



LXXIII.

Tristan and
Isotta

he true story tells that one day as King Marco was in the great palace attended by many knights and barons, his suspicion of Isotta grew so great that he summoned Tristano to him, saying, "Knight, you have behaved like an evil tree: the more you are cared for, the worse fruit you give. I therefore command you, on pain of your head, to get out of this kingdom. Take gold or silver as you please, but by the fourth day from now you must be gone."

Then the king commanded that no one was to dare speak to Tristano, on pain of death, and from then on Tristano talked with no one except one knight errant who happened to be passing through Tintoile, Sir Dinadano, who was known as the wise man who would not love. He was brother to the Valet of the Ill-cut Coat, and to Sir Daniello, whom Sir Lanzilotto had killed.

Tristano, seeing himself under such an order and treated with such disdain that no one would speak to him, had a ship provisioned with everything he might need, and went to take leave of the beautiful Isotta. As if the command had given them full license, they took great delight together; then afterwards they made the greatest complaint in the world. They sorrowed so much because in parting they also took leave of their hearts; that is, because each thought more of the other than of himself. And in this sorrowful leave-taking, Tristano made a sonnet and Isotta made one, too. Tristano says this:

Gentle queen, my leave-taking is so sorrowful,
And I have to do it against my will;
I suffer so much torment
That in truth life is hateful to me,
Because I leave you, rose vermillion,
From whom I receive all life and sustenance.
Therefore will I never be content
When I am far away from so noble a thing:
For when I spend but an hour away from your beautiful face
I have lost solace, joy, and laughter.
Therefore my sad heart soon will die

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And leave me, because I can't be here
With you, who seem like paradise to me.

Isotta's sonnet says this:

O leafy date tree, O gentle love, what will you do?

O that I could go anywhere with you!
O that I could go anywhere with you,
Love for you consumes me,

And when I do not see you I cannot rest.
For courtesy, you ought to take me with you,

For the great desire I have to see Queen Ginevara,
King Artù, and the other knights.

At this point, the queen gave Tristano a ring that the high prince Galeot had given her, a ring so powerful that anyone looking into it could not be held by enchantment, nor could he be harmed by any work of magic. Then Tristano and Dinadano rode out of the city of Tintoile and began their journey. At the gates they encountered a boy who was just getting out of a small boat. This was Alcardo, fraternal cousin to Queen Isotta, who had come from Irlanda so that Tristano might dub him knight. Tristano, who recognized him, showed him great joy and honor, and asked him to come along. Together they went in a galley over the high seas and arrived in the kingdom of Affraudis.

Riding through the great plain of Merloens, Tristano sorrowed over his parting from the beautiful Isotta, and thought about how he had left her so unhappy, and wept and worried over his great love. Sir Dinadano, who was a knight of many words who cared nothing for love, reproved Tristano, saying, "Knight, you have a head full of crickets to let love into your heart, for you ought to know that love is a thing which cuts short your days, dims your brain, and steals your memory and your reason. It is for that cause that the great masters say that love has four traits: he is naked, he rides without a bit, he wears a blindfold, and he shoot arrows. Thus I want you to know that his nakedness shows he cannot defend himself from any danger, his horse with no bit signifies his unchecked ride toward death, and his blindfold shows how he fails to see the perils that shorten his life. Finally, that he goes shooting implies that anyone who is loved or who truly loves is wounded, so that if he is wise, he becomes a fool, and if he is happy, he becomes sad, because love carries away the heart of the lover, and the man in love must go about sad and worried like one who has no strength because he has no heart."

Sir Tristano, who was in love, replied, "Sir Dinadano, you surely speak the truth. Love has the four properties you say, but you have not interpreted their significance correctly. That gentle love is drawn as a naked figure

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shows that he wants no cloak or other encumbrance, nor any impediment that might hold him back, for he wants to be free and quick, lively and always ready to go, with no thought of avarice or cruelty, nor any thought that could lessen the power of high delight. For the same reason love wants no bit, for that would be an impediment, and he wants to be free to please the one he loves. And he wears a blindfold to show that wisely and chastely he sees nothing that could distract him from pleasing the one that love has set over him. He shoots arrows to show that he is generous and courteous without avarice. Whoever follows love ought to be generous to spend, generous to give, courteous in speech, in his comings and goings, and in his speaking and looking. When he sees that this is so, gentle love accepts the heart of his noble servant, so that the lover will be happy and joyful and consoled."

At that, Dinadano, who was disenchanted with love, felt a great sadness. He turned his horse, saying to Tristano, "Alas, lord God, how can it be that love and the act of loving might console anyone? I saw with my own eyes that because of your love you went mad and left Tintoile all naked, and were in such a state that no one recognized you except the dog Idonia. This is the reward and the benefit you received for loving well!"

