Sir Tristrant and my dear lady, you are lost. May God bring shame on the one who gave you the potion!" With very sad thoughts, Brangene returned and said to Kurneaval, "I know well what is wrong. Your lord and my lady will die, and I am filled with remorse. They cannot recover unless they are willing to become lovers. How shall we let them know this?" The faithful maiden went on: "I'll risk my life and honor before I allow these two to die of such an illness."

"I, too, would rather perish," said the noble Kurneaval, and the two determined to bring them together, urging them on if they did not act of themselves. With grief, Brangene lamented: "I shall be blamed for their drinking the potion, but I'll leave it all to fate. Kurneaval, there's no need to tell what happened. Just do your share to get them together or they both are lost, and it would have been better for me if I had never been born."

On the fourth day they again entered a harbor, and the people went onto the strand. Kurneaval asked his lord to go to Lady Isalde and see how she was doing, and said that he himself might then feel better. "I don't know what ails her," said Kurneaval and added slyly, "maybe she would like to hear about your sickness." At Kurneaval's request the lord started out. But when he entered the ladies' room (believe it or not), he did not have the strength to come close to Isalde so as to hear rightly how she was. However, as soon as she saw him, the lady called loudly, "Sir, come here to me quickly."

"Bad luck is with you," thought Tristrant to himself. "She has no good intention in extending this great honor, because she doesn't like you. If she did, she wouldn't call you 'sir.'" The thought pained him, but at once hope cried out the contrary: "By doing you this honor she is showing that you are truly the dearest of all men to her. Yes, 'sir' means 'master.'" His joy made him strong enough to walk the rest of the way, and he sat

down close beside her. Brangene and Kurneaval were pleased at this and left the room without waiting longer. I am sure that no one remained except the two and Lady Love. I can't say who spoke first, but do know that in turn they told each other their feelings and that both were fully healed before they parted. And, truly, I'd take an oath that afterwards they often lay happily together and made love until they came to Mark's land.

Then late one evening they decided that Isalde should ask Brangene for her sake to lie with the king and make love with him the first night. They thought up this ruse to deceive the king as to Isalde's hymen, to preserve her good name by making him think it was properly intact. Brangene wept bitterly when she heard their plan. Now listen to Isalde's words when she first mentioned it to her: "Brangene, my dear friend, I need your advice as to what to do when I go to bed with the king."

"Lady, I have no idea."

"Don't say that, my dear!"

"Lady, what should I tell you?"

"You should give me better counsel than that."

"Oh, lady, I can't."

"Then all my joy is gone forever."

"That would make me very sad."

"Prove it by your kindness."

"Lady, how am I to show it?"

"Do something for my sake."

"Well let me hear what it is."

"Lie with the king for a while the first night."

"Lady, make no mistake: I'll never do it."

"I'll show you my greatest thanks with devotion and love."

"How will you do it?"

"I'll show you."

"I would rather do without your devotion."

"Then I beg you for God's sake."

"This is an unkind joke."

"Oh, how serious it is to me!"

"Such talk isn't worthy of you."

"But I can't help it."

"You don't need to ask that of me."

"No, dear friend, you won't forsake me. And I'll gladly reward you now and forevermore."

"Mindful of my loyalty, lady, I have followed you to a distant land. See that you do not wrong me."

"As things are, I shall lose my honor and never be able to do anything pleasing either for you or for myself. But you can prevent this."

"I deserve shame and ruin," said the faithful Brangene, "for I was supposed to guard the potion."

The lady replied, "In kindness remember this and help me in distress."

"I'll help you out, but I would rather be dead."

The lady at once told Sir Tristrant that Brangene was willing to do what she had asked, which pleased him greatly. He despatched a messenger to King Mark with word that he was coming and was bringing the maiden for whom he had been sent. The king at once set out to sea to meet him, bade him welcome, and took the royal maiden to Tintanjol with great ceremony. There was a splendid wedding festival.

Then Tristrant spoke shrewdly to his dear lord: "My lady requests that you observe a custom of her land with her. It can do no harm."

"What sort of custom does her country have?" asked the king. The hero replied that there should be no light by the bed on the first night that the queen lay with him, so that no one might see her until she got up in the morning. The king told his nephew he would gladly grant this and asked him to be the chamberlain and put out the candles since he knew all about it. He begged him urgently to arrange everything as the lady wanted it. So Chamberlain Tristrant took charge of the place where the king was to sleep and did the lady's will. He brought Brangene quietly to the king's bed and, right in the same room, lay with the queen. This was the greatest deceit of which Tristrant was ever guilty, but it was not disloyalty, for it was done against his will: the fatal potion was to blame. Just at midnight Brangene came and said that her lady should get up and go to her husband. Thus they began to deceive the king. For a year Tristrant stayed constantly at court. Indeed, as he

told Kurneaval, he couldn't remain away for a single day. It seemed to him that he would surely die if he were to go two days without seeing the queen. She felt the same way about him.

Not long afterwards the lady got the idea of rewarding Brangene with a death song for having served her so well. She feared that Brangene would tell what she knew about her and wanted to take her life by trickery. What evil thoughts! She ordered two poor knights to put her to death and gave them sixty marks of silver. The knights were willing and said they would gladly do whatever the lady asked. She gave them the silver at once and directed them to a spring which they were to watch. Whoever came for water, be it man or woman, they were to kill and bring her the liver. The knights set out for their post, thinking hard about the silver. The queen lay down and said she was ill, which the faithful Brangene greatly regretted. The false lady then asked her to bring some water from the spring that flowed through the orchard. Brangene did as the queen asked and, taking a gold pitcher, went into the orchard to where the spring was. The knights came quickly, but did not know what to do. They said to Brangene, "Lady, you will have to die."

"Sirs, what does this mean?" asked the faithful woman.

"That you are to lose your life," answered one of the knights.

"Sad to say, I know well the cause of this injustice," she said, "I am to pay for my great loyalty: my lady has ordered me slain. Now for the love of God—since I can't repay you—be upright men and let me live for a time while one of you goes back and tells my lady that I am dead and also what I now say to you: I don't know what she wanted to avenge when she betrayed me without cause. God knows I can think of nothing I have done which deserves her anger. Trusting only in her good will, I left all my family and journeyed with her into a foreign country; should I die so wretchedly after that? When we were about to depart," said the maiden, "her mother gave each of us a very fine chemise; she knows well what I mean. Before we arrived in this country hers was so torn that she could not wear it to the king with honor, but mine had never been worn and was whole and new. She asked me for loyalty's sake to lend it to her, which I didn't want to do. Still, she begged so eagerly

that at last I lent it to her. I don't know how to do more for her than when I brought my chemise whole and new over the sea and lent it to her the first night she lay with the king. It was badly torn when she used it then. Take careful note of what I say, and tell her that I never deserved this death from her."

The knights were moved to pity because they did not know why they were to take revenge on the lady, so her lamenting words saved her life. They thought they might never gain worldly honor if they slew her. When a dog came along then, one of the knights killed it and took its liver, wrapped in his shirt, secretly to the queen. She thanked him and quickly asked, "Did she say anything?"

"Yes, she did."

"Well tell me what." He began at once and told just what she said about the chemise and how the queen had borrowed it. "On your honor, is that all she said?"

"Yes, except that she wished very much that we would spare her life."

"May God reject me!" cried the beautiful lady, "God pity me for ever being born! What shall I, poor woman, do, now that I have proved so faithless? Neither woman nor man will ever trust me again. May God deprive me of honor and even of life because of this murder I have done! May the devil take me!" she cried, and beat herself and pulled out her hair so cruelly in her great remorse that the knight was astonished.

When he saw that her repentance came from deep sorrow, he broke his silence and said, "Lady, console yourself: Brangene isn't dead. I am very glad of it now, but I didn't dare tell you before because I was afraid you wouldn't like it."

"I can do without your jokes," she replied wretchedly, "It is hard for me to lose her like this."

"Lady, you may be sure that I am not joking, for Brangene really is alive. Should I bring her to you?"

"If she is living," said the queen, "you will be in luck, for you'll be rich the rest of your life. I promise you that on my word."

The knight went back with a light heart and told his companion the queen's will. Both happy, they at once brought Brangene to the ladies' quarters. Listen to what the queen said

when she saw her: "Welcome, dear lady. I thank God in heaven that you are alive. He was surely down here to help you in your need. Whether He condemned me to the same death I had planned for you, or caused me to sink into the depths of the sea, or forgave my sin, His judgment would be righteous." Then she fell at Brangene's feet, spoke lovingly, and offered her great compensation so that she would forget the murder the queen had wanted to commit. Brangene, too, asked forgiveness: that the queen would pardon her if she had done anything wrong. They lay there together, overcome by great sorrow. They remained thus for a long time, and no one lifted them up until both were ready to get to their feet and make up for the ill will. Then the two ladies kissed each other. The queen considered as to how she would compensate Brangene and make good the sorrow she had caused her; she was eager to begin. Tristrant was not at the court, but had ridden out with the king to hunt in the forest. When the noble Kurneaval told him the story, he was both grieved and angry. "This should not have happened," he said to the queen, "but, since it did, you should compensate her with honors." The lady replied that she would be glad to do so, and, with this, the reconciliation was completed.

Not long afterwards Tristrant became sorely afflicted without being wounded. Now listen to how it happened: he was defamed and slandered by three evil dukes and four counts who were staying at the king's court. I'll tell you why: they hated him because he lived festively, strove for honor, and always did what was best. They envied him because they themselves were not upright and brave. That has often happened since, and it still occurs to many an honest man that a worthless fellow concedes him nothing and belittles his fame. When he hears any praise of the upright man that he can't contradict, he may just go away and say, "It's a lie." That ill befits any of you if you consider it carefully, for no one ever won lasting fame and honor in love by such behavior. Now then, youths, fix your minds on virtue and learn to dislike all that is base. Who loves God with all his heart and strives for honor is seldom followed by misfortune. He can indeed win his share, all he needs, and his life will be happy. Whoever is upright and well-meaning—and also wisely shrewd within the bounds of

good manners—is protected against the envy of the wicked. They can't help it, they must be hostile toward him, but my God and all good people are pleased with him, which he has often earned and does every day. Still, the wicked are so enraged at him that they would gladly take his life if the honest people would support them: so great is the hate the wicked have for the good, only because they practice virtue.

One could see this in Tristrant's case; that is why he was hated by the lords I named before. The reason was that he strove for honor and, since he liked to seek glory and fame at all times, was always foremost wherever manly deeds were to be done. They also were hostile toward him because of his kindness and because the king liked him better than any of them. The seven agreed that they wanted to turn the king against him, and quickly. Four of them were really enraged, and their leader was Antret (called "The Cowardly") whose deceitful nature never let him do anything noble. He was Tristrant's cousin, the son of the king's sister. May the devil sink him in the Rhine! For, though Tristrant was his friend, he never showed any friendliness in return. And he liked evil so much that kinship also did not matter; he still wanted to bring Tristrant into disgrace.

He went with his companions to the king and began a hateful, slanderous tale: "Lord, if it would not anger you, we would tell you what we have heard. I hope you won't blame me for saying it, but Tristrant wants to dishonor you. We seven are very sorry about it, still we know for certain that he loves your wife. God willing, he should die for this because the shame he heaps on you every day can't be endured. Moreover, lord, you favor him too much. To me it appears unseemly that, because of one man, you consider the rest of us to be nothing at all. I think this most unusual."

"Quiet," said the king, "if you are fond of us, nephew. Tristrant shall stay, for I can't get along without him. And you are never to ask me to become angry with him to please you. If I were to bemoan all the harm he has done me, I would be finished before I started, and I have no more to say about the shame. He has often brought me both honor and profit. He got a deadly wound when he fought Morolt for me and upheld my

honor. If he had performed no more than this one service, he would still be showing me more loyalty and affection than any of you has done before or since. But I have often profited by his faithfulness, and he has always been eager to do as I ordered. As long as I live I shall share my life and goods with him. You must accept this, nephew."

The jealous knights were truly sorry to hear the king defend Tristrant's honor so strongly. They departed angrily and set up a watch to see if Tristrant was ever with the queen in secret, for they didn't really know. They made up a story and told it to the king, but he didn't believe them and thought it was all a lie.

"We are sorry that everything we tell our lord is thought to be untrue," said Duke Antret. "We wish we knew to whom we might complain who would make amends to us for the great distress our lord causes us."

"Be still with your complaining," said the king, "and see that I don't hear any more such reports from you. You are really fools to threaten a man whom I like so well. You surely aren't hurting him, and he will remain unharmed. No matter how much you envy him, I shall esteem him all the more."

Angrily the king left the lords in order to retire and found beside his bed the bold Tristrant with the queen in his arms. He was kissing her and pressing her against his breast very lovingly. Dismayed, he flew into a terrible rage and said to Tristrant, "That is evil love. How can I keep my honor with a traitor like you causing me such grief? Since no one should have either joy or sorrow with another's wife, I wouldn't believe it when they told me so often. I should have believed it. You are disloyal. Leave my court at once, and thank God that you are still alive." Such kisses bring forth such anger.

I don't think two hearts were ever so sad as when the lovers parted, without a word and knowing that they were not supposed to see each other again. Tristrant intended to leave the country at once and returned sorrowfully to his lodging; he could have died with grief. He was so sick at heart he thought he would never get over it if he rode away. The queen too was seized with great pain. So it was that they lay in bed and neither ate nor drank. When the king learned that Tristrant

was ill, he said, "I don't care; he has been disloyal to me." (Well, nothing can keep the two from dying unless you can manage it, so that they see each other again. Speak up! How can that be done? How will they be repaid for their sorrow? I think that Brangene must bring them together again.) Then the queen told the maiden of her great pain and that she would die if she did not see the good knight. Brangene was distressed. She had to go again to Sir Tristrant as she had often done before. She gently tapped the door when she got there, and Kurneaval, who was standing right behind it, let her in. As soon as she entered, she went up to the lord, who received her fondly.

"How is the queen?"

"Very sick, because of you. But if she could talk with you and get revenge on those enemies who have caused her sorrow and pain, her illness would go away."

He answered in few words. "Just tell my lady that I shall no longer avoid her because of anyone's threats. I don't care who is jealous; I shall meet her today in her orchard if at all possible. She must wait for me inside. When a leaf comes floating down the stream that flows through her room, she is to go outside quickly and watch for a shaving to come. On it will be drawn a five-pointed cross which will arrange a meeting, since unfortunately I can't do this in person. Whenever she sees the cross, be it night or day, I shall be at the linden which stands beside this same brook. Tell this to my lady." Brangene wished him good health and went to tell her lady. The queen was happy, asked for something to eat, and life came back to her out of her great weakness. Brangene had brought her a potion she liked which cured her. By means of the welcome message they met at midnight in the orchard and drove away their cares with joy and merriment. Brangene had managed to heal them both in a short time. Thus they outwitted the spies and spent the nights together, but Tristrant would lie in bed all day and complain of his pain as if he were mortally ill.

The bold and famous warrior guarded his secret carefully and was in the orchard as often as they wished. Yet the jealous ones had to thwart love again. They began to ask each other whether the queen was still granting Tristrant her favors. One

said, "No;" another, "Yes;" a third, "Lords, I don't know." Then their leader, Antret, spoke: "Not far from here lives a dwarf who is so wise that, whenever he wishes, he can see in the stars all that has been or is to be anywhere. Let us give him so much treasure that he will tell us the truth." They were quite willing to do this and sought the aid of the little man. His helper, whom people call Satan, came and showed them right where he was. When they found him and he agreed to tell them how matters stood, the devilish dwarf looked at the stars and said, "Indeed, my lady is holding Tristrant in her arms. If the king will do as I advise, I shall show him, so that he must admit that I have told you the truth. And if I have lied, you can take my life with any torture my lord wishes." I think his companion, the devil, spoke through him as he said that Tristrant was pretending to be sick. He spoke, "If it isn't true, have my head cut off." They took him quickly before the king and told how things were. "I'll give you some good counsel," said the scoundrel, "if my lord wishes, he could find out for himself. Let him ride out with his retinue for a hunt in the forest. This would encourage Tristrant to go to the queen. Then I shall show the king where they will meet and take him where he can learn the truth." The king was pained to hear this and became angry. So he followed the advice and gave public orders that everyone at the court should make preparations because he wanted to go hunting in the forest early the next morning. And he had it proclaimed that he would be away for seven nights, which pleased the queen.