Tristano, listening to these words, said, "Dinadano, what you say is true. A lover must sometimes suffer bitterly. But he is so greatly rewarded and receives such benefits that it makes all past pain vanish."

"I don't agree with this," said Dinadano, "Because the pain of the lover is great and the delight is little, and the evil is a hundred times greater than the happiness, so that one tiny pleasure gets you a thousand pains."

Tristano answered him, "Dinadano, Dinadano, the pain is nothing compared to the great delight you hope for, because one great pleasure makes a hundred sorrows vanish out of mind."

Then Dinadano turned to Alcardo, saying, "You, which one of us do you agree with? Speak, by your faith for the lover or the non-lover. Say how it seems to you, and God be your savior."

Alcardo replied, "My lords, I will say how it seems to me, but I am not yet wise. Still, as I see it, I say that no one, be he of whatever condition you please, can increase in reputation or worth if he does not feel love, and without love, nothing can be perfect. The man in love thinks of nothing but serving and pleasing, but the non-lover does not love himself and does not serve others, like the dog who stands in the straw and lets no one take any, even though he can't eat it himself. That is to say, the non-lover does not feel the sweetness of love, and is jealous of the lover."

When Alcardo had said these words, Dinadano looked around and said very spitefully, "Sir Alcardo, Sir Alcardo, you have broken a lovely silence and have tried to talk like a philosopher. Now I am convinced that in Ireland there are masters of this science, so full of sentence have your pro-

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nuuncements been. But it is of no use, for the will comes and overpowers a lover, you would not so praise love. I see you are strong of will and weak in reason, for you have said you want to be a knight errant, but it seems to me you will go mad when love maddens you. But it doesn't matter: to such meat, such a knife. Love will do for you what he does for all the desperate ones who become impoverished, and thus die."

Sir Tristano, hearing all this, laughed the loudest laugh in the world. He took great pleasure and delight in Sir Dinadano's words.

Riding on, they entered a thick and dangerous forest in which they found no villa, house, or castle, so that they had nothing to eat for a whole day. When evening came they took refuge at the crest of a high hill, but couldn't sleep for fear of wild beasts. The forest was full of lions, dragons, serpents, and all manner of savage animals, so that they stayed on their horses all night because of their great fear.

When day came they rode until the hour of sext, then looking at the summit of a high mountain they saw a fine, strong fortress. They approached it by means of a steep slope, and as they came near they saw, at the top of one of the towers, a very black watchman who was looking out over the countryside, holding in his hand an ivory horn. They saw that at the entrance to the fortress, at the gate, there were two huge chained lions, and in front of the gate was a great column of vermillion marble. At the top of the column was a silver bell with a fine golden chain, and in the column itself were carved these words: "If any knight comes this way who is so ardent that by his own force he sound this bell, he will have to fight the lord of the fortress. And if by his prowess he is victor he will become lord, for he will have conquered this fort and its holdings, and will have set free the thirty-six knights who are here imprisoned forever." This is what the words on the column said.

LXXIV.

Tristan and
the Round Table

Now if anyone should ask me what that fortress was called and by whom it was maintained, I would tell him that it was called the Fortress of Dianfer, and the forest around it was called the Wasteland of Lionferfero, and its lord was the maddest giant in the world, a creature called Lucano the Great, brother of Urgano the Hairy and of the two other giants killed by Sir Tristano, and Sir Lancilotto in the Valle Pericolosa, as this book will tell farther on. All four of these giants were the off-spring of a giantess and a lion.

When the knights errant came close to the fortress, Dinadano begged Tristano not to be so eager as to ring that bell, advising him that they should ride on. Tristano paused, thought a little, then said, "Alas, Sir Dinadano, we would be very cowardly if we rode on without discovering who is the lord of this place."

Dinadano replied, "Sir, my lord Tristano, we have had bad luck yesterday and today. We have had nothing to eat and we have passed a foul night. You are not as strong as you ought to be for a fight, if one should be necessary. Thus we should get out of here in great leaps, so we can find a place where we can refresh ourselves."

Tristano said, "Dinadano, you know very well that this place is a wilderness, and is not yet patrolled by King Artù or any of the knights errant. If it were, we would have here a habitation furnished with all that custom requires. Besides, I want very much to find out who the lord of this place is."

Then he spurred forward, strongly and with a good will; he came to the bell tower, and rang the bell vigorously. As soon as the sentry in the castle turret heard that sound, he blew a blast on his ivory horn, and at that sound the lord of the fortress hurried to arm himself. He covered himself with armor of tanned leather that weighed more than four hundred pounds, took up his shield and mace and came to the meadow.