When the king had entered the forest and the little man had found out for certain that Tristrant would go to the queen, he waited no longer, but told the king to ride off with him alone and see what Tristrant dared to do. The king mounted and lifted the dwarf up behind him. He rode where the latter asked him to go and was shown the place where the linden stood by the brook. "I'll tell you, sir, what you should do," said the evil dwarf. "There is no other way to hide here than to climb this tree and be very quiet. In the tree we should pay close heed to what these two do." The moon shone so brightly it seemed like day when the wise king tied his steed to a nearby sapling and climbed the tree as he was directed. The dwarf climbed up after

him. I think he was helped by his comrade, the devil Satan, who surely lifted him carefully, for he wanted to share his realm with him. How else could the devil have gotten him up the tree? May God damn them both!

They had not been there long when Tristrant came. He broke off a leaf, which he dropped into the stream, and let a shaving with a cross on it follow. Then Tristrant saw the shadow of the king and his companion in the tree which the moon had cast onto the surface of the water, but he had enough presence of mind not to look up. He thought to himself, "Now I'll surely die. Oh, if the queen only knew about the watch set for us!" The leaf and the shaving floated through the room. The lady quickly took her fishing net, caught the shaving with it, and looked at the cross. So she knew that Tristrant was waiting and hurried to where he was. He sat there and kept motioning behind him. "Almighty God protect me!" thought the queen. "What is the matter with the youth that he doesn't stand up and come to me? I'm not used to this and don't know the reason for it." She caught sight of the signals and thought at once, "Whatever troubles him, I think someone is nearby watching us." Then the lady noticed the shadows of the two spies which the moon cast into the water and showed her good sense by not looking up and by acting just as if she didn't know they were there.

She spoke with great cunning, "Tristrant, why do you want to see me?" "To get your help, lady, so that my lord will grant me his favor and let me live at his court again as before."

"I promise you that I shall not aid you, for I am pleased from the bottom of my heart that my lord is angry at you. You may be sure I won't help you to return. Although I've done nothing wrong, I've been talked about on account of you. I was friendly to you because of my lord, for you are his nephew and bring him more honor than all the others. But now I have become an object of gossip because of you, and for no reason. I would be glad if my lord were to put you to death."

"No lady, for the sake of your own fame you should remember that I have suffered great distress for you, and you should be sorry that he treats me unjustly. If you will be merciful to

me, I may well gain his favor, for he is angry with me without cause."

"I won't help you," said the queen, "yet, if my lord wants to be kind to you, it will be all right with me. However, I am not going to ask him."

"Then I must leave the country," answered Sir Tristrant. "However little my lord may regret this, still he will never make up for the harm done if I leave his country as an enemy. For my part, it will be wise to go to where I am treated in a more friendly manner—where people, without any ill will, like and honor me. My lord forgets that when I return home I shall be as mighty a king as he. And I am sure that, if I go somewhere else, I shall not be driven out, but will prove so deserving that they will not hate me, but think highly of me and give me a hundred knights with battle steeds and pack horses. Lady, if you thought enough of me to ask the king for honor's sake to free me from my loyalty pledge, I would leave his land at once."

"Not I, truly. I won't ask him anything for you because he is angry at me on account of you. I would be best pleased if you never won his regard." With this, the lady went back to her room. "God Himself should be grieved at my lord's injustice toward me," said Tristrant and started out for his lodging.

As soon as he left the orchard, the king drew his sword and would have killed the dwarf right in the tree, but the little man dropped to the ground and fled. The lord was very pleased at what he had heard, even though he greatly regretted the fact that the dwarf had gotten away—he escaped with the aid of Satan. It seemed to the king a long time till day because he wanted to find out if there was anything he could do to get Tristrant to stay. He rode back to the forest, as he was supposed to, wondering about this. Early in the morning he went to the city to his wife and fondly asked her to tell him what she had talked about with Tristrant the night before. She answered, "Lord, you might well spare me such things. I haven't seen him in twelve days and don't want ever to see him again. I have had so much sorrow on his account that I'll not see him again if I can help it."

"The truth is, lady," he said, "that you saw him last night. I was in the tree, could see you below and heard what he said to you. But don't worry about that; just be so kind as to help me keep him here. You can be sure that I shall make my entire court subject to him."

"I won't and can't help you with the warrior," said the lovely lady. "We parted in anger when he spoke to me last night. I would truly rather that he be driven away than that he should remain here. He can't do me any good, and, if one of your dear friends should tell you stories about us, my shame would be all the greater. Let us allow Tristrant to go wherever he wishes."

"No, no, my darling! This wouldn't be good for either of us. Forget that and help keep him here. I don't want to lose him."

"Then you should talk with him."

"I dare not." At this, he said, "I'll give you permission to be with him as often as you wish from now on. I became more angry than needful when he kissed you a short while ago, but that won't happen again. I thought you deserved it. However, you and the good knight have now clearly shown that you are faithful to me."

"If you want to win him back," said the queen, "ask my lady-in-waiting to go to your warrior and implore him for you. But I believe indeed that she wouldn't like to do this any more than I."

Then he spoke to Brangene and began to urge her out of the goodness of her heart to help him keep Tristrant there.

"Why did you order him to leave?"

"Because lies were told me about him."

"Who did that?"

"A duke."

"Let him win Tristrant back."

"He can't."

"I can say that too."

"Nothing so painful has ever happened to me."

"Is that true?"

"Yes, on my word."

"No, I don't dare trust it."

"You can try to persuade him without fear of regret because I shall be most friendly toward him, and he may be with Isalde as often as he likes."

"No, I don't think he will come back, and it wouldn't be wise for him because the same thing could easily happen again. If he wants my advice, I'll tell him to ride off at once to some place where they will offer him true friendship."

The king then offered to reward Brangene well if she would help so that the good knight would again stay at his court: "Whatever harm I have done him I will make good. I'll have his bed put in my room, and he can be with the queen early and late. What is more, he will indeed have my good will because he is innocent of any malice toward me." Since the mighty king begged her so earnestly, Brangene had to give in. She rode into the city and went to Tristrant's lodging. It was easy for her to persuade him to stay: she managed it with skill.

When he returned to the court, the king gave orders that his family and his retinue were to be subject to Tristrant's command. He said, "I heard lies about him from a certain duke whom I could name, whose standing with me will be much worse from now on."

"Nephew," spoke the king, "you shall be my chamberlain and be with me in all things and with the queen—note this carefully—as often as you wish, even though they all should tear their clothes with anger and grief because I do not dismiss you." Sir Tristrant had Kurneval carry his bed into the king's chamber. For all the sorrows he had ever had he was now repaid with joy since he could lie with the queen whenever he wished.

One day while the lord high steward was on a hunt, he came at dawn to a mountain in the forest and saw the dwarf in a thicket before him. Tinas had him caught and asked him at once what he was doing in the forest. The dwarf replied that he was out of favor with the king. "I'll help you appease my lord," said the knight, "and calm his anger." He ordered that the dwarf be taken home with him and helped him secure the king's good will. (If he had known his full guilt, he would sooner have hanged him.)

It was not long until the jealous lords were again offended that things were going so well with Tristrant. The false Duke Antret swore by his head that the dwarf had deceived him and wanted to kill him. The hateful man replied (may we never know such cunning as that which directed his words): "Tristrant is

indeed the queen's lover, just as sure as I live. If my lord weren't angry with me and would listen to me, I would show him the truth." Again the villains slyly repeated this to the king until, with both truth and lies, they brought him to the point where he said, "I'll do it. I'll try it again, and, if God wills that he is innocent, friend dwarf, you'll be burned to death." To which the monster replied, "Lord, that's all right with me, I won't care what happens to me." And the little man went on: "Lord, this is my counsel: tell Tristrant that he is to leave the country as your emissary, that you have no one but him who can do it, and that he must be gone by tomorrow morning. Say that he will be away for seven nights and that you will reward him with all sorts of gifts. But let me warn you that he cannot begin his journey without first seeing the queen. I'll tell you what is to be done: I'll strew white flour on the floor between your beds. If he doesn't come to see my lady before daybreak, have my head struck off with a board tomorrow. I'll hide under my lady's bed and wake you when I hear him coming. He won't be able to deny it when he has walked in the flour. You should also give orders beforehand that men are to be at the door to help you capture the warrior, for he is very strong. Command Antret and his companions that three of them should guard the door from within and the other four from without."

The king agreed to all this and told the seven lords to watch the door. The cowards were ready because they were all glad to do it, and so Tristrant was betrayed. When night came, the king asked him to carry his message. He spoke slyly: "Remember, my dear friend, I have no one to send who is really suitable but you. So get ready and ride off tomorrow morning to King Arthur. Britain is not far, and you will be back in seven nights. After you are prepared to depart, I'll let you get some rest. At break of day I'll tell you the message and reward you with gifts—you can believe this without question." Tristrant was very sad at heart on hearing this, but the good knight said he would do willingly what was asked of him. The king thanked him warmly and posted the guard.

After Tristrant had gone to bed, and the little man had strewn flour on the floor (as he had promised), and the villains who were to capture him were in the room—now listen—Tristrant wanted to say goodbye to his lady. He saw the flour and

thought, "No matter what you have strewn here, neither such precautions nor spying will help you, for I shall go to my lady." He was very foolish not to refrain in fear of his life, but, as we have heard, the potion made him decide to go to her before the journey. He was otherwise clever enough to drop the idea; the power of the potion taught him such lack of restraint. It was just midnight when he determined to visit the queen. Her bed was close enough that he thought he could surely leap to it. In doing so he sprang so hard that old wounds opened, and the lady became as red as a flower while he was lying with her. Then Aquitain, the evil dwarf—woe to him for betraying the noble man—waited no longer but cried out loudly, "Now you can catch Tristrant!" The king jumped up quickly and woke the guards. How glad Tristrant would have been to have leaped back to his bed, but he couldn't quite make it and put one foot down.

When the king came to the lady's bed and saw what Tristrant had done, he shouted, "On, good knights, whatever your hopes or fears, forward to battle!" They did as he commanded, seized Tristrant, and bound his hands behind his back like a thief. This was his great misfortune. The evil villains had never been so pleased, for the king was very angry at the good Tristrant and the queen. He said that he would gladly end their love affair in such a way that people would speak of it as long as the world endured. He ordered his dear friends to tell him what would be the most shameful death he could give them. Antret stepped forward and condemned Tristrant to the wheel and the lady to the stake; thus they would atone for their crime. The king was eager for day so that he could take their lives as Antret had counseled. He commanded that an alarm be sounded in his lands without delay, and all the people who could be found were ordered to come to the court session. Everyone wanted to hear why, but the heralds would only say that those who wanted to support the country should come early to the court. The people prepared to do so.

At daybreak the king hurried out of the city to hold court before the people. No one dared make any request of him but the lord high steward, Tinas. Oh how fond he was of Tristrant! He begged the king for his own honor's sake to let his wrath cool and said, "I shall help Tristrant make up to you any harm

he has done you." He fell at the king's feet and implored him, but the latter raged fiercely at Tinas, saying: "Your pleading so far Tristrant shows that my honor is not as dear to you as I thought. You anger me by this."

"No, dear and kind lord, for the sake of your noble spirit let the warrior live."

"No, he shall be broken on the wheel before the day is half gone."

"I shall never look on while the best man I ever knew and such a fine woman die like that," said the loyal Tinas. "It must grieve God in heaven that I can't help him. You will never be able to get over this day if you kill the knight and your own wife."

"Yes, they must both die this day. This shall surely be. I was never so offended."

"No, my dear lord, think better of it!"

The king began to glow like a coal and became so angry he had to sit down. Tinas could see the terrible mood he was in and dared not entreat or oppose him any longer, although his heart could have broken with grief—many a good man was greatly distressed then.

The kind and noble Tinas was very bitter, and his heart was overcome with sorrow when he left the king and rode away. He had not ridden long before he met a large troop leading Sir Tristrant, his hands bound tightly behind him. He at once began to weep. "If I could only show the good will I have toward you, friend," he whispered, "but you surely must know how deeply this grieves me. If I knew I would be caught and hanged like a thief, I would not let it stop me, but would free you or die with you. Sad to say, this cannot be; yet I do have the power to unbind your hands." He cut his bonds, strictly ordered those who led him not to tie him again, and added, "You are more likely to keep your rights if he keeps his." With eyes filled with tears he kissed the good knight, then wept more and more, now loudly, now silently. "Oh! Oh!" he cried, "I wish I had never seen you! I shall never get over this day." He was a true friend of Tristrant's; his heart was indeed loyal.

Those in charge of Tristrant became ill at ease and sad on seeing the distress of the lord high steward. As they were leading the good knight by a chapel, he asked to be permitted

to go in and pray while they waited outside. They replied that he had already caused them too much delay. However, one of them said, "It won't take long, and Sir Tinas asked us to be kind to him. Let us allow the penitent to confess his sins so that he may escape the devil. It will be easy to do what he wants," he went on, "because the chapel has only this one door, which is small enough for us to guard well, and on the far side the walls look down on the beating waves of the sea. We'll let him confess his sins. Whether it helps him or not, it can't hurt us." They told him to go on in, which he did without delay. Once inside the chapel, he barred the door—as a wise man would—which greatly vexed his guards. He then moved along very quietly until he came to an embrasure. He slipped into it carefully, for he wanted to save his life, and kept pushing till he thrust himself through the window. He sprang into the sea, swam to land, and ran along the water down below. He often looked back to see if anyone were chasing him.

Meanwhile Kurneaval had almost wept himself to death, for Tristrant had shown him much good will and kindness, and his sorrow was great. He came riding out of the city with his lord's sword in his hand and leading his horse. Sir Tristrant saw him coming straight toward him, and his fears were stilled. The faithful Kurneaval was greatly troubled, yet he thought, "Oh, dear God, he could perhaps escape if by chance he were to get his horse and sword. It would surely help him to get away." The thought sprang from the great love in his heart. He often lamented that he was ever born and would rather have lost his life with his lord. But in a short time he caught sight of Tristrant and galloped up to him, eager to learn what had happened. They were very happy to see each other. Tristrant mounted, girded on his sword, and hurried off at once.

The squire spoke prudently, "Now let's get away from here!"
"Where shall we go?"

"I am afraid that as soon as the king and his retinue discover that you have escaped, we shall probably be glad to flee the country."

"I'll never leave when the queen is to be tortured to death: I'll help her escape or die with her. And I am going to get revenge on some of her subjects." He rode into a thicket close to where court was being held and covered himself with foliage so

that whoever went by could not see him, while he himself saw clearly everything that happened at the court.

In the meantime those waiting before the chapel became impatient and said, "Tell him to come out; his prayer is too long." One of them sprang to the door and called loudly, "You could stop your praying today. It's not civil to keep us standing here so long." No one answered. Then they began to break down the door and would have been glad to wreak their anger on the warrior, but their labor was in vain, for they didn't find him. Shortly thereafter word came to the king that Tristrant had escaped, which must have displeased him. He announced to everyone at the court: "I shall show such grace to him who catches Tristrant for me that he will never use up what he gets. I promise that I shall give him so much wealth that he will always be rich." The knights all sprang on their steeds, but I don't think they would have found a trace of him if they had looked till this day: some were sorry about this and many were glad. Antret came back quite soon. He was glad he didn't find Tristrant because he feared the latter might exact some love-token.

When all the searchers returned without quite having caught Tristrant, the king determined to cool his wrath on the lady. He began to threaten her cruelly and said he would put an end to her love once and for all by frightful means. He then ordered that she be led away and executed without delay: he wanted her burned on a pile. At this, a leprous duke ran up and appealed urgently to the king, who allowed him to speak. The leper spoke thus: "Since the queen is to die and you want her to have a shameful death, I don't think she should be burned. This would be no disgrace to her because you are so mighty that you can have her hanged or burned as you wish. I'll tell you a death which will bring her much more shame." The king asked that he name it. "Give me the lady, and I'll take her life."

"How?" asked the king.

"I'll take her to my lepers," spoke the duke, "and they shall all rape her. She thus will die an object of loathing."

"This is true," replied the king, "but who will be surety that she will be killed if I give her to you?"

"I make a solemn promise," said the dreadful figure, "that you may have me, my nephew, and all my leprous retinue either hanged to a tree or slain with a sword if the lady lives." With this the king let him have her.

The leper was very pleased and quickly put the beautiful lady in front of him on his horse. The king thus got such revenge on her that many people in the country spoke ill of him, because it was a great shame for him to give his wife to the lepers. Their way passed right in front of Tristrant. Kurneaval recognized the lady at a distance and said to his lord, "There they are taking my lady!" Tristrant's love showed itself again as he sorely lamented the great dishonor, that they were allowed to lead the lady away and that one of them dared touch her with his foul hand. The warrior got ready and, when he came near them, spurred his horse forward in a rage. He cut the leprous duke in half, so that the upper part fell to the ground, dragging the lady with it. Then, swords swinging, the two charged into the other lepers. I think they let hardly any escape. Surely not many could have lived through it. Tristrant picked up the woman and raced off toward a dark forest.