First he encountered Dinadano. He took him by the nose-guard of his helmet and lifted him off his horse and carried him easily to the castle wall. Tristano, seeing the size of the giant, who was taller on foot than he himself was on horseback, and the size of his mace, which weighed more than 300 pounds, was terribly afraid, and truly sorry that he had ever rung that bell. But even so, he rode forward ardently and shouted at the giant, "Knight, let my companion go! I'm the one who rang the bell! I, not he! Now I summon you to battle. Come on!"

At the sound of those words Lucano left Dinadano and came toward Tristano, and Tristano rode against him. Tristano struck the giant's shield with his lance, which shattered to pieces, for that shield was harder than stone. Then the giant tried to hit Tristano with his mace, but Tristano par-

ried the blow so that it fell to one side. Nonetheless, the stroke fell on his horse's shoulder and sent the animal dead to the earth. Tristano, finding himself on foot, was very worried. He took his sharp sword in hand and tried to hit Lucano on the helmet, but found he could do him no harm. Lucano struck Tristano's shield with great force, and broke it all to pieces, fracturing his left arm and sending him a lance's length through the air. When Tristano felt that heavy blow, he almost died of it. But then, in anger, he grasped his sword and, wounded thus, roused himself to return to the encounter. He feinted as if he would strike the giant on the helmet, then quickly made the blow underhanded and thrust the point of the sword into his throat, between helmet and collar. The blow was so strong and skillful that Lucano fell to the ground and died right then and there.

After Tristano had delivered that blow, the companions went to the gate and killed the two lions, then entered the fortress where they found no one but the sentry and a gentle lady named Agretta whom the giant had held there for his pleasure. She was not of the race of giants. Then the lady led Tristano to the great tower where the prisoners were. Tristano unlocked it and led forth the thirty-six prisoners. All of them were very noble knights from different countries. When the lady saw Sir Alchino of Londres, her husband, whom the giant had imprisoned, she was very, very happy, and gave many thanks to God and to Tristano.

Tristano stayed there that evening, in great pain because of his arm. He tied it and set it as well as he could, then afterwards ate a great deal of meat and fowl.

Then Tristano gave Sir Alchino the fortress and all of its holdings. Afterwards, in the morning, he mounted Alcardo's horse, and Alcardo went on foot or rode behind Sir Dinadano. They went on through the wild forest.

Know that Sir Tristano had in this world, in his career, five principal horses. The first was a fine and noble bay called Gulistardo; this was the one given him by Bellices, the daughter of King Ferramonte. The second was dark and was called Passabrunello. This one was the best in the world, and was given him by King Marco. The third was white, or actually, iron-gray, and was called Piantagiorno, given by Duke Bramante. The fourth was black, and called Brunfort; this one Fata Morgana gave him. The fifth was gold as grain and was called Giuriando, given to him by Sir Inamante of the Valle Bruna.

And as Tristano and Dinadano rode on in this manner, "Alas, God," said Dinadano, "If you listened to me, Tristano, you would not have lost your good steed, and your arm would not have been broken."

But Sir Tristano replied, "Dinadano, Dinadano, although I am not glad of those things, because they happened I was able to make this part of the country secure, and set free all those noble knights who were in prison."

Then Dinadano said, "Let us ride faster, so that we can get out of this

wasteland. And I beg of you that we do not discuss love, for when I reason about it, I find that it displeases me very much."

Tristano, laughing, said, "It is all right with me if we don't discuss love, since you don't want to."

Tristano and
Spinogres

LXXV.

The true story tells that they rode along this way until evening, when they met an armed knight, accompanied by hounds and other dogs, who was going hunting. Upon seeing him, Dinadano challenged him to joust, and they spurred toward each other. The knight, who was called Sir Spinogres, was a nephew of King Bando of Magussir; he struck Dinadano with such force that he knocked him off his horse. After that, even though his arm was badly broken, Tristano josted with Spinogres and defeated him.

Seeing himself bested, Spinogres approached Tristano and, taking his hand, asked him politely to reveal who he was, and Tristano told him. When he heard that this was Tristano, the knight so praised for prowess and all excellence, he honored him greatly, and gladly invited him to be a guest at his stronghold, the fortress of Prougno. Sir Tristano accepted the invitation, for it was very late. At once they rode toward the fortress, Dinadano and Alcardo going before and Tristano and Spinogres riding after. Now Sir Tristano was telling the knight all about the controversy between himself and his condition, and how they argued together so much about the ways of love. Tristano said Dinadano scorned love more than any other knight in the world.

Spinogres, who was a very playful knight, said, "Sir Tristano, I boast that tonight I will give you a happy supper, and an evening of much delight, because I have a young daughter who is very quick and bright. I will tell her all about Dinadano, and I'll tell her to act as if she is in love with him, to find out what he will say."

Sir Tristano said he was delighted with the idea. When the knights arrived at Spinogres' castle, he summoned his daughter and told her what he wanted her to do with Dinadano, and she, a wise maiden, learned her part well. After a little, the maiden joined the knights and said to them, "My lords, the tables are set out, and if it pleases you, you may eat."