One of the lepers escaped and went to the king and began to lament pitifully that his lord and all of his companions had been slain. "Tristrant did it and took the lady with him. I barely got away," thus spoke the poor leper. You all may well be surprised at what the king said. He urged everyone, vassals and kin, to waylay Tristrant: "Who seizes him so that I can avenge the great trouble he causes me shall share all I have the rest of his life." The knights, young and old, sprang on their horses in a body and looked for Tristrant throughout the land, but he had entered the forest and was riding toward safety. Since they could not find him, they returned in a short time and told this to their lord. Then the king sternly warned his friends and the neighboring princes that the fugitives were to suffer. He asked that they kill Tristrant if they came upon him or bring him back.

A hound named Utant, which Tristrant liked more than any other dog, was tied up there, and it began to struggle fiercely to get loose. The king asked a squire who was standing by whose

dog it was that was barking so. He replied that it belonged to Tristrant. At this, the king told the squire to go quickly and hang the dog. He would lose his eyes if he let it live. The squire took Utant and rode away from the road. He was truly sorry to have to hang it, and, because he liked Tristrant, he thought he would rather leave the country than do so. He turned the dog loose instead of doing as the king ordered, but he was right in letting it live. The squire then returned.

The hound came to the very place from which Tristrant had ridden away and followed the scent far into the forest. His master heard him baying and spoke to Kurneaval: "Listen! What should we do? We may soon be dead. I hear my hound. They are tracking us down with it. I don't know where we can go. We'll give them a good battle right here, for we can't escape either by horse or on foot. But we'll sell our lives so dearly that their wives at home will lament our death. They won't profit by having been so eager to pursue us. The one who leads the chase will probably be in a rage. I'll charge him when he comes trotting up." So spoke the bold warrior. Kurneaval, however, replied, "Sir, that won't help us. We can't fight with them, for there are too many of them and they are good warriors. If we confront them in a battle, we shall all be killed. I alone shall die while you two ride on to safety. I'll take good care that the hound on our trail does not follow you any further than here." He entreated his lord to ride off with the lady at once and save their lives: "I'll die with honor here." So, with great pain and sorrow, Tristrant and the lady started away.

Kurneaval looked back to see how close the dog was and took on the aspect of one who was about to give his life to kill it. Grimly he waited in ambush behind a tree and carefully watched the place where he heard the dog. He thought he would like to render the same service to the dog's handler as it so that his deed might be the more praiseworthy. Then the good dog came racing up alone—as I told you before, it had no handler. Kurneaval was very happy to see that, I fancy, and quickly rode on. He spoke to the dog, which was pleased to have found him. His cares and fears gone, the squire joyfully rode after Sir Tristrant, following his tracks. When he had ridden for a short time, hardly half a league, he lost the trail,

so he put the now-silent dog down on the ground and ordered it to lead him to its master, but not to bark. The dog therefore eagerly hunted down game that was not wild: a man and a woman.

Kurneaval was gladhearted when he found Tristrant and the queen, and his lord was too. He asked Kurneaval how he had gotten the dog and was told that it was following their scent alone. No one could describe their joy: they forgot all the troubles they had ever had (which they should be lamenting) and rode all day, so deep into the forest that Tristrant truly believed they would never be found even if the whole country looked for them. The warrior then halted and told his companions that they would have to stay there for a while. (They dared not leave the forest.) They dismounted, and Kurneaval quickly brought his lord enough limbs and branches for them to build a hut. Even the lady could not be idle and held the horses while they worked. They lived there without proper food for more than a year and a half. I tell you truly that the poor people ate almost nothing but the herbs they found in the forest; their best food was just whatever they could seek out. Sometimes the wise Tristrant shot something with a bow and used his wits to catch some fish from a stream with a hook. It has been told me as the truth that Tristrant was the first man ever to fish with a hook. I have also heard that he was the first to learn how to use hounds to track down game. They had a hard life in the wild forest, he and the beautiful Isalde, yet it was child's play to them for they also had much joy from their great love. In fact, as I think of it, only Kurneaval really suffered, and it was a wonder he did not die. Now all listen carefully to what they did next, for I can tell you.

Tristrant, the queen, and Kurneaval all suffered great hardship. Whoever endured such hunger for a year nowadays, I must admit, would starve, for they had neither fire nor bread. You will be surprised to hear that their horses had only leaves, grass, and moss to eat. Their clothing fell apart from storm and rain. It is a wonder to me that the lady and the men didn't freeze to death after losing all their clothes. However, both the book and the storytellers say that they stayed in the wild forest more than two years without seeing city or village. Tristrant

had a custom, which the lady accepted, of drawing his sword from the scabbard and placing it between them whenever they lay down and talked their fill with each other. He never failed to do this, and they never slept without having the sword between them. That was a strange practice for a man, but it stood him in good stead later because one of the king's hunters came stealthily up to the hut early one morning while they were asleep. When he recognized Sir Tristrant and saw the weapon, he hurried away without being seen and came to the king. Was it shameful for him to tell what he had seen and how he found them? The king at once asked him to say nothing about it and lead him there. You'll just have to wonder what he had in mind, for I can't tell you.

While it was still early, the hunter rode quickly back, as Mark had asked, and brought the king to where he found these helpless people. He had his men stay with the horses and without delay went forward alone and on foot to where Tristrant lay. He saw the sword lying between them and, since they were asleep, carefully reached for it. He took Tristrant's weapon from the noble pair and drew his own. He placed Tristrant's in his scabbard and laid his sword where the other had lain. Both the lady and the warrior slept through this. The king then laid his glove on the lady, but without awakening her. He softly withdrew his hand from the queen, walked back to his horse, and rode where he would—just as he rightly should. When Tristrant awoke and sat up, he saw the glove and asked the lady whose it was. She became frightened and said that she didn't know how the glove had gotten there. The lord then noticed that his sword had been taken and at once recognized the king's sword. He spoke to the queen: "We shall never escape with life and sound bodies, for, mark my words, the king was here and is not far away. I don't know where he is hidden, but it is someplace close by. Death is at hand. Only his courtly manners kept him from killing us at once while we were sleeping, but as soon as we get up, we'll both die." He asked her to call Kurneaval and have him bring the horses. When they were mounted, they listened, but could not tell from which direction the king had come (if I have heard the story rightly). Still they fled in haste, seeking the same refuge, the deep forest, as I can well believe.

All day long they trotted further into the forest and about vesper time came to a thick tangle of fallen trees. The companions halted there and did what was needed. Each gathered his share of herbs, and they sat down together to eat the wild plants. Even the queen had to eat what there was. But I'll tell you the truth: they were wise enough to have preferred better food if they had had it.

Not far away lived a holy hermit who was a father confessor of King Mark. The good man's name was Ugrim, and he was the one who imposed penance on the king for whatever evil he did. One day Tristrant rode to the man and wanted a penance, but the latter would give him none unless he gave up the queen. The hermit asked him to do this for God's sake and be freed from sin, saying that he could not escape the devil if he remained longer in the wrong. The knight did not esteem this counsel so highly as to follow it and rode away without absolution. Love's might kept him from leaving Isalde, and they remained together in the forest, believe me, until the power of the potion waned. This happened four years after they had drunk it, as those say who read it in the book (which indeed may be telling the truth). It then seemed to both of them that they should part, and both began to suffer greatly from the hardship of the forest: they couldn't bear it another day and could hardly wait through the night.

At break of dawn, Tristrant took the lady to Ugrim and said he was sorry not to have heeded his warning. He added that he would do as the hermit counseled and that this was also the lady's will. The good recluse was very happy and gave them what he could that was fitting for them to take. He asked Tristrant if he repented the evil he had done with the lady.

"And will you give her back to the king?"

"Yes, I will," answered the knight, which pleased Ugrim. He quickly wrote a letter to the king and sent it by Tristrant, since he had no other messenger. He counseled the king in the name of God to do willingly what he asked in the letter. When it was ready, Tristrant did not wait any longer, but set out in the night. Coming to Tintanjol, the shrewd man rode into the orchard in which the king had watched from up in the tree. He tied the reins of his horse to the large linden, by which he had often felt joy and sorrow, and took a look around. Then he went

to where the king slept, spoke to him through the wall, and asked if he slept.

"Yes, when people let me," was the answer.

"I say to you truly that you must wake up for a while."

"Tell me, why?"

"I would gladly tell you if I dared."

"Well speak up quickly; you have permission."

"Your dear teacher, Ugrim, sends his best wishes."

"May almighty God reward him," said the king and bade him go on.

Then Sir Tristrant threw the letter through the window to the king and said, "Your father confessor Ugrim sends this letter and word that, if he is dear to you as a confessor, you should listen well to what is written in it. He also sends word that he grants you God's salvation and imposes this as a penance for all your sins. So you should accept it gladly. Furthermore, he says that you should have a letter giving your answer written tomorrow and hung on the cross which stands where the road divides at the tower in front of the city. Your confessor will send someone for it tomorrow."

The king knew Tristrant's voice and couldn't help saying, "I know very well that you are Tristrant. Wait for me; I want to talk with you." Tristrant paid no heed to these words, but rode quietly away without his leave. The king sprang out of the door and cried after him sternly, but the warrior rode where he wished unharmed and was not pursued. It seemed to the king a long time before the night was over, and he had the letter read to him as soon as it was day. In it was written this: "Sir, Ugrim beseeches you in holy love to take back my lady, your wife. He bids Tristrant come with few troops and bring her to you, and you should receive her fondly and should again show Tristrant your favor. He can indeed earn this with his strength wherever he ought, as you, my lord, know better than I. I, Ugrim, your teacher, beg you for the love of God to be gracious, for God's sake and because of his plea." The reader then was still.

After the letter had been read to the king, he told his counselors how they had been lying when he found them in the forest and swore that Tristrant had never had her as his woman, that he only had always been kind to her and too fond of her. He ordered a letter written which said that he would

take back the lady in four days if this suited Tristrant, but the latter was no longer to enjoy his favor because he had treated the king so badly that no one counseled him to let Tristrant stay in the country, only that he should give the warrior full protection while bringing the lady, which was surely his duty to do. This was written in the letter and also the place to which the queen was to be brought. In the evening, the king ordered the letter to be hung where Ugrim's messenger had said, and Tristrant did not fail to get it that night and bring it to his confessor. The good Ugrim read what was in it and told the warrior. The latter got ready for the event, but had no clothing. So Ugrim gave him as much as he could spare of his own very poor linen, which Tristrant thought good enough, although it was not at all suitable for him. He then had the courage to bring the lady to the meeting as he had planned.

When he took her there, the king spoke up at once: "Well, Sir Tristrant, will you give me the lady now?"

"Gladly, sir," spoke the warrior, "Shall I be allowed to live in this country?"

"No, I forbid it."

"Why? What have I done to you?"

"A great deal, and it has brought me shame."

"I will be happy to make that up to you. I also want you to let me enjoy the lady's company."

"I won't."

"Why not?"

"That's too much."

"I don't think so. Do you really believe it?"

"Yes, I do."

"You are joking."

"No, I'm not."

"Yes, you are. Well, forgive my misdeeds that God in heaven may reward you."

"May God scorn me if I do. I am too angry at you to ever be well disposed toward you again."

"How have I earned that?"

"How? You surely know."

"I shall perform such deeds for you that you will again be fond of me."

"I don't want your service."

"Why not, sir?"

"I'll tell you. You have brought me much harm and shame."

"You won't allow me to remain in your land?"

"No, you would be too near me. You must leave or I shall indeed bring charges against you."

At this, Tristrant spoke angrily to his lord: "Well, take the queen! I'll ride away and do the best I can for myself. You will never see the day that I shall again court your favor with such respect. If I am to have your hate, I can endure it. But be sure of this: if you are not happy with your wife, you will always be in danger from me. Otherwise I shall spare you because of her great kindness. Oh, mighty King of Heaven," said Tristrant, "how painful it is for a man to give up something so dear to him as my lady is to me. But, whether for better or for worse, I give her back to you. Sir, take my lady, and with great sorrow I shall leave her." The king rode up, took back the lady, and kept her fondly for many years. The dear friends parted very sorrowfully. Tristrant entrusted his dog to the noble queen and asked her to care for it well, go to see it every day, and think of him when she did. "If you are fond of me," he said, "show it in your treatment of the hound." She took it lovingly in her arms, and Tristrant departed.

The brave knight rode off to stay at the court of King Ganoje. He arrived there early one morning and was well received, but, to the great regret of the king, did not remain long. What manly deeds the noble lord performed there and how he did them would take too long to tell. He suddenly decided to leave without delay, thanked the king very much for the friendship and honor shown him, as was proper, and set out, never to return. He rode to Britain, with no attendants at that time but Kurneaval. You never saw such a cordial welcome as he received from the great king and his retinue when he arrived. But no one there was so happy at his coming as Gawain, who at once became his companion and took such good care of him that Tristrant could get anything he wanted at the court. Whenever there was fighting or brave deeds to be done, Tristrant won the honors without any doubt. This went on until his fame was such that there was no one at court who

wouldn't admit that he had never before seen so bold a warrior as Tristrant. Many knights were there who often performed manly deeds, but none could match his.

It was the young men's custom to ride off for two or three days, armed and seeking adventure. And when one met another, they had to fight whether they wanted to or not; it could not be otherwise, for this was what the young knights at King Arthur's court did. They won great fame because they all tried to gain as much honor as they could. Among them was a good knight, called Chevalier Delekors, who had the courage of a lion and never shunned any hardship which brought praise and honor. He was a very able man and widely famed; he was upright and courtly and had travelled through many lands without ever being unhorsed by a knight's spear or ever giving way because of fear of a man. He wrought brave deeds with his strong hand.

One day Tristrant rode into the forest seeking adventure and changed his armor as soon as he was out of sight so that no one would know him. (They did this through pride.) He met this knight on a field and knocked him off of his horse just as if he had never been there. Did Tristrant take the horse? Yes, he quickly led it away but then met a poor man who was on foot and gave it to him. However he was so cleverly disguised that the man didn't know who had given him the horse. The courtly and handsome Chevalier Delekors didn't lie there long; he walked to the castle, which he had never done before, and told what had happened to him. It was six weeks after he was unhorsed before anyone heard from any report or story who was the cause of this. At last Sir Gawain and the king agreed that it must have been Tristrant, for they thought no one else would have been good enough: "It was he all right, but who can find out for sure?" The king asked that someone inquire about it. So the merry Gawain shrewdly began to question his friend. The latter would admit nothing until Gawain pled with him for Isalde's sake to tell whether he had been the one. At this, the warrior said frankly, "Friend, it was I. Whatever I am asked for my lady's sake I always reveal and do not hide because of any peril, even death."

Then spoke Sir Gawain, "Blessed be my lady, the queen, in that you have told me this for love of her. My friend, can you see her as often as you like?"

"No, sad to say, I am not that lucky."

"Would you like to see her?"

"Yes, I would, even at the risk of my life."

"Then I shall work to this end and, if I can, will soon help you to get to where the lady is. King Arthur has a hunting lodge not far from Tintanjol and, for your sake, will go there to hunt. In this way I shall take you along to where you can see your lady, the queen, if it can be done." Tristrant was very happy at this.

Sir Gawain arranged it so that the king went hunting there—just hear how cleverly the plan was carried out. The forest into which the king rode to hunt did not belong to him alone, but was owned in common with his dear friend King Mark, and some of the game ran near Tintanjol. The lords therefore agreed that they should take their hounds and hunt merrily where they pleased, either near the hunting lodge or by the city. Gawain asked the huntsmen, as a favor to him, to drive the stag toward Tintanjol. They did as he wished, and the stag ran as he was supposed to—away from the lodge. When it was brought to bay near the city, King Arthur rode up with his retinue and ordered it killed. However, Gawain and Tristrant asked that the stag be allowed to live until they wanted it slain and cleverly managed to put this off until evening. By the time they had killed the stag and decided who was to carry it and the king was ready to ride back, the day was gone.

"I have you to thank for this discomfort," said the king to his nephew, "since you kept me from having the stag killed in good time. Now we have three leagues to ride at night."

"Why do we need to hurry back so," answered Gawain, "Tintanjol is not far. You can stay there and pass the night at your ease with King Mark, who often has heartily invited you to his castle."

"You know well how the matter is," said King Arthur, "and that your friend Tristrant is out of favor with him."

"Send Kay there with word that you would like to stay overnight with him if he will pledge the safety of those with

you," replied the knight, and Kay had to go. When he came to Tintanjol and Mark heard the message he brought from his lord, the king quickly asserted that they might all come in peace, no matter what they had done to him. Very pleased at this, Kay went and told his lord at once. "What is there to hinder us now?" asked Gawain, and Tristrant, too, was happy.

As soon as King Mark heard that the beloved guest was coming, he went to meet him with candles, and I am not afraid to pledge myself as fully as I can that the latter and all his retinue, save one, were well received. King Arthur then went to the lovely queen, who fondly welcomed him and those with him. Now listen! The lady wanted to speak with Sir Gawain, but he did not want to leave the company of his companion—whom, sad to say, she dared not greet—and would rather forego her kiss than do so. She didn't like to leave out Tristrant but there was nothing she could do, so Sir Gawain didn't get kissed this time. He bore this without malice. The king festively gave lodging to his welcome guests and plenty of everything that God created for food. After they had had enough to eat and drink, Mark asked his guest to see to it in his stead that his companions did nothing to disgrace their host. He said that he had pledged the safety of all and would keep his word, "but if someone tries to dishonor me, that could be the end of him. So I warn him: he may well be paid back for all he ever did to me."

"You will have my help," answered the worthy guest, "in seeing that whoever would dishonor you is sternly punished." With this, Tristrant was greeted and well warned. However, he still had his old nature in that he would never shun his dear lady because of anyone's threats, and he had to suffer for this.

I tell you truly that in times past kings did not have splendid halls, for they were not so well furnished with fine chambers as the lords are today. This could be seen in Mark's court because his guests had no other place in the castle to rest than in the main hall. There they lay altogether at one end, and the king and queen, as was usual then, lay at the other. It was their custom to sleep alone. Tristrant saw this and planned to go over there. The surly host, for his part, had a thick board studded with sharp blades ready when the chamberlain or-

dered the candles put out, for the king knew well that Tristrant would come to the lady no matter what might happen. If he cut himself, and the king caught him, his wife would be safe. Tristrant did not know of the trap set for him and, after everyone had gone to sleep, walked toward the queen. What was supposed to happen did, and he cut himself badly, yet wouldn't turn back without getting to the queen. He took his shirt tails, bound the wounds with them, and went on to chat with her. But then the blood swelled so strongly from the cuts that the several thicknesses of cloth would not hold it back, and his leg became all bloody. Tristrant did not stay long with the lady, which (as you should indeed believe) she sorely lamented. When Tristrant told her what had happened, she was very frightened and began to weep. They had to part so soon that there was time for no more than fond glances and loving embraces before the warrior returned to his bed and lay down, bleeding like a stuck pig. "Now I have no doubt lost my life, for the king will take a harsh revenge on me," he said sadly. Sir Gawain heard this and asked what was wrong. When he learned, he was most unhappy and began to lament so loudly that all his companions could hear.

King Arthur discovered that the bold Tristrant had cut himself badly and was also deeply grieved, as were all the rest. Each knight said to the other, "He will die, for our host laid down such certain terms that I cannot protect him."

"We shall help him in his need or die with him," said the one whom Tristrant had unhorsed. Sir Gawain agreed, as did all those who had come with Arthur. Both the lord and his men loyally declared that they would stand by him no matter what happened, lose their lives there, "or help him get away." Then Sir Kay spoke up: "You all think you are so splendid, but what proof have you? It seems to me a courtly man would know some trick to save him." He said this scornfully and went on to give some advice which was good, though not without malice: "Sirs, I'll tell you what to do. We shall start a fight and see to it that during the commotion everyone gets cut. This will help him."

"May God bless you," said Sir Gawain, "You are truly right," and ran at once to where he got a bad cut. All willing, they sprang up and began a free-for-all. They kept pushing each

other back and forth and didn't stop until everyone had a cut except Kay, who had crept shrewdly out of the way. However, Sir Gawain seized him and threw him also down on the board so that he got the worst wound of all. "Oh! Oh! Damnation!" cried Kay above the noise, "do wolves run around this hall that one should set traps for them here? God destroy them forever! My leg is cut! May God get us home quickly! Why should we stay here any longer? Whoever heard of a king being so spiteful as to cut friendly guests with steel blades. They have strange customs here."

He called out so loudly that the king woke up and spoke to them angrily: "What are you lords doing? I thought you were well-bred, and you storm around at night like monsters."

"I can't restrain them," said King Arthur, "They do this all the time. At home they won't stop either for me or for my wife."

King Mark soon got over his anger, for which all were glad, and they lay down to sleep. But Tristrant came back to his lady. They lay with each other—I tell you without question they enjoyed it—and did not part till dawn. When the knights got up and each bound his wound and complained, Mark was ashamed that this had happened to all of them. They all limped as they walked, and Kay more than the others. Thus did Gawain fulfill his promise to Tristrant.

Then the kings parted. Arthur returned home, and not long afterwards Tristrant left him. The king regretted this, but the youth would not stay for anything and rode away. Sir Gawain was very sorry to see his friend go and reminded him of the fellowship there and all the good and pleasant things which had happened to him. But no one could change his mind. The king's retinue lamented, and Arthur offered him fiefs and hereditary lands. I don't know why he wouldn't remain: he just took his armor and went his own way. Sir Gawain said he had never been so unhappy, and both the king and the queen said the same.

Tristrant rode straight ahead as far as he could go in seven days and came to a beautiful land which had been so burned and laid waste that he did not see a single dwelling. Many fine castles lay in ruins, the victims of what had happened there. He later saw several villages and large cities along the way

and was greatly vexed at the strange state of affairs, for he rode three days without even hearing a dog or a rooster. In the early afternoon of the fourth day the warrior saw on a hill an old chapel and beside it a small cottage—perhaps that of the priest—with smoke coming from its chimney. The two young knights quickly rode there and found a priest named Michel. Tristrant dismounted and asked for food and lodging. The priest answered that he would gladly give the best he had and did take good care of horses and men until the next morning. After they had eaten that evening and were sitting by the fire, Tristrant asked the good man what land it was. Michel told him the whole story.

He said that it was a thriving country "before it was laid waste so with fire; grain and grapes grew well here. The lord who rules here is called Havelin and is a great and noble king. This great dishonor was done him by his vassals, who should stand by him and serve him in return for their fiefs. I'll tell you how it happened that my lord was so disgraced. A mighty count, Riole of Nantes, asked him for his daughter. My lord would not and should not give her to his vassal, and so the count resolved to take her by force, for he is a good warrior. Indeed, were it not for this injustice to my lord, he would be upright and noble. The other princes joined him, and they destroyed all my dear lord's castles. He and a small troop are in Karahes, a city they cannot take. He suffered this injury because he would not have his daughter marry below her station. His like was never born in any country. The loss of his wealth was a loss to many, for whoever wanted some of it received more than he asked for. He still has a son, named Kehenis, who is a bold warrior and, if he could fight by court rules, would dare confront any one of his peers without giving ground. But there are so many of the enemy that he cannot withstand them in a battle. They seek him every day before the walls, but the gates are closed so that no one can go out. Things are going badly there."

Tristrant asked how far the distressed city was and was quickly told that it lay hardly two leagues away. In the morning he took leave at once and asked the way to the city. When he arrived at Karahes, he found the king standing on

the forward battlement. In a friendly manner Tristrant asked if the king were there, and the latter answered, "Yes, what would you like? I am here." His son also came forward and looked down at the warrior. Sir Tristrant spoke: "Sir, I have heard laments that you had suffered insult and injury from your enemies and have come to serve you. That is my wish." The king was silent a while. At last he spoke: "I regret that my state is not such that I can retain you under conditions suitable to both of us." On hearing this, Tristrant answered very politely: "Noble king, why do you say that?"

"I must know you better," said King Havelin, "before I tell what means I have."

The bold knight then spoke. "My name is Tristrant, my father's land is Lohenois, and Mark is my uncle. I have come from Cornwall to help you because I have often heard of your honor and kindness."

"Oh what grief and sorrow that my eyes ever saw you, since I cannot retain you."

"Why not, sir?"

"I dare not tell you. I know for sure that it wouldn't be good for me."

"I promise in all truth, sir, that I shall not betray you. You also need not pay me, and I shall bring no shame on you because of it. What more can I say?"

"I must admit to you my great need. We have no bread or other food. You surely could not stand the hardship we poor people must endure, so wretchedly do we feed ourselves."

"Sir, I tell you truly," Tristrant quickly replied, "I spent more than two years in a forest and survived without bread, so God knows I can do it."

"There is no one here—king or queen, man or woman—who gets anything more to eat than a few beans."

Tristrant spoke: "Let me live thus with you, and may God reward you!"

Kehenis then spoke: "Father, he wants to be here and asks us in earnest, so for my sake give him a friendly welcome and let him share with us both loss and gain."

The king welcomed him for better or for worse, and the two knights hastened to the gate. The bar was quickly drawn, and

they were admitted. Kehenis went to the bold Tristrant, received him as a comrade, and they promised each other friendship with hand and tongue. Soon Kehenis said, "Friend, let us go where the ladies can receive you and you can see my sister. You will have to admit that there was never a more beautiful woman: she well deserves to be the wife of a king."

"What is your sister's name?"

"Her name is Isalde."

For a moment Sir Tristrant fancied that she had chosen him and thought, "I have lost Isalde and found her again." Just then he came to where she was, but he did not say that he knew a more beautiful woman than her.

I tell you truly that Tristrant and Kehenis walked hand in hand when they left. The bold and shrewd warrior asked how the fighting was going and if there were no sorties out of the city. Kehenis replied that the enemy had such a host of knights and challenged them with such strong forces that they could not oppose him: "Their chief, the noble Riole, always races far in front of the others to see if anyone dares confront him, but there is no man among us who is bold enough to ride out. They have all learned that and go about as they please." Tristrant eagerly asked his friend to help him get out of the city before dawn of the next day. Kehenis said, "I can tell you that we have sworn not to open the gate as long as the enemy is before it." But Tristrant reminded him that they had promised to be loyal to each other and urged him out of friendship to help him leave the city in the morning. So Kehenis had to do it.

Believe me, just as it began to get light on the following day Tristrant came out of the city. He kept watch, waiting for Riole, whom he wanted to fight, and saw him coming, far ahead of his followers. The count also noticed Tristrant on the field, where he had never before met anyone, and wanted to find out if he would fight, so he turned his way and charged swiftly. Tristrant rode at him and struck him down, then rode back to him and used force to make him yield. I tell you truly that he gave him many great blows on the helmet and cut his shield to pieces. Riole was in fear of his life when he gave up.

He promised Tristrant that he would go into the city as his prisoner and not leave it and that he would not let anything keep him from doing as Tristrant told him: the young man was

happy to come out of it alive. Tristrant accepted his surrender in a friendly manner. Then the count's men arrived—which they should have done sooner—and freed their lord. Tristrant had to retreat, but did not go far. The enemy attacked the city in knightly fashion and rode away when they had tired of it. However, the honest Count Riole, whose word was good, did as he was supposed to and came into the city. His master, the shrewd Tristrant, said to him, "You must supply the city with plenty of food for a week. If provisions—grain and wine—are not brought to us, you will get a good look at the deepest dungeon in the city, be sure of that." Riole was proud, and it seemed to him a shameful thing to be thrown into a dungeon. He thought he would rather suffer the loss of the supplies and therefore had so much food brought that they would have enough for more than six weeks. The enemies of the king wanted revenge for this and sent him word that they would destroy the city the next morning if he did not set Count Riole free. They also said, if he held the count any longer, they would kill the king and all those with him, they would take the city and leave no one alive. "May God now be merciful to us!" spoke up the bold Tristrant. "But, whether they like it or not, no threats will free Count Riole."

As Tristrant was saying this, a message came to the king from two of his sister's sons, saying that they had come with 200 good knights to help him and that they were bringing their own supplies with them, enough for twelve weeks or more. They had come by sea and were now riding toward the city. Tristrant asked the king to give them a fine welcome, and the king himself went forth with a great throng to receive his kin with honor. Let no one ask me to tell of the splendor with which he greeted them. Before long the king related to his friends what Tristrant had done and that he wanted the latter's counsel on his plight. He ordered his son and asked his kin and knights to be subject to Tristrant, saying that he would grant no honor to those who did not do Tristrant's bidding. This suited all the lords.

When the king found out that his enemies would keep their vow, Tristrant, as their leader, ordered the knights to dress themselves in leg armor and hauberk and tie their helmets on firmly. He said, "Whether there be many of them or few, God

willing, they shall find us in the field." His orders were carried out, and everyone gathered in a courtyard. Tristrant asked them all to follow his command as to where they were to fight. Then the handsome youth rode out of the gate and had the army halt in front of the city. He bade his lord remain there at home with a hundred knights in good hauberks and with all the people who were willing to help and able to fight with maces, javelins, bucklers, halberds, and spears. There were also a large number who carried sharp swords (with which they were to strike great blows). Tristrant left many fine warriors in steel helmets there, bold defenders in good hauberks. He also left skilled archers, who would be useful in supporting him if he were driven back to them. He did not stay there long. Further from the city, he placed one of the king's nephews with half of the troops who had come with him and still further away the other nephew with the rest. He asked them all to stay quietly where they were and not to come forth unless he or Kurneaval told them to.

Tristrant and Kehenis rode on with 200 men in armor to carry out a bold scheme. When they came close enough for the enemy to see them well, they crowded together as if trying to conceal themselves. The others caught sight of them and charged at once without even being fully armed, which caused the death of many. With evil intent, Tristrant's men did not move until the enemy came close; then they raised their shields and raced right into them. The latter began to flee, and Tristrant did them great harm, capturing 40 knights—not counting those killed. I regret to say that later there were enough of them to stop him, although they got many wounds before they finally forced him to turn back. The bold Tristrant fled, but so cunningly that he suffered no losses. And he was soon aided by one of the king's nephews. When he was chased to the ambush where the knight was, Tristrant ordered him to charge, and, giving his horse its head, he dashed forth. "You catch that one; I'll kill this one!" his men all cried, with a clamor like that of a great army. Still the enemy did not retreat, but fought fiercely against Tristrant. Many died before the skirmish was over, and 30 or more enemy knights were

captured. Throngs of knights lay about the battlefield like slaughtered cattle. Countless warriors fell by Tristrant's sword, many firm helmets were split open by its edge, many a bold hero was laid low by his hand. Then Tristrant had to give way again, and he fled in knightly manner to the second count, whom Tristrant also commanded to rush forth bravely from the ambush. The lord was a bold man and did not delay. Seizing his banner himself, he rode into the broad circle of battle. The grimmest struggle ever seen by eye of man followed. There was great carnage as the young men broke through rings of mail with their spears, and one could hear afar the resounding blows of brave men's swords.

Stories are told of Dietrich, but Kehenis and Tristrant fought there more dreadfully than either Dietrich or Hildebrand ever did. At last Tristrant thought that he could win the victory if the king were to come, so he looked away from the conflict, caught sight of Kurneaval, and asked him to ride off and bring him. Just then, a bold warrior, Nampetenis, seized Kehenis's reins, led him away, and tried to force him to yield. Tristrant was greatly pained by this and, as soon as he heard of it, came to his friend's aid with such powerful blows that Nampetenis let him go. The wise Tristrant then returned to the battle. He made helmet holes and many a bloody shield; Kehenis made a lot of orphans; and the king's nephews also caused great distress: they robbed many women of loved ones that day. The four swung their swords mightily and chopped helmets apart as they killed and wounded a host: they were well versed in battle. Tristrant and his men fought grimly, but they began to lose their horses and were at last all on foot. "We must stand and fight for our lives, whether we like it or not," the brave knights said, "for we can't flee. We'll never get away if the enemy can help it." From the swords of the youths fell a great number of warriors, with splintered shields and rent breastplates from which the life blood poured forth. Hauberks were hacked through, helmets were split open, and the dead of Riele's army lay all around, making a great Red Sea of blood—knee-deep in places—in which the fighters waded. Whoever saw as great a carnage as that by the bold Tristrant?

Although he had few men, the others were disheartened at what they saw, for he and Kehenis had killed many brave warriors. The birds had food for a long time.

The nephews of the king threw their shields on their backs and, swinging their swords with both hands, began such a fierce attack that bright blood settled everywhere like dew, and many died for lack of it. The sturdy warriors avenged their uncle's troubles in a most fitting manner: bodies lay on bodies, and dust turned to mud with blood. They cut through many fine helmets: whoever came within reach of their swords was lost. They were very angry, and their revenge for the insult to King Havelin caused much unhappiness. Horses ran riderless about the field, shields were hacked away from the hands that held them, many a warrior fell. At last the king appeared, carrying a huge banner and crying "Karahes" in a loud voice, and the fortunes of the enemy did not improve. They were greatly frightened, for the battlefield seemed full of good warriors. So they stopped fighting and fled: lords and men were killed in great numbers.