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The knights answered that they were ready. The maiden had water brought, and after they washed, they went in to eat. Spinogres' daughter had Dinadano sit at the head of the table, then had the food brought in. All the bowls and utensils set before Dinadano were elegant and new, and she had the largest capon given to him. When they had eaten the boiled meat, the roasted meat was brought, cranes and peacocks and pheasants.

All the while the maiden served Dinadano in an honorable and seemly way, casting her eyes toward him over and over. Gracefully she carved for him and took his cups and rinsed them, speaking no words. As Dinadano became aware of such great favoritism, he became very suspicious, saying to himself, "The enemy of God is subtle, and the maid is very beautiful and charming. I could easily fall in love with her." Then he said out loud to her, "Lady, maiden, leave me. Go and serve your father. I don't need all these services you do me, and it is not fitting that you show me so much honor."

Then the maid replied, "Sir knight, eat well, it is right that you should. You are far, far too ready to do more than anyone asked you to do. Go on, go serve your father, and do him the greater honor."

It is discernment to show honor where honor is merited. I well know that you are accustomed to chivalry, and are a very fine lover, and so I serve you gladly."

"Lady, lady," said Dinadano, "Great virtue has the one who can tell a lover from one who scorns love (that means the free from the lost). But I can well see there is no such virtue in you. You have missed the mark, for, by my faith, I am not a lover, nor do I ever want to be, nor am I any friend to love. And because it seems to me that you see so badly, I reject your friendship entirely. I neither need it nor desire it."

Courteously and prudently the maiden replied, "I know you are only saying these things so you won't wear me out, but truly, to serve you gives me great delight. It is my pleasure to be obedient to you and to all noble knights, since I am not beautiful."

Then Dinadano said, "By my faith, the more beautiful you were, the less hope you would have." Then he arose from the table at once, saying, "I am determined that you will not do with me what Eva did with Adamo. She gave him such things to eat that he was miserable ever after. You could do the same to me with these good services you do me: you could make me fall into such a trap that I would be sad forever."

Spinogres said to him, "Dinadano, remember that this girl is my daughter. If she pleases you I will give her to you for a wife, because it seems to me you are beginning to love her."

Dinadano answered, "Surely, you would not sell me this merchandise! I desire only that this piece of goods remain yours. Too dearly are you pleased to sell me this supper, for I want you to know that the worst evil there is, is the one which a man does to himself. Therefore, kind host, if you want

to be paid for your goods, reckon the bill at no more than three times its worth, and don't inflate it so much. Don't try to marry off your daughter by means of your game meat and your hospitality."

At these words Sir Tristano and the others began to laugh the loudest laughs in the world. And when they had debated together for a while, Sir Dinadano said, "Noble host, when it pleases you, I would like to go to bed."

Then a squire was commanded to show him to his room. The boy did so, leading him into a luxurious chamber in which there were two fine, rich beds. When Dinadano got into bed, he very quickly fell asleep. Then Sir Tristano and Alcardo came into the room, and Tristano very quietly lay down by Dinadano and put out the light. Then he began to kiss and embrace the sleeping knight, so that Dinadano woke up and said, "Who are you, touching me like this?"

Then Tristano, in a very soft voice, said, "I am the maiden who loves you and desires your love with all my heart."

Dinadano, when he heard these words, really believed that this was the maiden. He jumped out of bed at once, shouting, "By bad fortune, what whoredom is this? May the devil take such a host and such a hostel and whoever brought us here!"

Then he ran out of the room shouting, and Spinogres, who had not yet gone to bed, hurried from his rooms and said, "What is it, knight?"

Dinadano said, "It is that evil baggage, your daughter, who has attacked me in my bed!"

Spinogres marvelled much at this, and said, "That can't be!"

Then Dinadano led him to the room, and when they came to the bed they found Sir Tristano there, enjoying the biggest laugh in the world.

Spinogres laughed heartily, too, and said, "Dinadano, it seems to me surely that love has weakened your brain, or the power of the wine has risen to your head, when you can't tell a man from a woman!"

Then Dinadano was badly irritated, and said "Tristano, Tristano, you ought not play jokes on people, but mind yourself, you who go begging and weeping through the world because of love. And you mock me because I don't want my reason dominated by my will! You who have the fault had better not praise it, for more than a hundred times it has brought you near death."

Tristano begged his pardon, saying, "I would never have done anything to wrong you on purpose. I must have done it in my sleep."

And Dinadano answered, "By my faith, ever since the day you went to Irlanda, one could say you've been asleep or out of your mind. Because of your love you have given up kingdoms and provinces, and acted against God and against your uncle, King Marco."

Tristano replied, "Sir Dinadano, I beg your pardon, and promise you that I will never again speak to you of love except at your command."

Then Dinadano, still indignant, went to lie down beside Alcardo, but

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Tristano was not upset with him. When the next day came the knights armed themselves to great advantage, and Spinogres gave Alcardo a fine and noble palfrey. Then they mounted, took leave, and went on their way, but Dinadano was still not speaking to Tristano, out of disdain.

LXXVI.

The masters of stories tell that as Tristano, Dinadano, and Alcardo rode on across the great plain of Matuvana, at the hour of sext they met an unarmed knight who greeted them courteously and said, "My lords, I am sure that you have not eaten all day, so if it pleases you, come into my tower here, where you can rest and refresh yourself."

Tristano, hearing such a lucky invitation, accepted it, and rode with the knight toward the fortress, which was named Fregulla Vittoriosa. Arriving, they saw that the walls were encircled by a deep river called Tendorubia. Once inside, they were courteously received: the tables were quickly prepared and water was brought for their hands, then they sat down to eat.

As they ate, the knight of the fortress, Sir Oris L'Aspro, watched Tristano very closely until, from so much staring, he recognized him. Then he gave him a look of great hatred. When he noticed this, Tristano said, "Good host, why do you look at me like that? What are you trying to do? Tell me for courtesy's sake."

Then said Sir Oris, "By my faith, I stare at you because you are the man who has done me the worst and greatest shame of any knight in the world. But do not think about it, for all that. Eat freely and with a good will, for I shall show you nothing but honor and kindness while you are my guest. But once you are outside this fortress I swear I will give you your death or take mine from you. This has to be, because of the great insult you have done me."

Tristano then answered very courteously, saying, "Look, my good host. By my faith I do not remember what I have done against you, or even that I might have done anything to displease you. By my faith, I am very sorry and ashamed of any such thing I might have said or done."

Sir Oris said, "Knight, I know in truth that you are Tristano of Cornovaglia, who killed Sir Sigurano, my own brother, for I saw this myself at a tournament in Irlanda."

"By my good faith, knight," Tristano replied, "I do not remember this,

or any part of what you tell me. Besides, what a man does in the mêlée should not be held a shame and a dishonor. May I not have from you peace and respite?"

"By my faith," said Oris, "No. Not until I have done to you what you do to my brother."

Then Dinadano, who had not spoken to Tristano all day because of the tricks he had played on him the day before, said, "Good host, I advise you some advice which you have not asked me for. I advise you not to risk your own life on behalf of a dead man, and, when you can have peace, not to seek war—especially not with a knight who is more powerful than you. For know that the dead rest with the dead, and the living had rather die. Out of this desire to avenge your honor, you will only make matters worse. This is great wisdom: when you see that your enemy is stronger than you, pretend you don't see him and go on your way, and wait for some other means of vengeance."

But the knight replied, "By my faith, I will avenge the death of my brother with all my power, for it would be a great dishonor to me not to do so."

Dinadano said, "My noble host, you think too much of dishonor. It would be better if you thought of the danger."

After the knights had eaten, Tristano said, "Good host, I am leaving. I commend you to God, and thank you very much for the honor you have done my companions and me. Many times over I ask for your peace and your pardon."

Then said Sir Oris, "A sharp sword is all that can make peace between you and me."

Dinadano responded, "Good host, it seems to me that you have lost your mind entirely, or else you have been badly advised. I have tried hard to make you see that in fighting for your vengeance you will make two wrongs out of one."

At that the knights got on their horses and set out at once. Sir Oris, who remained behind, quickly armed himself and called for his horse. He rode after Tristano, and when he overtook him shouted, "Tristano, guard yourself!"

Tristano, seeing the knight, readied himself for a joust. They rode toward each other with their lances lowered, and delivered two great blows. Sir Oris hit Tristano so hard that his lance shattered, but Tristano hit him so hard he sent him to earth. Then even though he saw he was beaten, Sir Oris got back on his horse and grasped his sword, striking Sir Tristano heavy blows across his helmet from behind, once, twice, and more. Tristano just looked at him and rendered him honor. Only after he had long endured the great outrage and the pride that Sir Oris displayed did he draw back and say, "Here is iron against iron and strength against strength."

Then he put his hand to his own sharp sword and struck Sir Oris with such power and strength that he knocked him off his horse, again seriously

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wounded. It was a blow and a wound that would be the death of him. And Dinadano said, "Good host, now you have more shame and more harm than you had before." Then they left and continued to ride through the great forest. Dinadano was still not speaking to Tristano.

LXXVII.

They rode all that day through the great forest of Cerveroiche, all along the wide river called Temeso, and at the hour of vespers they met a damsels on horseback, a lady named Tessina. When she saw Tristano, she recognized him as a noble knight. She rode up to him and, taking his horse by the bridle, said, "Sir knight, for courtesy's sake, I require a boon of you, one that I will ask you for."