I'll tell you what followed, if you want to know. When the battle was over, the king rode back to the city and asked all the lords to come before him to hear his words. He thanked them very much—the knights of his court and the noble Tristrant—that he could now rule over all his kingdom. To the nephews who had come overseas to show their respect and help him he gave splendid rewards and sent them and their troops back home with honor. Tristrant stayed there and arranged a peace which added to the king's fame. Then Kehenis began to fear that his friend, Tristrant, would leave and wanted to make him so much at home that he would be happy to stay forever in Karahes. He thought this would bring him, Kehenis, both honor and happiness.

"Dear friend," he said, "my father is fond of you. Why don't you ask him to give you my sister as a wife?"

"I would like to do that," replied Tristrant, "if I knew that he would do it. But if I were unlucky and he did not grant my request, my service would have been for nothing."

"What if it pleases him and he wants to give her to you?"

"Truly, I would be happy to take her," said Sir Tristrant.

Kehenis at once told this to his father, and the latter answered him just as Tristrant had done. So Kehenis carried on the matchmaking until the lady was given to Tristrant. However, she was with him for a year, so I heard, without really becoming his wife. The noble lady bore this patiently.

Isalde never spoke of it until one day when the king and queen, Tristrant and his wife, and Kehenis were riding toward Karahes along a low-lying road near the city. Isalde's horse stepped into a clear pool so that the water splashed up under her dress to the knee. She said, "Water, you surprise me! Bad luck to you! How dare you jump further up under my dress than any knight's hand dares to go or ever went?" Her brother, Kehenis, heard this and said that it was not so. The lady was sorry he had been listening, yet replied, "What I say is true."

"You have been with your husband more than a year. How could there still be any place on your body over which his hand has not passed? You are telling me a lie."

"Truly, it is not a lie. Your friend is so well-bred that he has never even placed his hand on my bare knee."

"Then you have never become his wife?"

"No, by God, neither his nor any other man's."

That was not the end of it, for Kehenis didn't wait, but went straight to his father and complained to him and all his vassals that Tristrant didn't want his sister as a wife. "He has insulted us," Kehenis said, "and shall pay for it, since he did this only because he intends to leave her."

"God damn us, if we permit that!" spoke the king.

"Let's get revenge now," cried Kehenis hotly. "How shall we do it?"

The king gathered kin and men, for he wanted to kill Tristrant at once, right on the road where they were riding. But this troubled Kehenis, who asked his father to wait a while, "for he is my friend, and I'll warn him first that he offends my honor."

Do you want to hear what he said to Tristrant when he saw him: "Comrade, I am breaking with you. I can no longer be your friend."

"But why not?"

"I can't like you any more."

"For what reason?"

"You have brought shame on my sister and all of us."

"How?"

"Why should I say it? You surely know."

"Not I."

"Shall I tell you?"

"I would like you to."

"Because our sister is still a maid as before."

"How is that an insult?"

"It shames us."

"No! Why?"

"You can see that."

"I can't."

"Shall I tell you?"

"Do so."

"We know what you intend. You want to leave her."

"Not at all."

"You would have no right to do this because her family is just as noble as yours."

"Sir Kehenis, believe me, it never entered my mind. There are other reasons why she has not yet fully become my wife."

"What are they?"

"No. You'll be angry if I tell you."

"I shall not."

Then Tristrant said, "Your sister Isalde has never treated me in such a way as to be worthy of lying with me."

"She is fond of you, isn't she?"

"Not she."

"But she goes to bed with you. What more should she have done? She left it up to you, to do as you wished."

"You shouldn't get angry before you know how things are. There is a lady who for my sake, alone and in front of others, treats a dog better than your sister has treated me. So don't quarrel, but come with me. I'll take you where you can see that I have told the truth. And, if I am lying, you can assert your claim against me."

"Agreed," said Kehenis.

Tristrant had to promise father and son, solemnly and on his honor, that he would return to the lady at once, and if Kehenis

should state that he had lied, Kehenis was to do with him as he wished. Tristrant and Kehenis set out quickly. They rode to the sea, then went on by ship until they warily approached the castle at Litan, where Tinas welcomed them as befits lords. Tristrant took him aside to tell him of his trouble and to send word to his lady that he had come and that his life was in danger. He requested that she in mercy do him a favor and ask the king to go hunting for two full days in Blankenland, telling him she would follow with a splendid train (which should greatly please him). "The journey will do me no good at all," said Tristrant, "unless she comes as I would like, in great pomp. She will save me by this, otherwise I must die. There is no hope for me without her kindness. Now listen, friend, I'll tell you just what happened and hope it will help me." Tristrant then told Tinas the whole story and added, "My dear friend, Tinas, you have done me many favors. Now it depends on your kindness as to whether I shall again get your help so that my dear lady will save my life. She now as always is more to me than any other woman—you may be sure of that."

"Shall I do it?"

"Yes, you can manage it well."

"She will be glad to do everything you like."

"I hope she will make the journey if she hears my life is at stake. It began with her in that I claimed that she, alone and before others, treated my dog better than another lady her husband. The truth of this will be seen in my fate."

"Then your life is safe enough."

"I hope so, if you remind her so that she doesn't forget. Say that at the deer stand near the road on which she will ride (she knows the place well) she is to look around carefully and take note of a thick clump of thorn bushes by the road which I have picked for us to hide in. When my dear lady is abreast of us, I'll throw a twig into the mane of her palfrey. Then she is to stop for my sake and lift up my dog in such a way that my companion will admit that I told the truth."

Tristrant also requested him to ask the queen to come in state, bringing with her many ladies, all shining in splendor as befits a queen, and say that he wished it very much. Tinas later told her all this. As a token, Tristrant sent her a ring, which

she knew well since she had given it to him. Tinas rode off and found the king and queen at Tintanjol, sitting over a board and just beginning a game. He hurried to them and said that he wanted to play. During the game he reached for the board more often than he needed to so that the lady would notice the ring. At last she looked, recognized the ring, and stopped playing. Listen to what she did. She went to her chamber, sent for Tinas, and asked if he knew where Tristrant was.

"Yes, noble lady, I was with him today."

"Oh, dear friend Tinas, how is he?"

"Very well."

"Does he want to see me?"

"Yes, and doubtless should see you."

"Tell me, when will that be?"

He gave her the ring and the message from Tristrant and urged her to do all that her dear friend had asked. The queen was happy. She arranged with the king for him to send for the lords and ride with a large troop to Blankenland for a hunt. Tinas did well what he was supposed to do, and the queen prepared herself with great zeal.

Early the next morning, Sir Tristrant and Kehenis entered the thicket. They were not there long when the cooks, with pans and pots, and the people with the food came running by. There were a lot of them, so Kehenis thought. Then came the cupbearers and those who served the bread, followed at once by the hunters, with a large number of dogs. A short while later the king's wardrobe went past, a holy relic, and behind it the chaplain. The king drew near, bringing many knights, with greyhounds and falcons, and, when he had gone by, the ladies' wardrobe appeared in front of the hiding place. Kehenis was greatly surprised at the large number of squires trotting along with it to take care of the clothing. Then the two lords saw many fine ladies, beside each of whom rode a handsome youth or a stately knight, as the queen had arranged. One pair rode far enough behind the others that they could say what they wished without being overheard. The ladies were decked out in gold jewelry and long mantles, the best that could be bought. Their clothing and hairdos were splendid. Each who passed

was more beautiful than the ones before: I am sure they had dressed with great care. Many lovely, well-dressed ladies rode in the queen's train.

Then they saw one who was so beautiful that Kehenis said to his companion, "Look, here comes the queen!" But Tristrant replied, "No, not she. Amid dark clouds the light of this sun would be bright enough, but she is not nearly as radiant as my lady, the queen." It didn't seem possible to Kehenis that anything could be more beautiful, for he could see himself in her as in a shining mirror. I'll tell you who she was, the maiden Gymele of Schitriele. Beside her rode Sir Galiag, the son of the count of Miliag and the most handsome youth ever born. The two had turned toward Kehenis and were laughing merrily. Watching them, Kehenis said to himself that no living thing was prettier. They went on, a holy relic followed, and after it came the good and gentle, courtly and wise Brangene, whom Kehenis thought in all respects much more charming than Gymele. Whether he liked it or not, he had to grant her the prize, for she was a great deal prettier. Brangene went by the two, riding alone. Behind her walked two fine palfreys carrying between them a gold-trimmed litter, and Kehenis asked his companion what was there. "That is my dog," replied the latter, "which the queen transports thus for my sake." Kehenis then said, "You were never carried about in such a manner by my sister." Before these words were out, he caught sight of such a gleam that he thought there must be two suns, and he asked Tristrant what it might be. "See, there comes the queen!" was the answer, but Kehenis would not believe that the day could be so brightened by the beautiful woman until he saw her himself.

The queen was riding alone at that moment because she had sent her partner, Antret, off for something or other that he didn't find—it makes no difference what he was doing, in any case. She rode toward the thorn thicket, bringing with her the light Kehenis had seen, and he had to admit that he had never looked at a more beautiful lady. He thought in his heart, "There never was a prettier woman: my sister, sad to say, can't compare with her." The queen caused him to think very poorly

of his sister. When Tristrant threw the twig into the mane of her horse, she stopped and quickly bade Brangene call Galiag. As soon as he came, she sent him to the king with word that she was feeling bad—it had come on her during the journey—and that the latter could best care for her by doing without her presence that night. She also asked that he set up his tent on the other side of the river, since her train needed a lot of room, while she set up hers on this side. Moreover, she hoped he would help her get some rest by doing what he could to keep the dogs from barking and horns from sounding after she arrived. The handsome young Galiag rode off and brought the message to the king, who was very sorry about the lady's illness and took care to do what she had asked.

The queen dismounted unaided (which she had never done before), went to the little gold house, and took out the dog. I tell you truly that she began to stroke it fondly with her mantle. This was costly: made of fine silk, lined with ermine, and well-adorned with gold, many jacinths, and other gems. She took the dog in her arms and caressed it so fondly that Kehenis said, "Dear comrade, you are free. My sister never treated you so well." When she finished petting it, Queen Isalde carried the dog back to its house and let her mantle fall as she returned. (When Kehenis saw this, I fancy he told Tristrant that he never saw such a lovely lady.) In a friendly manner, she spoke to the birds which were singing there: "You are very joyous with your many kinds of voices. I'll give you twelve fine golden bands if you will come along to Blanken Forest to be with me and sing for me tonight. I'll be counting on you." This was a ruse to let Tristrant know where he should come, for, to her great sorrow, she dared not speak to him. But when she said this, Tristrant heard very well where to go, just as she intended.

With these words, the queen again put her mantle around her. At that moment, the hateful Antret came running up, lifted her onto her horse at once, and led her to the camp. All that the lady had asked of the king had been done. His people had lain down to rest before the king wanted to go to sleep, so he rode alone over to find out how the queen was. Brangene told him that she felt very bad and that he could not see her until morning. What could he do but ride away? He was very

sorry about her discomfort. As soon as it was dark, Tristrant came, and he and Kehenis were brought to the lady, who received them fondly, as was her way. There was no one with her but those who knew her will and were very careful to keep it secret: Brangene, Gymele, and Perenis. The queen took Tristrant with her and told Kehenis to go to Gymele of Schitriele. Kehenis sought to make love to Gymele, which she didn't want. However, he wouldn't stop, but urgently insisted, whether she liked it or not. "What are you thinking of?" said the lady, "You can see that I'm no peasant for whose favors you might ask in such a short time. You must be a commoner. How else could it be? I promise you that you'll never be able to talk about me. Besides, I don't ever want to have a lover. I tell you truly: even if you had carried out all my commands for five years, I still wouldn't do what you ask." But the lady thought a little and spoke up again: "You seem such a fine man: if you were my countryman and of equal rank, and if it pleased my friends for you to have me, and if it suited both of us, I think I might well accept you."

So Kehenis had to give up his wooing and was sorry he had ever begun. Clever as he was, he didn't know what to say. Then the queen, who wanted to have her pleasure with Tristrant, said to Kehenis, "For Tristrant's sake, I'll let you have a delightful lover for the night; take either Brangene or Gymele of Schitriele, whichever you prefer, and tell her to lie with you tonight." He didn't hurry and thought for some time that she was making fun of him until she said that she really meant it and convinced him it was the truth. At this, he carefully replied, "May our Lord on His throne forever reward you! If the choice were mine, it would be Gymele, for I have been sitting here with her, have talked with her, and have asked for her love." Then the queen bade Gymele go to bed with him, which must have made him very happy. So Gymele told Kehenis to sleep with her, and they took off his shoes. When he was lying on the bed, Gymele went to Isalde and said, "Noble lady, do you want me to lose my honor?"

"Not at all," answered the queen. "Take the pillow I put under my head so that I can go to sleep when I am longing for Tristrant. You know what it will do. If you place it under his

head, he will fall into such a stupor that he will sleep all night, and you can lie beside him in peace with nothing to worry about, for you will be safe from harm." The pillow had the power to make one sleep night and day, doing nothing else, until the pillow was taken away. This is how Kehenis was cheated: she quietly took the pillow back with her and said to Kehenis, "Lift your head and I'll put my arm under it as my lady directed." Kehenis thanked God and was filled with joy, but Gymele cleverly slipped the pillow under his head. He went to sleep at once and did not make love, which sorely grieved him later.

In the morning, after it was light and Gymele had gotten up and dressed, she pulled the pillow from his ears so that the fool awoke and reached about with his hand. Not finding the lady, he was greatly embarrassed. The night had passed, it was a beautiful day, and Kehenis wished he were over twenty leagues away. However, quite unwillingly, he had to remain there a while with the ladies and their maids and hear things which pained him. Gymele said mockingly, "If I had known last night that you had such fine manners in bed, I would not have refused when you asked for my love, but would have granted your request." Kehenis at once became almost numb with misery. If his ears had been cut open, no blood would have flowed out. He wished he were at home. By then it was light enough outside to see well, and the lovers had to part again in sorrow. Tristrant had enjoyed himself greatly and did not know that his friend was downcast.

When they came to a bad break in the road which they would need horses to cross, Tristrant, wanting to stay on the right path, bade Perenis go and tell Kurneaval, and he gave him directions to the place where he had asked the squire to wait. Perenis kept his message a secret, as was right, until he ran and delivered it to Kurneaval. The squires set out at once to join their lords at the break but met one of the king's knights, Pleherin by name, with seven of his men. When they wouldn't stop, Pleherin began to chase them, and they were not ashamed to flee. He thought it was Tristrant and shouted, "Come back, knight, come back, since you are so brave!" However, that was not to be. Then Pleherin asked him to turn

and fight for the honor of the queen, if she were dear to him. Still they did not stop. They were pursued so hotly that they barely escaped, although they rode at top speed. They lost one horse and were chased so far that Kurneaval rode out of his way a long time, more than four leagues, before finding his lord.

Shortly afterwards Pleherin came to the court and said to the queen, "Lady, I saw Tristrant; he is here in this country. I helped chase him today, and we seized one of his horses, but he fled away swiftly. Finally I urged him to turn around for your sake, but the lord acted as if he didn't hear." The lady replied angrily, "Why do you tell me that? I wish you had carried him on your back into the sea so that I would never hear him mentioned again. Still you would sooner dig the eyes out of your head than chase him." Pleherin was a courtly man, and when he heard his lady's great wrath he secretly lamented having said anything. He was wise enough to be silent at once and leave quickly. The lady was greatly vexed that Tristrant had not stopped for her sake. She sent him word secretly by Perenis that he had acted very poorly in not halting when Pleherin called out "and asked him to halt because of me." Perenis hurried off, soon came to Tristrant, and delivered the queen's message. "I'm innocent," replied the knight quickly. "As far as that is concerned, you can see for yourself that we don't even have the horses yet. Whatever happened, I would have turned on anyone who challenged me in her name, even if he had had a thousand knights with him. She should believe this, for it is certainly true." Just then Kurneaval and the squire of Kehenis arrived with three horses. The fourth was lost, whether they liked it or not.

At that time Kehenis thought that the noble Tristrant was pleased at his great chagrin at having slept so soundly the past night and that he was to blame for it. He therefore wanted to get revenge on him at once and did something he should not have done. When he saw the horses coming, he said to the squires, "You found a good pasture. The horses have eaten their fill since we were chased today."

"Why did you say that?" demanded Tristrant angrily.

"Because it is true. You could glare till your eyes popped out, and I would as surely say what I have."

"Give up this bad joke."

"I'm really not joking."

"So help me God, you are."

"No, it's the truth."