Then Tristano, to make a joke and force Dinadano to speak, said, "Lady, ask it merrily and boldly, for I am not such an unloving knight that I would refuse a boon to a maiden or a lady."

Then the lady thanked him warmly, saying, "Sir, I will ask nothing of you right away, but I will make my request at the place and time where I have most need."

Tristano said he would always be willing to serve her; then they took leave of each other and rode their separate ways.

The sight of that maiden reminded Tristano of the beautiful Isotta the Blonde. He rode on ahead, while Dinadano and Alcardo came behind him. So deep were his thoughts that his horse carried him however and wherever it pleased, for because of his sorrows and his memories he neither heard nor saw where he was going. Lost in dreams, he nearly went to sleep, nodding over his saddlebow. Riding this way, they came to a great bridge, one that was guarded night and day so that none could pass who did not first joust. As Tristano crossed it, the knight who was the guardian of the bridge cried out to him, "Soldier, do not cross! I challenge you!"

But Tristano, who was daydreaming, did not hear him or understand him, but continued to ride on. Seeing this, the knight struck out at him and gave him such a strong blow with his lance that he sent man and horse to earth. Then Tristano woke up to find himself on the ground. He was very upset, and he cursed the soul of the giant who had killed his good horse. He turned to the knight and asked him to joust another time, but the knight said he

had no desire to. Tristano asked him again and again, because the fall he had taken was not his own fault. "You have not acted honorably," Tristano said, "To strike me when I was sleeping. That fall did not happen through any mistake of mine."

But the guardian of the bridge said he was under orders not to joust more than once with any knight, and he would not be false to his vow or fail to follow the command.

Then Tristano said, "Knight, I ask you for courtesy's sake to tell me your name and for whom you guard this bridge."

The knight replied, "Sir, you may know that I am called Suziano of the Valiant Heart. I was the son of the beautiful Larginia, the most unchaste woman in the world. By being so she gained two rich cities, Tarsena and Latinale, the one held by King Scalabrino and the other by Amorotto of Lestenois. One of these two was my father—it was thought to be King Scalabrino. But I knew nothing of this; rather I grew up in King Artù's court and was made a knight errant. One day as I set out to seek adventure, I passed by this bridge and fought the Scottish knight who guarded it, a man called Sir Lanfate, and I killed him.

"The beautiful lady of this country, then, who is called Losanna of the Torre Antica, came to me saying, 'Knight, you have killed the one who was to be my husband. But if, for love of me, you will guard the bridge until a year from today, and joust with any knight who passes by, then I will grant you my love as wife or as mistress.' And so I, for love of her, have been here more than seven months."

Then Tristano said, "Knight, is the lady Losanna as lovely as I have heard she is?"

Suziano replied that she was the most beautiful lady in the world—"and if you please, come to the piazza and the great tower as my guest, and I will treat you kindly. You ought to come, because the hour grows late."

Because he wanted so much to see this lady, Tristano accepted the invitation, and the four of them rode on toward the Torre Antica. The lady Losanna, seeing the knights, received them with great honor. Soon the tables were set out and made ready for eating, while Tristano marvelled to himself about the beauty of the lady. They ate, then were led into a noble chamber, where three beautiful, rich beds had been prepared for them. They rested here until morning.

When they arose and readied themselves to travel, one table was called for so they could eat again before they rode away. While they were eating, that is Tristano, the lady, Suziano, Dinadano, and Alcardo, four young knights who were Losanna's brothers served them. At that moment, the damsel Tessina appeared in the hall, the one Tristano had made his promise to the day before.

In her hand she carried a naked sword, and she was attended by three

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squires. When she stood before the knights she said to Tristano, "Sir, if you please, give me the gift you promised yesterday. But before I tell you what I desire, I want you to know how I have come here.

"Let me reveal that I was the daughter of Federon the Red, who is the brother of Falconardo the Ready, lord of the city of Nuscaligi, and I have been a maiden much praised for beauty. Then it happened that a knight of this country fell in love with me, a knight named Pinabello who had nine brothers. I told my mother how he loved me.

"My mother had him summoned before her and said to him, 'Pinabello, others have given me to understand that you love my daughter. Is this true?'

"And he said, 'I love her more than I do myself or any other.'

"Then she said, 'If you want me to further your suit, you must bring me the head of your own brother Orices, who murdered my brother Garionne. Then I will give you my daughter to be your wife.'

"Then Pinabello, who loved me so much, did not hesitate. He arranged it so that he killed his brother Orices, and presented the head to my mother. Then, according to their agreement, he took me for his wife. The surviving brothers plotted to kill Pinabello, but he guarded himself against them.