"Your words are false and those of a traitor." He ran at him to knock him down with his fist, but then thought, "He came with you, and you would gain nothing by it. Don't be angry however badly he has acted." The wise warrior spoke to Perenis, "Tell the queen that I am innocent of that which was told her of me. She can be sure that I never left undone what one asked or ordered me to do for my lady's sake. What is more, there has not been time enough for this to have happened. If you want to tell the truth for me—and indeed you have seen yourself that she has accused me unjustly—just run quickly and say that to my lady. I'll wait here until you come back and tell me whether she thinks me guilty or innocent."

When Perenis came to the queen and gave her Tristrant's message, she said to the squire, "Oh, what are you doing? You are being paid to deceive me. Lying so could get you into trouble." He swore many an oath that he was telling the truth and would not deceive her, but the lady would not believe him. Then Perenis said that it was the squires who would not turn and fight. "At that time they were riding to Tristrant who had waited for them all day."

"Perenis," replied the lady, "I am not pleased that you could be bribed to give me a false report." When he saw how angry she was, he didn't dare say any more, but went back and told Tristrant that the lady would not believe he was innocent. The knight was distressed at his words and said, "This pains me. Because of this I must now suffer great hardship again or else she must give me my freedom, whether she likes it or not." He then called to Kurneaval to move out of the way and let Kehenis ride wherever he wished, "for I have lost my lady's favor because of him." Seeing Tristrant's great anger, Kehenis was very sorry at having said anything at all to displease him and told Kurneaval, "I don't want to go anyplace. I'll stay here with you until my companion returns." Where have you ever heard of someone courting a lady's favor so eagerly because of such a little offense? Tristrant said, he would rather die "if she will not declare me innocent."

Tristrant left there and went to a leper. He put on the latter's clothes, took his clapper in hand, and appeared before the queen in a pitiful state as if he were leprous. The lady knew him at once and ordered that he be driven off, but he wouldn't stay away and returned to where she could see him. In wrath she said, "Drive the leper away!", and two squires ran up and began to strike and kick the knight most rudely while she looked on laughing. Tristrant departed angrily. When he returned and told what the lady had done, that she had laughed so hard as he was beaten, Kurneaval at once began to hate her fiercely and would gladly have stripped her of every honor. Since he could attack her in no other way, he said to his lord, "I won't stay with you another day unless you avoid the lady so that she will neither speak to you nor see you, openly or secretly, for a year, whether she likes it or not." Tristrant solemnly promised to do so and also forgave his companion, Kehenis. His anger later caused him to make the latter's sister truly his wife, thus ending the quarrel with her father. Tristrant and his wife were very happy, and he did not care whether or not the queen regretted her actions, for his joy was lasting.

It was in May that Tristrant had seen his lady, the queen, and parted from her with enmity. This sorrowful state endured until St. Michael's day, when the lady began to lament bitterly at not seeing Tristrant. Perenis told her, "Lady, he is treating you as you deserve, because you didn't do right by the good knight in having him beaten, for he was innocent."

"You are surely joking."

"Not I."

"Are you lying then?"

"No, I'm not."

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes, I do."

Then she was greatly troubled that Tristrant was avoiding her for this reason, and her heart was pained that she had lost his favor because of her anger. She thought of her misdeed and wept. She took counsel with her dear Brangene as to what to do and was advised to send him a letter, confessing that she had done wrong and offering to make it up to him in any way he wished. "It would be better without the letter," spoke the

lovely queen, "because nothing would please my wicked enemies more than for the messenger to be caught with it. For that reason I think it best to send word but no letter. Now you should consider well whom I could send who would be suitable."

Now there was a page at the court who was proud, courteous, very well-bred, and clever. His name was Piloise. The lady had him brought to her and began to lament her troubles.

"I would like to ask a favor if I may."

"Lady, let me hear it at once!"

"But I am afraid it is too much to ask."

"Truly, lady, it is not."

"Then I'll tell you."

"Yes, whatever you wish."

"Will you do it?"

"Until you let me know what it is, how do I know that I can?"

"You can, all right."

"Then I will."

"Oh, how I shall reward you!"

"You have already done so."

"Well, I'll take the risk and tell you."

"Do so."

"Now take careful note of my feelings: I have been most unhappy—and you must help me say that—for my anger has caused me to lose Tristrant's friendship, and rightly so, because I watched him being beaten. If I had been sensible, I would have wept, but I laughed openly. That is why I have lost his favor for so long." Then she said to Piloise: "You shall be my messenger to him, and I'll reward you very well for it. If I dare send word to him, you are to tell him of my devotion and sad longing for him. For his sake I wear a hair garment next to my body, and my lover well knows that my tender, noble skin can bear it night and day only with great discomfort. Tell him I shall always wear it and never take it off until he returns to me. Say to him also that I cannot live unless he is kind to me; I shall surely die if he does not soon give help in my distress. Piloise," continued the queen, "if you win for me his good will, you'll never cease to profit by it."

Right afterwards the squire left Cornwall in search of the noble Tristrant. At the time when he had come close enough to Karahes to see the castle, Tristrant was riding on an open field by the road, hunting with a falcon. He had succeeded in catching a bird and was pleased. Having filled its craw, the falcon was also well disposed and perched happily on his hand. Then Lord Tristrant saw Piloise going along the road and at once thinking he was a messenger, perhaps with good news, began to ride in his direction. The squire saw Tristrant and walked toward him because he wanted to get some information. When they came closer together, they quickly recognized each other. Tristrant welcomed him and asked about the queen: how she was. "She is wretched," answered Piloise.

"Why?"

"She is almost dead because of you."

"How is that?"

"She is afraid of your anger."

"Is she?"

"Yes indeed."

"She need not be."

"She is distressed, just the same."

"For what reason?"

"You know very well."

"Not I."

"Because you are her enemy."

"How do you know?"

"I know that for certain."

"Will you tell me about it?"

"Yes."

"Then begin!"

"She watched you being beaten."

"That is true."

"Well didn't you at once get angry?"

"I didn't like it."

"You were right."

"I still don't."

"No, good knight!"

"Am I to forget it?"

"Yes, sir."

"I can't. It is too close to me."

"How is that?"

"Too close to my heart."

"She suffers greatly because of it."

"She's gotten over that long ago."

"No, truly. You will kill her."

"How?"

"By staying away from her."

"She likes that."

"Truly, not at all."

"I think so."

"No, she does not."

"Yet she really enjoyed it when she herself ordered them to strike and kick me and drive me away from her. She didn't feel bad then, for she laughed loudly."

"She is willing to atone the rest of her life for that in any way you say. Most people err and make amends: mercy is better than justice. She seeks your pardon, and you will gain her loyalty. She will make up for whatever harm she has done you, and in a fitting manner. She can't contend against you and doesn't want to. She seeks mercy because justice would be too hard on her. If she may send you a message, she offers you her service and gladly agrees to do anything you wish. She also sends word that for your sake she wears a hair garment right next to her body. If you go on avoiding her, she will never have release from sorrow. Lord, at your feet I implore you to come to her soon. Then her grief will be over."

"I would never think of it, for it wouldn't do me any good. Tell her, I said that the same thing could easily happen to me as did before when she ordered them to strike and kick me and watched me get many blows."

"Truly, I assure you that she will make amends for the blows if you like."

"No, I'll not go there; I'd gain nothing by it."

"Sir, you should come for the sake of my lady's happiness, the service I offer you, your own goodness, and the great distress my lady suffers because of you when her painful chemise troubles her, the hair garment she wears next to her

white skin. Sir, you are dearer to her than anyone else. In kindness have pity on the poor woman in her trouble and console her."

"Piloise, you are a good messenger. I'll change my mind. Is it really true that the queen feels grief for me?"

"Indeed, greater than any I ever heard of."

"I was somewhat angry at her, but now I'll be her friend again."

"May God reward you!"

"Hear me a little further: tell her from me to take off the chemise. I was never so enraged at her that I would have wanted her to wear a hair garment for a long time; it also wouldn't have been proper. I'll forgive her, partly because you are such a good messenger, but mainly, Holy Christ knows, because I want to. You can tell my lady that as soon as I have kept a certain promise I'll see her at any cost. For I promised faithfully to stay away from her a year without seeing or speaking to her. She may be sure that I'll journey to her when the year has passed; I'll come there in May."

Piloise was both happy and sad: happy that Tristrant had ceased to be angry and sad that he would not see her before the winter was over, as he had promised. Piloise then said: "Sir, now permit me to leave you, for I want to go and tell my lady the joyful and the sad news I have heard here."

"Come to my quarters in the city and, acting as if you were a stranger to me, ask for a present. According to the custom of the land, I'll order that something be given to you. Then set out and tell your worthy lady to take off the hair garment for my sake, and also give her the rest of my message." Piloise thanked God and did as the lord commanded; Tristrant had a hundred shillings of good pence given to him.

The messenger took leave in such a way that no one in the lord's court found out who he was. A fair was going on in a city of the land, and he asked Tristrant to have someone direct him there. In Cornwall there was also a city of the same name, and indeed I can tell you here that both were called St. Michelsstein, that they were almost equally rich, and that both had fairs: a great fair every year during the festival of Saint Michael. The squire hurried there and bought whatever he

wanted. Then, having completed his own business, he set out over the sea toward home—as he should. He would have been glad to be as swift as a roe, but that wasn't possible and he had to go at a man's pace. When he arrived at Tintanjol and went before the king, the latter and the queen received him well. The king asked where he had been and where he had gotten the goods that made him so rich. At this, the lady was sorely afraid that he might say the wrong thing, and she broke out in a sweat. Piloise could easily see that the lady was worried and spoke very shrewdly: "Oh noble king, it is often the case that he who waits patiently lives to see the day when his spirit is soothed, when good and delightful things happen to him. I was at St. Michelsstein this market day and gained there all these things which now make me so rich." They all thought that he said this because he was so pleased, but in fact his intent was to deceive the king. The lady saw at once what he meant and weeping with joy, went to her quarters. Piloise quickly followed her there and gave her the message Tristrant had sent. The lady forgot all her past troubles, but she still greatly regretted not being able to see the finest man she had ever known until the winter was over.

As soon as May had come, Tristrant got himself gray clothes, foreign shoes, a knapsack, and a staff, so that he would look like a pilgrim. His squire, Kurneval, dressed himself in like manner, and the two travelled secretly to the castle of Sir Tinas, who, however, was not at home and could not be found. The worthy Tristrant wondered what to do, and Kurneval advised him to go to the highway and see if he might catch sight of someone who would serve as a messenger. The wanderers then went there and lay down in the same thorn thicket in which earlier Tristrant and Kehenis had hidden. Tristrant saw many people going by in each direction, but no one whom he could trust to bring word to the lady. So he remained there overnight without seeing her. Soon after daybreak there came riding by alone a close friend, who was sleeping so soundly that he did not notice Tristrant standing in front of him by his hiding place. Tristrant went up to speak to him, but did not want to awaken him as he was riding past. He was being very polite in letting the lord sleep; Tristrant thought he had spent

the night lying with a ladylove and would rather do without his service as a messenger than wake him up.

Tristrant seized the other's horse by the mane and held it for a long time without awakening the rider, until the horse became startled and jumped off of the highway. Only then did the knight wake up. How quickly he recognized the bold Tristrant! He was happy and rightly so. He gave the good knight a very fond welcome and said cordially that he would be most happy to do anything that Tristrant might wish.

"I would like to ask you to deliver a message for me."

"I'll do the best I can and represent you faithfully."

"May almighty God reward you! Now take this ring to the queen, so that she will believe you, and say that I am here and would like to see her. This can hardly be unless she carefully arranges for the king to ride out for a hunt in the fields of Blankenland while I lie there in the thorn thicket where she saw me the last time. I shall forever show my thanks, my friend, if, for the sake of your own honor, you keep this secret. It could cost me my life if I am seen here."

"Have no doubts about that. As dear as you are to me, I shall certainly represent you without treachery."

When the knight arrived at the court and the queen saw the ring and heard Tristrant's message, she was very happy. She had the king order another hunt near Blankenland, a suburb of the city, and everyone made preparations. The king did whatever the lady asked. She said, "I would like for Antret to remain behind so that he may ride with us women afterwards when we join you." The king sent word to him, asking very politely that he escort the noblewomen into the deep forest. Antret was glad to wait with the queen and bring her later to his lord. It was a great honor for him. As soon as the lady had eaten, she and her retinue mounted and rode after the king. The queen had suffered a great misfortune in that death had taken the fair Brangene, who was as dear to her as life. Everyone, the queen too, mourned her with much lamenting. Oh how great was Brangene's love for her friends! There was great sorrow when she died. The noble queen grieved beyond measure. How could she help it? She had to lament, for Brangene had done her many kindnesses. Believe me, that's why she was

filled with sorrow. With the queen rode Gymele, who was privy to everything she did, as was also the chamberlain, Perenis. In this the queen was wise, for she often profited from their aid.

When she came to Tristrant's hiding place, she told the people to ride on to the town since she wanted to stay there a while with only Antret and Gymele. So her retinue departed. The two women dismounted, as did the rascal Antret—may God bring him to disgrace for being with them! He had to be the third one, whether they liked it or not. Because he was the lady's kinsman, he was free to be with her whenever he wished. The queen had to speak to Tristrant before she came to the meadows of Blankenland. But how could she ever do it without Antret hearing? She had begun to pick flowers near the hiding place when she heard the dogs running back and forth. She listened carefully as they approached. The elk appeared, and my lady's horse was so startled that it broke the rein and galloped into the forest. Antret jumped on his steed to try to catch it, and lady went to talk with her lover, not in a low voice but right out loud, since she was afraid to enter the thicket and he dared not come out.

What did she say to her dear sweetheart? If I only knew that she told him to follow her at once!

[To a listener] Tell me, haven't you heard whether or not she bade him do this?

"I think she did."

[To another] What do you think?

"I believe so, indeed."

[To a third] And you?

"I'd rather reflect on it before assuming so."

But remember that the lady hasn't seen him for a long time.

"I fancy, I could surely expect that she urged him to follow her soon and told him just where."

A huntsman drove back the elk so that it again ran toward the thorn thicket in which Tristrant was hiding. When it saw the people, it was greatly frightened, turned, and ran another way. The king was following it closely enough to see this and hurriedly rode up to find out what caused the elk to change its course. At this, the lady ran in the direction the elk had taken, crying loudly so that it fled from her. Thus she helped to save

Tristrant. She screamed for the dogs. The king thought she was very upset, changed his mind, and helped call the dogs. The latter quickly found the right track, and all chased off with the king in their midst, which caused the lady no grief. It was not long afterwards that Antret came riding up to the hiding place with the horse which he had caught and spoke angrily to the lady, "I have been chasing after this horse all day." To which she at once replied, "I wanted you to chase it all day." She said this as if in jest, but I tell you truly that she meant it. Then they mounted and rode to the town.

I fancy that Tristrant did not neglect to do whatever it was that the lady asked of him: he surely came where she told him, and the beautiful queen welcomed him fondly. With kindness and love she healed the memory of the blows, so that the knight forgot that he had ever been beaten and she forgot to complain of the hair chemise. When she embraced him, they were filled with joy.

When he left in the morning, he did not find Kurneaval and did not know what had happened to him. He looked for him in the forest so long that Queen Isalde and King Mark meanwhile had eaten, mounted up with their retinue, and ridden to another town. This brought more trouble to Tristrant. He thought, "I'm spending too much time seeking him here. He may well have gone on to where we are to take ship. It would have been better if I had hurried away early this morning to look for him." He set out at once after his companion and came to the town where the king's retinue was. He was about to turn back when he saw these people, for he was afraid someone would recognize him if he came closer, but he was already too near and thought that it wouldn't help him to go back. So he didn't hesitate, but began to walk through their midst. He saw what the men were doing: some were throwing the javelin, some were leaping a ditch, others were putting a stone. One of the knights, a close friend, recognized him, but pretended that he had not.

Sir Tristrant went his way, thinking: "No one is noticing me," and was very glad that he had survived the danger and gotten away unharmed. Soon the knight trotted after him and asked him to stop, but he wouldn't do anything for someone

who might recognize him. At that, the knight called him by name and asked him as a favor to come back to the town, but without revealing himself.

"That wouldn't be a good thing for me to do."

"Truly, nothing will happen to you."

"What am I to do there?"

"I'd like for you to throw the javelin once, take one leap across the ditch, and put the stone once. No one can match you in any of these things."

"You haven't considered it well, if you ask me for the sake of such little fame to do something which would cost me my life."

"I shall bring you back here faithfully and with no trouble."

"You are foolish to ask this, and I wouldn't be wise myself if, for so little praise, I were to go where they could easily capture or kill me. Your words are ill advised, so, for my sake, say no more. This would bring me no good."

"I shall ask you on so high a level," replied the knight, "that you surely will have to do it: I ask that you do it for the sake of the queen, with whom you have often lain in secret as a lover." So Tristrant went back with him and, without a word, did as the knight requested. He took the javelin and threw it so fearfully far that all had to admit that they had never seen such a great throw. Tristrant's reward was that everyone came running to see it, so that a large crowd collected. Then he made such a leap over a very wide ditch that his gray trousers split and one could see fine wool underneath. I tell you truly that he drew his clothing firmly about him and wisely kept his hat on. He then went to where the stone was and threw it so far that once more none of them had ever seen the like. But, as bad luck would have it, his gray coat tore, and, God knows, one could again see fine wool gleaming underneath. He hurried away and, I think, was wise to do so. They let him go where he wished, and, as fate would have it, no one wondered about the strong man until he was far away. He was lucky enough to escape again. When the king arrived that evening and heard the story—what wonders had happened, that it was a pilgrim who did them, and that fine cloth had been seen gleaming through his gray coat—he went with many young knights to

see where the stone and the javelin had been thrown and the leap that had been made. He thought to himself that Tristrant had done these things and at once asked his retinue to see if they could find the man anywhere. They all hurried far into the forest to seek him. But the bold Tristrant, so I've heard, joined Kurneaval and travelled home, where he was fondly welcomed by Kehenis, the mighty king and the queen, and his dear wife.

Not far from Karahes lived a mighty lord named Nampetenis who formerly had often won high praise with knightly deeds and now had begun to hunt all the time. He had a beautiful wife, named Gariole, whom the warrior guarded so grimly that his own honor suffered thereby. I would like to know what a man is thinking about who keeps watch over his wife, for, if her heart is not willingly faithful, he can never protect her, no matter how careful he is. If she wants to have a love affair, she will have one against his will sooner or later, as was seen in this case. Nevertheless, Lord Nampetenis guarded his wife to the extent that he had the castle walls built very high and—note this precaution—had three moats dug around it, each deep and wide, as I've heard say. He, himself, was the gatekeeper of his castle and carried the keys, although there was no need for this since he had enough servants. Whether they liked it or not, there were no men so young or so old or so simple that they dared ask him to be kind enough to let them remain in the castle when he rode out. Gariole, therefore, had to stay only with women, which greatly annoyed her.

This Nampetenis was the warrior by whom Kehenis once had almost been captured. Now it had come to the point that he had given up knightly pursuits and devoted all his efforts to watching over his wife and enjoying himself with hunting, as I mentioned before. Whenever he rode away from the castle, he drove out all the men, both bondsmen and nobles. There were three gates, and the knight locked them all and took the keys with him. How would you like that? No matter who came to the gate then, though it be the queen herself, it let no one in or out until he returned. Even if they risked their lives, all those inside had to stay there, and no one could come in. It was his custom to hunt and shoot game almost every day, which sorely

vexed his wife, as it well might, but he was a frightful man and did not care whether or not this custody was proper for her. When he came home, she didn't dare look at anyone. How could it ever be worse with her?

Now the lady had secretly promised Kehenis before she took a husband that she would receive him fondly if he came to her, but this had not been possible, and it did not turn out that way. Nampetenis had heard of the promise and, as soon as he married her, set up this watch over her. But the lady still liked Kehenis, and he had also not forgotten her: he showed very clearly that his mind was filled with thoughts of her love.

One day this lord fulfilled a part of his wishes: he trusted to luck and secretly rode alone to her while Nampetenis was hunting. The lady, who had gone up on the wall, caught sight of him and at once bade him welcome. "May God reward you!" he replied with feeling, "And may He forever forsake him who locked up this castle so that I cannot tell you why I came. But it would help a little" (one could easily see this) "if these ladies would leave you for a while so that I would be free to give you my message." She quickly asked the ladies to go off a little ways, which they did. There was no wind, so it was as still as the two could wish. Kehenis then reminded her of what she had promised before her marriage and said that he was always thinking of her. "Therefore, noble lady, you should let me enjoy that pleasure."

"Good, Kehenis, I would really like to, I can't deny it. I would have been very happy to do your will if it had been possible then. I still feel that way if it could be done, but you can see indeed how it is. My lord has locked me up so that no one can come to me." However, she told him truly that she would permit him to visit her if he could manage it, saying, "You have surely heard how my lord guards me, but my heart is so inclined toward you that I shall do your will if you can get in here to me."

The knight was very happy at this, thanked the lady, and went away. He considered carefully as to how best to get to Gariole, and one could see him lost in thought. But, though he pondered early and late, Kehenis could not think of a way to visit her without harming himself. At last he went to Tristrant

and got his advice. When Tristrant heard what she had told him and also that she was well guarded, he said, "My friend, it seems to me a good idea to ask the lady to press the keys secretly against pieces of wax and throw the latter over the moat to you when no one is looking. With luck you will get to her then. New keys will be cast after the imprint in the wax so that you can unlock the castle yourself and go in. As your counselor, that seems best to me; that will get you into the castle."

Kehenis was very pleased. He thanked his friend for the advice and went back and told it to the lady. "You will surely get the wax," she promised. "Tell me, when will you come after it?"

"Not until Monday," he answered.

"I'll manage to have it ready for you at that time if I can."

There were three ladies who knew of this plan, and they were clever enough to get the wax ready. Was Kehenis sorry about this? No, indeed! He came on the third day, to be sure, and the ladies saw him and threw the wax over the moat. He was in a joyful mood when he picked it up. "May God reward you for all your kindness, my dear lady," he said, and wished her good health. He went away happy, because things had gone well for him. As soon as he got the wax, he trotted off the way a man often does who is thinking of something he wants to do. But he went through the whole country looking for smiths and talked with many of the best without finding one anywhere who would undertake the task and skillfully make the keys for him. Some of his joy left him, and he no longer laughed: it seemed to him a great misfortune.

He came back to his friend to get his advice on the matter and said, "My dear comrade, I really need your counsel. I have gotten the wax, but have failed to find anyone who will make the keys."

"If you don't find someone," replied Tristrant, "I think I have a smith who can make them all right, if you will let him. He followed me across the sea from Tintanjol and is here in the city."

Kehenis urged him to test the smith at once, which was done. Tristrant sent a messenger to bid him come without fail

and look at the wax. Then he asked that he secretly make the keys for him. The smith laughed heartily and asked, "Sir, do you want to steal something? I'll not make any keys for this purpose nor help you keep it secret."

"Don't worry about what he does with them," said Kehenis. "I promise you truly, if you make the keys right, he will treat you so kindly that you'll have no cause to regret it."

"Indeed," replied the smith, "I'll make them very well." At this, Kehenis's sorrow vanished, and he began to laugh again. He intended to attain his goal in this matter.

Meanwhile, a courier from Tristrant's land arrived and told the latter that his father was dead and the country was without a ruler: "There is great strife in your kingdom. Some of the princes want to be king there, and your friends, kinfolk, and thanes oppose this." When Tristrant heard the message, he spoke to Kurneaval: "You have served me faithfully for a long time. Now that I have a kingdom, I shall give it to you as a reward. And I am glad to be able to pay you so well."

"May God forever reward you!" replied Kurneaval, "but the crown does not become me. It suits you much better. I won't take it."

"Why not?"

"Because you should wear it yourself."

"I'll let you have it and all my realm too."

"I won't take it."

"You shall."

"Not I."

"For what reason?"

"Sir, I don't know very well how to be a king."

"Your thanes will teach you."

"I wouldn't know how to let this be done, and your thanes would not like to accept their fiefs from me."

"Then I'll see to it that they will all be glad to serve you."

"Sir, if you want to please me and will journey with me, go there yourself and take possession of your realm. Pass judgment as a king on whatever has happened there, give out fiefs yourself with royal hand, and invest me with a piece of lowland on which I can support myself. Then if you want to go back across the sea to your wife, you could shrewdly ask your

vassals to accept me as ruler until you return. After they have fully understood your will, I think they'll do it gladly, early and late. So follow my counsel, for it is the right thing for you, and I feel that I shall be honored by this."

"So be it!" said the lord.

The bold Tristrant began to make arrangements to go home, but on the day before he was to leave, it seemed to him that he would never survive the loss if he failed to see the queen before losing the service of Kurneaval. Therefore, he bade him journey across the sea once more with him. "My greatest concern is that I may never see her again when I no longer have you to help me," said the wise knight. He told Kehenis what he was going to do and asked all the vassals who wanted to depart with him to remain there until his return, when he would be happy to take them along: "Be ready for this." Thereupon the handsome lord set out very secretly with Kurneaval to visit the queen. The young men put on the manner and clothing of two errant squires: they wore short, red cowls and mantles of fine yellow cloth. They arrived again at Litan, and Tristrant was pleased to find Tinas at home.

Sir Tristrant sent Tinas to his lady with word that he had come, would like to see her, and that they should meet in the orchard: she would find him where the king had waited for him up in the linden tree. Tinas told this to the lady, and at night she came secretly to Tristrant and remained with him until morning, when they lay there in sorrow until they had to part. The lovely queen was filled with grief because the young men left her so soon.

They hurried back toward the ships and had stealthily travelled so far from Tintanjol that Tristrant thought they were safe, when the damned devil sent the hateful Antret to where he caught sight of Tristrant and at once began to chase him. He was most unhappy at fleeing from the coward, but it could not be helped because they had no weapons and Antret was pursuing them with spear and shield. It was Tristrant's pain and lament that he could not fight with him; still he did quite right in saving his life. He fled from his kinsman to a stream which was both narrow and deep and sprang into a boat which he found at the bank. Otherwise the knight and Kur-

neval would never have gotten away without being struck down and taken prisoner. Antret rode up just as they pushed off, but could neither ride in or wade in to kill the knight. However, he did what he could and, as the boat floated away, threw his spear at his cousin. It missed him, struck the boat, and broke in two. Antret was greatly vexed at having failed to hit him. Tristrant shrewdly seized a piece of the spear and rowed across the stream with it. He was in luck, because they had had neither an oar nor even a scrap of wood. The noble squires used the spear fragment to get to the bank, while the cowardly Antret searched in vain for a place to cross. The two companions were fortunate, for otherwise he would have killed them.

Then Duke Antret sent word to the king that Tristrant had just tricked him again and had seen the queen, also that he had come upon the knight and would have killed him if he had not fled and escaped. The king set out at once with all his men. They rode to meet Antret and sought Tristrant all through the country. The king placed guards on every path in the realm and ordered them, if they cared for their eyes and land, not to leave, openly or secretly, until Tristrant had been captured or killed. The king and all his vassals searched very carefully for three days. Tinas was obliged to care for the watch near his castle, and it soon happened that, while riding alone, he came upon Tristrant. Tinas brought him to his wife and ordered her, if she valued her life, to hide him where no one would see him and to take good care of him with her own hands. I am sure that he would have been caught: he would not have survived if he had not come there. Truly Tinas, so I've heard, did not take his life. But the king was so angry that, if he had captured Tristrant, he would have killed him.

While the lovely queen was worrying morning and evening that the young men would be caught, two squires, wanderers named Haupt and Blat, who had gambled away their outfits, came to her quarters. The lady, who saw at once that they were in need, took them aside and asked who they were. They replied frankly, "We are wanderers and arrived here just today." The queen asked that they do her a favor, and the squires quickly said that they would be happy to.

"I don't hesitate to advise it indeed, for it will make you rich."

"We'll certainly do it."

"Will you promise me?"

"Truly, lady, we shall," and they showed their good will by giving their word.

She began to lament to them the condition of Sir Tristrant: "My lord has learned that he is here in the country, and now he can't get away without being captured or killed. You are to go on your way, dear Haupt and Blat, and let yourselves be captured. You won't be hurt. Save his life and my honor for me, poor woman that I am, and you will forever live as rich men. I'll give you enough to travel in a much better manner."

"It can easily be too late."

"No, there is still time enough."

"Tell us what we need to know to carry this out."

Thereupon she told the squires: "I'll give you two cowls. You are to put them on, flee as if you wanted to get out of the country quickly, and let yourselves be caught. When you are prisoners, maintain that Tristrant is your lord and that he sent you to his country. Say that he remained in Karahes and intended to ride after you soon with 300 warriors because his father has died and the friends who want to save his realm for him are in distress. You should say, in truth, that he is coming soon. Tell them that you almost lost your life here, that you were approached by warriors who wanted to slay you. When they moved hostilely toward you, you had to flee and came to a river. There you were lucky enough to find a boat, and you jumped into it at once since you had no arms. Then someone threw a spear which broke in two against the boat. It annoyed him to miss, and he complained bitterly, but you thought it quite fortunate because you got a piece of the shaft and rowed down the river with it. Say that you have been going about the country ever since until you were caught. If they question you separately about these things, keep your heads for your own sakes so that you don't falter and remember well what I have told you. Don't let anyone lead you away from it with either threats or kindness. This will indeed be a good thing for you yourselves because you will die quickly if you waver, but you

can come through all right if you keep my words in mind." Queen Isalde gave them two cowls like Tristrant's. They left at once and were captured before they had gone far.

They were then brought to court. The evil Duke Antret asked who they were, and the squires repeated what the queen had told them to say. He did not accept this and examined them further. In support of their story they told everyone how hard they had been chased and how they had barely saved themselves until they got across the stream without oar or pole. Antret was not content but separated them and said to the first one: "All your cunning won't help you; I know who you are. You lied, and my lord is terribly angry at you. I promise you faithfully that you will die if you don't tell the whole truth right now."

"No matter what happens to me, I can't say anything different unless he wants to hear lies. I can tell many of them, to be sure, and make up whatever one wants."

Antret brought him back, took the second one aside, and spoke to him slyly: "What is the matter with you that you lied to my lord? You fooled only yourself and will surely die. You would have had nothing to worry about if you had told the truth, as your companion did."

"Does he say anything different?"

"Yes, he does."

"Then he should be ashamed."

"Why?"

"Because he is a liar."

"What a pity that you are too stubborn to say anything else."

"Do you want the truth?"

"Yes, I do."

"You have heard it."

"It happened differently."

"No indeed. Do you think I want to lie so openly and deceive these people? But I'll do it if you like."

"No, I don't want that. I want nothing but the truth."

"Whether you like it or not, you already knew it this morning."

Antret left the squires and told the king that they were not lying: "The two whom I chased wore just such cowls, and, when they fled, I thought that one must be Tristrant." At that, the

king quickly put an end to the watch and let the two good squires go where they wished, as they had a right to do.

As soon as the guards were gone, Sir Tinas helped Tristrant return home. When he arrived at Karahes, he took with him 300 knights, who were all ready, and journeyed to his own country. The princes at once came and received their fiefs from him. What had happened before he came was settled as he wanted it, and he remained there with his friends for just two years. Then he turned over to Kurneaval a great deal of his property as gifts and fiefs, for he felt like going back home. He bade Kurneaval take care of his realm and asked his thanes both publicly and in private to serve and be subject to him. This done, the knight went back to Karahes. In the meantime, both his father-in-law and his mother-in-law had died, and Kehenis had been engaged in a long war and had suffered much from it. Count Riole had attacked him and caused great damage.

But now Tristrant has returned. Kehenis and all his men were greatly pleased at this, and Tristrant's wife was also very happy. As soon as Tristrant learned what had been done to Kehenis, he sent messengers to the nobles of the land, and many a warrior joined his forces. Riole and his friends were defeated again and in a short time were again punished for their misdeeds: Tristrant could drive a hard bargain for their lord's pardon. Then he moved against the city from which Riole had brought such injury to Kehenis and wrought vengeance on it. He quickly overpowered it and set fire to it the same day—the inhabitants could well regret the harm done to Kehenis. After the army entered the city, they found in it a tower the defenders of which would not parley. Tristrant had his helmet off when they refused to surrender the tower, and he attacked in a rage without putting it back on. He was struck at once by a heavy stone and so badly wounded that he was carried away for dead. However, Kehenis captured the tower after a hard fight, and its defenders paid for the stone so dearly that none survived. They fared very badly, for all of them were hanged.

Sir Tristrant lay without seeing or hearing and did not move a muscle. They brought him home with great lamenting, for no one thought he could recover. "I'll never get over it if he dies,"

said Kehenis, and he and all his men wept bitterly. He brought doctors, who cut off the knight's hair and bound and healed his wounds. Still he barely recovered, and only after more than a year. Then he was well enough to walk and ride, but he looked different than before. He had lost his beauty, and his aspect was such that no one would recognize him who did not know his changed appearance.

There had come with him from his own land a boy, his sister's son, of whom he was justly fond. One day the good knight rode out to hunt fowl, and the boy went with him. As they came riding to the sea, Sir Tristrant looked toward Cornwall and said in a low voice, "Oh, beloved queen, shall I never see you again? How could that be?" The boy heard and replied to his words, "I hear strange things, uncle. Why won't you see her?"