"After living in fear for a long time, he happened one day to be riding through the valley of Zetro with four of his knights. Here he encountered his eight brothers. And as the brothers had planned, without other exchange, they began to fight. That was a perilous battle, for in it died Pinabello my husband, two of his companions, and of his brothers, four were killed, so that of ten brothers, six were now dead. Because of this, my husband's family hated me very, very much and desired my death, and I kept myself safe from them as long as I could. But then one day bad fortune brought me to the crossroads at the Fountain of Valesca, where I met a knight of that family. When he saw who I was he drew his sword and told me my end was at hand.

"Pitifully I begged him, saying to him, 'Alas, knight, for courtesy's sake, don't kill me! That can bring you no honor!'

"And he said to me, 'Just because I do not kill you, don't think you have escaped your death.'

"At that, he gave me this sword and made me swear to come here to the lady Losanna and these four knights her brothers, children of Trincardo the Mad, and sister and brothers to Pinabello and the others who died. I was sent here to them to be killed, and I am sure that I cannot escape. Therefore I ask that you grant me the boon you promised yesterday."

Tristano said, "Lady, ask boldly. I am ready to serve you." And she said, "Take this sword and cut off my head, for I would rather die by the hand of a noble knight than come into the hands of my enemies."

Tristano, when he heard what boon she asked for, was miserable and sad, and did not know what to do. Then the lady said, "Knight, of two things you must do one or the other: you must kill me or defend me."

When the lady Losanna and her four brothers realized that this was Tessina, because of whom six of their brothers had died, they rushed forward to strike her down, but Tristano would not suffer it. He pulled out his sword and set himself to defend her, so that there was a great scuffle and hard sword-play all through the hall. Tristano had Alcardo protect the lady, ordering him to get in front of her and take her out.

But Dinadano made no move to help Tristano. Rather, by his words and his looks he supported the lady of the fortress, saying to Tristano, "How can you champion this evil woman, who is the cause of so much harm? It is obvious that she deserves to die."

Tristano cared nothing for these words, but kept on defending Tessina. The struggle was great and dangerous. Two of the lady Losanna's brothers were killed and Suziano was badly wounded, but in the end Tristano left, leading Tessina with him, and went on his way.

But Dinadano, for four reasons, stayed behind. One reason was that he was still angry with Tristano for playing tricks on him; a second was that it seemed wrong to him to defend and give help in escaping to one who had been the cause of so much harm and death; a third, he was afraid of Suziano since he had seen him beat Tristano at the bridge; and finally, it is thought that Dinadano fell in love with the lady Losanna, because she seemed to him an honorable woman.

As he stayed, he fell more and more in love, and it was the first and last time that love ever moved him so. Thus the proverb does not lie that says no iron is so cold that, brought near the fire, it does not grow warm. Dinadano, who was cold and set against love, when he was brought near the lady who was lovely and chaste and warm, became himself a servant of love.

For know that there is nothing so pleasing to the loyal true lover, and nothing which so moves others to love, as the honor of the beloved, speaking both temporally and spiritually, because the loveliness of honor is greater than even that of humility. Thus Dinadano stayed with the lady Losanna, full of love, saying, "Lady, if you desire it I will take oath with Suziano, and if you will promise me your love, I will surely bring you the head of that damsel who has wronged you."

The lady agreed and promised gladly, and the two knights got on their horses and soon caught up with Tristano and Tessina. Then Dinadano shouted, "Tristano, do one of two things: either give me the head of that bad woman, or else defend her!"

Tristano laughed heartily at those words, and turned the iron point of his lance backwards, because he did not want to do Dinadano any harm. They rode hard against each other, but Tristano hit him with the stock end of the lance, and knocked him on to the ground, where he lay and complained greatly of the blow.

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Then Tristano turned the iron point forward and struck Suziano with such force that he sent him dead to the earth. After that, he left them both and went on his way. Dinadano stayed behind, sorrowful and sad, swearing never again to love lady or maiden, and never to defend another one of them, whether she be wrong or right.

LXXVIII.

Tristano and the lady he protected rode on day after day until they came to the great valley of Girano. There they met a squire who was riding in great haste, all covered with sweat. Alcardo asked him what the news might be, and he said he was a messenger from Queen Ginevara, who had sent him to ask, command, and invite all knights errant to gather for the mid-summer feast of Santo Giovanni in the open meadow outside the castle of Rocca Dura, for the queen had ordained a lavish tournament, and knights from many countries would be there. When he had told them this, the squire rode on, and Tristano and his companion went on their way.

In the middle of the day they came to a lovely plain all covered with fruit trees. In the center of the plain was a fine, rich castle with its gates wide open. At once they rode inside, going straight through the village until they came to the palace. They were received honorably, and the people all cried, "Welcome, knights and lady!" But then under their breath they said, "You have had a fine entrance, but you will never praise your exit!"