"No, that can't be."

"Surely it can."

"It is not possible."

"Why?"

"When I last saw her, it was discovered, and I would never have escaped if I hadn't been lucky: one of my friends hid me and got me out of the country. We went there dressed as two pages and barely succeeded. Before that I went as a pilgrim and was also recognized, so that I was almost caught. It can't be done again. They are watching for me now, and, sad to say, I dare not go to see her any more. To be sure, if I had Kurneaval here, he would advise me as to what to do so that no one would find out. He knows many fine tricks."

"Uncle," said the boy, "you can never carry out your wish to see her more easily than now."

"How is that?"

"You look different than before, and your hair has been cut off. Whoever would have recognized you formerly would not know you unless you were pointed out by name. Now you should be clever and go there alone, wearing a hooded coat and acting silly, and those watching will think you a real fool." The bold Tristrant began to laugh and kissed the boy fondly: "May almighty God reward you, my dear nephew," he said. "I shall always be grateful to you for the counsel you gave me."

The lord hurried off to get the coat and set out alone, which he didn't find tiresome. He carried a large club and prowled around all the ships which had come from Cornwall. This helped him with the journey, for he wandered about them until a merchant from Tintanjol seized him. He thought him a jester and wanted to take him to his lady, the queen, and his lord, the king, to gain their favor. I tell you without lying that Tristrant was happy at this. The merchant took him along when he set out, as the knight had planned, and was very pleased with his fool. He weighed anchor and sailed for home. I tell you truly that Tristrant behaved so comically in the ship that he kept everyone laughing. They had to watch him and admit that there was no better fool anywhere. He was given some cheese to eat, but he had not forgotten his beloved lady. He stuck it secretly in his hood to bring to her and ate whatever else he could get.

Thus they came safely to land at Tintanjol and found King Mark riding on the shore. They did not wait, but brought the fool to him at once. He dressed and acted so like a jester that the courtiers were sure he was one. They pulled him about by the ears and played with him, and he put up with a great deal from them. But when the evil Duke Antret—who had caused him much sorrow with both lies and truth—also wanted to frolic with him, the fool chased and would have killed him. I could easily have recovered from my grief if he had caught Antret; the false counsel the latter had directed against him and his evil malice would have been repaid on the spot. With luck he barely escaped and wasn't killed. The king rode to his castle with the fool striding along close behind him, carrying his club high, acting comically, and playing silly jokes. Many knights followed him as he went before the queen, who received him as one should a fool. He stopped in front of her and wanted her to kiss him, but the lady had no desire to do so since she didn't know who he was.

Then the fool stood before her and looked at her so fondly that the king himself spoke up: "What's this, fool? Stop it! Must you look at my wife so lovingly?"

"Indeed I must and I dare to."

"Why?"

"Because she really ought to be well disposed toward me."

"For what reason?"

"I'll tell you."

"Go ahead!"

"She likes me."

"You're joking."

"No, lord, not I."

"Yes, you are."

"No, I'm not. And it may well be that I shall soon make love to her."

"To whom?"

"The queen."

"My wife?"

"Yes, your wife."

"Be still, fool. Stop this talk!"

"I can't be still about it."

"Then talk of other women!"

"But I don't know how to lie."

"Yet you are throwing lies in all directions."

"I'm telling the truth."

"She is well protected from you."

"I don't know if she is or not."

"She'll get rid of your love."

"But I am as dear to her as her own self."

"How could such a lovely woman be fond of a fool like you?"

"Sir, I am a noble knight and have done much for her sake."

"What have you done?"

"I have endured many hardships because of her, and she has often brought me both joy and sorrow. Shall I tell you the truth? I became a fool because of her. They pull me around by the ears here and I endure it openly and in secret for her sake: she is the dearest one in the world to me. Whether you believe it or not, I wish no one so well as her."

He sat down before her on the rug and gazed openly and secretly into her eyes. The king kept watching and never turned his glance away: he couldn't help staring at him, but he and all the rest thought him a fool. However a few wise people, both knights and ladies, said privately to each other: "Take note that in general he doesn't talk foolishly."

"I alone am more clever than all of you," spoke the jester, "whether you like it or not. You are jealous and find it painful that I am so smart." That was an odd idea. "See, I'll show you that all my thoughts were of my lady, for I brought this a long way across the sea." Therewith he reached into his hood and drew forth the cheese. "It would be too bad if my hardship and trouble were to go for nothing." He then spoke to the lady: "Now accept it, my dear lady, I give you my word that I would not have brought you this fine gift if I were not so fond of you." They all began to laugh and say that he really was a fool. Thus he ceased to talk sensibly and said such things that they all swore they had never seen anywhere a more simple-minded and wanton jester.

When the king left, the fool managed it so that he was not driven out, because he himself wanted to remain. He didn't get bored there. He placed in his lap the cheese that he had brought and had kept more than seven nights in his hood and asked Queen Isalde to eat with him, but she was not so thoughtless as to do it, no matter how much he begged her. Tristrant the Fool took a little of the cheese and placed it against his lady's lips. She slapped him lightly on the ear. "My lady," said the fool, "you hit me too hard. If you knew who I am, you wouldn't strike me like that. If you are fond of Tristrant, you shouldn't hit me." The lady at once asked what he knew about Tristrant, and the fool shrewdly told her, without anyone else hearing, many things which had happened while he was with her, and showed her a ring that she herself had given him. At last the worthy knight said, "Lady, I am Tristrant." With that, she recognized him and was very happy. The lady gave orders that good care be taken of the fool and that a comfortable bed be prepared for him in her quarters under the stairs. He was well looked after there.

The fool had a good life. By day he was a jester; by night he came to his senses and went often to the lady, early and late. He was in a good position to do so and cleverly managed to have his will with the lady in secret. Thus three weeks passed, and then two chamberlains found out that the deceiver was making love to the lady. They quietly told three of their friends, who were to help them capture him; the king was not

at home. Late that same evening they went to the lady's quarters. One went close to the lady's bed, two were posted inside by the door, and two stood outside and guarded the way to the door. They wanted to slay or capture the knight when he left. The clever Tristrant noticed the watchmen, but still he took his club in hand and went to talk with his lady. He couldn't forgo this because of a threat from anyone, for she was dear to him; he loved her more than all the world. The watchers lost heart and dared not attack him. He came to the lady, kissed her lovingly, and spoke sadly: "Now we must part. This is best for both of us since they have found me out here. Oh, I can never come back and see you again! How this grieves me! If I only knew what to do henceforth! You must be faithful to me, and I too shall be forever loyal. If ever my messenger should bring you this ring, do secretly whatever I have him ask of you. May God damn those who cause us to part so soon!"

"And may the devil take them too!" said the noble lady weeping bitterly.

Tristrant then departed. He held his club high because he intended to kill with it those who had waited for him if they tried to take him captive. They were so fainthearted at seeing him walking bravely along that they did not dare confront him. After he had gone some distance, those inside sprang after him out of the door and began to quarrel with the guards outside, demanding to know what was the matter with them that he had escaped without being slain or captured. All of them had to be ashamed of this. Each tried to put the blame on the other, saying, "If you had seized him, I would have helped you."

"And truly I would have helped you." They began to be very sorry they had not captured him and went after him as if they wanted to seize him. But when they caught sight of him again, he seemed to them so fierce that each once more became timid. Sir Tristrant went home unharmed, and none of the guards dared tell anyone what had happened.

You have all heard how it was with Nampetenis's wife, whom the noble Kehenis loved as himself, and also how great sorrow so occupied Tristrant that their love remained unfulfilled. Now take note of what Kehenis did—the keys were all ready and in his possession—for later he and Tristrant met with joy and sorrow because of it. One beautiful day when

Nampetenis went out to hunt, Kehenis got his friend, and the two knights rode secretly to Lady Gariole. It was before mid-morning when Kehenis boldly unlocked the outer gate, then the other two, and they joyfully rode into the castle. But listen to this: Kehenis was wearing a hat made of flowers and, as he rode in, the wind seized it and blew it into the moat. The happy knights were then welcomed by the ladies. Since the two could not stay long, Gariole at once led Kehenis into a bedroom, while the clever Tristrant remained with the others. Now he could throw a twig better than anyone else, and, as he was sitting there, he threw a twig into the wall. Thereupon he threw another into the first and then again and again, one into the other. The ladies were amazed that he could throw them with such skill. He enjoyed the sport so much and so entertained the ladies with it that, without thinking, he covered the wall with twigs, which brought him mortal distress when he rode back toward Karahes.

While Kehenis held the lady in his arms and did his will with her and she pressed him closely to herself and kissed him as often as she wished the time passed quickly, and they had to part. It grieved them to separate so soon, but they were also happy, for their desire had been fulfilled. Kehenis and Tristrant said goodbye and quickly left the castle, locking the gates behind them. They were riding away through a small woods when there jumped across the road in front of them a deer, which they wanted to catch. As bad luck would have it, they couldn't overtake it, but they were determined and chased so long that they wore out their horses until they swayed from side to side and almost collapsed. Before the knights got back to the road, Nampetenis came home and unlocked the hermitage in which his wife lived day and night as if she were a prisoner. (You don't need to get impatient for him to return and find out just what she had done.) Her ruin began as he was about to go into the castle, for he saw Kehenis's hat lying in the moat and wondered how it got there. He went to find out what the ladies were doing and saw upstairs in their quarters the twigs which Tristrant had thrown sticking in the wall. The knight thought, "No one can throw that way but Tristrant; he was surely the one who did this," and it at once occurred to him that Kehenis had been there too. For he knew very well that his

wife was fond of the knight, that the latter would come to her if he could, and that she would do gladly whatever he asked, no matter what might happen to them.

Quickly drawing his sword, the lord said, "Gariole, Tristrant and Kehenis were here!" and began to threaten her. He swore that he would kill her if she did not tell the truth as to whether Kehenis had been there. The lady became frightened and said, "Yes, he was."

"What did he do to you?"

"He kissed me."

"Did you make love to him?"

"No, I didn't."

"You're lying."

"Lord, I am."

"What happened then?"

"It did come to that."

"It came to what?"

"He pulled me down under him against my will."

"How did he get in?"

"Lord, I don't know. He did it without my help."

The knight leaped on his horse and, followed by eight men with spears and shields, hurried after his enemies. No matter what happened, he wanted to avenge his injury and free himself from the shame they had brought him. They could not flee because their horses were tired. When Tristrant heard horses overtaking them, he said to Kehenis, "I think we'll be attacked here. What should we do to save our lives? We must defend ourselves strongly; nothing else matters," and with this they were steeled for battle. Nampetenis came, and the two knights fiercely attacked him and his men. They fought, for they wanted to save themselves if they could and they were in a desperate situation. Kehenis was killed, but he slew three warriors before he died. How did Tristrant fare? He killed four very quickly and wounded another, but was himself so badly wounded that he could not fight on. Nampetenis struck him with a poison lance, and he was left for dead on the battlefield. Nampetenis would then have gladly forgone his vengeance to have the two bold knights alive again. "I have avenged my shame," he lamented, "and can bewail this to God in heaven. For I must die, since I cannot escape the friends of these two. I

have paid dearly in the loss of my good men." He rode away sadly.

When the news came to Karahes and Tristrant's wife heard it, she was overcome with grief. Lamenting, she brought her lord home: no one could describe her sorrow. She had Kehenis buried with great mourning and quickly had doctors brought for Tristrant, to advise him and heal his wounds. They bound them up, but nothing did any good, for his injuries were such that no one could heal him except the king's daughter, Isalde, Mark's wife, who had already saved his life from poison once before. So Tristrant sent to the city for his steward. He came, and his lord asked him to be his messenger. The man said he would be glad to, for he had come with Tristrant from distant Tintanjol. Tristrant asked him to go back there and take word to the queen to remember everything he had done for her sake, also what he had requested when he last parted from her, and tell her for love of him to come quickly, that it meant a great deal to him. He added sadly, "Steward, you must strongly remind my dear lady that I have often suffered distress and harm because of her and that I have always been faithful. Tell her to remember this and not give up her honor but help me recover, for I shall die if she does not come and save me. Tell her not to worry about all she has there, for we shall have plenty as long as we live. Dear Steward," spoke the knight, "take care to do this for me: return with a white sail if my lady is so kind as to come with you. However, if she will not come and remains there," he said, "hoist a black sail. Take her this ring as a token. Tell your daughter very secretly of your coming and bid her watch every day on the shore so that she can tell me the color of your sail. Warn her to be careful to let no one else know why she is looking out on the sea."

The steward did everything his lord wished. Note how he began. He went home at once and told his daughter what his lord, Tristrant, had asked of him and what she was to do on his return. He gave her strict orders to keep it secret. Then he set out in haste and, journeying to the queen, secretly gave her Tristrant's message. When she saw the ring, she left husband and land, wardrobe and treasure, and all else she had and sailed off with the merchant, taking only the things she needed for her healing art. These she would not give up and leave

behind, which showed how much she loved him, but she renounced the honor of royalty for his sake and esteemed it no more. When the girl began to expect her father's return, she watched for him every day so that she could tell Tristrant what sail he had set. I don't know who told Tristrant's wife, but she ordered the girl, on pain of death, to let her know as soon as she learned that her father was coming, to tell her at once what sail was spread, and to conceal this from Tristrant until her father was there. She said that the former could easily be harmed by knowing. When the girl returned to the shore, she saw far off on the sea a snow-white sail approaching. I think she did what the lady commanded; she wouldn't dare not to. She quickly went and told the lady that her father had come and that the sail was white. As soon as his wife heard this, she said to Tristrant that his steward was nearing land, which made the knight very happy. The news also caused him to feel a little better, and he sat up. He then asked shrewdly if she knew how the sail looked, and she told a lie which later brought her great sorrow. Foolishly, but without any kind of disloyalty, she lied and said that the sail was not white. One could see how this pained the knight: he laid his head down on the bed, became so tense that every joint cracked, and died.

Tristrant's death almost killed his wife, for it was she who had spoken the words which broke his heart. How loudly she screamed, "Oh! Oh! Why did such a terrible thing happen to me!" She saw indeed it was her fault that he died. Wailing spread all through the city, as great and small began to weep and mourn. The knight was borne into a lovely church, and shortly before the ninth hour the funeral service was carried out, with songs of sorrow. When, at the lady's wish, the death watch began, a mournful sound welled forth as bells tolled everywhere.

The queen sailed to the shore, heard the loud lamenting, and was greatly alarmed. "Oh sorrow, now and evermore!" she cried, "Tristrant is dead." She did not turn pale or red, nor did she weep, but her heart was filled with grief. Now see what she did. She went silently to where he lay on the bier, his wife standing beside him, bitterly weeping and lamenting. "Lady, you must move back and let me go closer," said the queen, "for, believe me, I have more cause to mourn him than you do. I

loved him more." Without saying anything further, the queen uncovered the bier and, in front of them all, moved him a little to one side to make room for herself. Then she lay down close beside the knight and died. Seeing that the queen was dead, Tristrant's wife could hardly bear her sorrow, and all the people there began to wail loudly. Who didn't weep had a hard heart indeed.

Sir Eilhart von Oberge composed this poem and told us the story of how Tristrant was born, lived and died. Perhaps someone else will say that it was different: we all know indeed that it is not always told the same way. But Eilhart has it right, and the story was just as he told it. Now hear what Tristrant's wife did. Tortured with grief, she wept bitterly for a while, and later ordered that the bodies be placed in splendid caskets. In a short time, the news came to King Mark that Tristrant and his wife, the queen, had died because of their love for each other. He was told indeed that a potion had caused them to fall in love against their will. On hearing this, he was deeply grieved that he had not known it in time—while they were still alive. "God knows," he declared sadly, "I would gladly have treated Queen Isalde and my nephew Tristrant kindly so that the knight would have stayed with me always. I shall forever regret having driven him away. It was very foolish of them not to tell me that they had drunk the fatal potion and, against their will, were forced to love each other so. Oh, noble queen and dear nephew, Tristrant! I would give you my whole kingdom, people and land, forever for your own if this could bring you back to life." The king at once sailed across the sea for the bodies, often declaring that he had never felt such grief.

For the rest, I can only say that he brought them back and that, amid great mourning, they were buried with splendor and—I tell you truly—in one grave. I don't know if I should repeat this to you, but I heard say that the king had a rosebush planted over the woman and a fine grapevine over the man and that the two grew so tightly together they could not be separated without being broken. Indeed, I also heard it said that this was due to the power of the potion. Now I have finished all that has been written of Tristrant. May our Holy Christ accept it!