Tristano and his companions rested well that evening, for they were nobly served and greatly honored. When they had eaten, they were put in a large, luxurious room where three rich beds had been prepared. Here they slept until morning. When day came they got up and found that the door to their room was shut and tightly locked. Tristano went out on the balcony and saw that the palace was encircled by a wide river and a broad lake of water. In the middle of this lake was a small island with a beautiful palace set on its crest. As Tristano was standing there a knight and a vavasor passed underneath. The vavasor said to Tristano, "Sir knight, you are in our prison, and you will never get out except by dying, according to the custom and the law of this castle. There is no remedy that can set you free, unless you have enough prowess to climb down to the bottom of the tower and get out through a small wicket you will find there. Then you will have to cross an iron bridge to the island and fight with one of our knights who will meet

you there. If he wins, he will cut off your head, and if you beat him, you will cut off his. Not otherwise can you escape for all the gold in the world.

Then Tristano, seeing himself in such trouble, thought a little, then went to arm himself. He climbed to the foot of the tower then, calling on God, got down on all fours to cross the iron bridge, which was one foot wide, 332 feet long, and somewhat thick. Tristano was comforted, and used his strength in such a way that he reached the island.

Then he saw a knight coming out of the palace on foot, completely armed except for a lance. When the two knights confronted each other, without delay they lifted their swords and began a cruel battle, giving each other heavy blows. They fought with a will because they knew that one of the two of them had to be left dead, that is, he could be left in no other way. The two knights fought until each one's shield was destroyed and the greater part of their armor was scattered on the ground and their helmets clangled on their heads. In the second assault they laid bare their flesh, all livid and covered with blood and sweat. The knights were growing tired and out of breath, because each one of them had lost a lot of blood.

But finally, the knight of the island could no longer endure. He stepped back and said, "Alas, God, sir soldier, you know that one of us must die here. Therefore, if it pleases you, I would like to know your name, and gladly I will tell you mine. This is permitted, that we reveal our names to each other, so that the victorious knight may know who he has killed, and of whom he can boast himself conquerer."

"So I want you to know that I am called Amorotto of Gaules, who by my own ill luck have come to this island. I killed the son of Sir Gurone the Courteous, Sir Vasparino, whom I found here then. Now you have come and you will kill me, I am certain of that."

Tristano, when he heard that this was Amorotto, kinsman of Sir Lancelotto, was very sorry, because he saw that the man was seriously wounded. Then Tristano told him his name. Amorotto, hearing that this was Tristano, lord of Liones, the greatest and bravest knight who ever mounted a fine saddle, was the saddest knight in the world. He said, "Alas, my God, it is my greatest misfortune that you have come here! Now truly I must give myself up for dead, for the virtue and power of your name has sapped all my strength and force, and I will lose everything."

Then Tristano said, "Sir Amorotto, can the battle we have begun between us by any means be left off so my companions and I may leave the island?"

Know that Tristano spoke those words not out of fear, but for love; he was so sorry for Amorotto, a handsome knight only seven years older than he was.

Amorotto answered him, "Be sure that the battle we have begun cannot in any way be stopped. It is certain that I am dead and cannot escape. But I pity you, for you will not then be set free. You will not be able to leave

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this island for a year from today, and you will have to do battle with the knights who arrive. Know that all of this has been ordained by a lady of marvellous beauty. Because of her beauty, knights have come from far away to look at her, and she ordained this evil custom so that anyone who desired to gaze on her would have to pay dearly for it. Since then, she has not been plagued with such a great crowd of fops and intriguers.

"The knight who lives on this island can take of her all his delight pleasure, but he cannot leave before the year's term is served. At the end of the year, if no other knight has appeared, one of the knights of the castle is put here, that is, one whose turn has come."²²

Then Tristano asked Amorotto, "Tell me, if the knight wants to leave here without permission, why can't he cross the iron bridge and be on his way?"

Amorotto replied, "Tristano, you are mistaken, for this bridge is made by such enchantment and such power that when you are there you can cross it to come here, but once here, you cannot even find the bridge if the lady does not lead you by the hand. And if you come to the bridge, you still cannot see it, it is made by such strong enchantment."

"By my faith, Amorotto," said Tristano, "I will not stay on this island because of any enchantment. I will find the bridge and show it to others, for I am wearing a ring which warns me and shows me all enchantments."

Amorotto said, "Tristano, if you can get me off this island where I have been seven months against my will, we will stop this fight, and I will be your knight and your servant for the rest of my life."

Tristano answered him, "Amorotto, be assured that at any time you please I can show you the bridge quite clearly."

"I am very glad of it," said Amorotto, "But we can't cross it now because of all the people who are watching us. If they notice that we make truce or peace, or that we do not fight to the death, they will send a ship with more than 800 fighting men, all armed with Syrian bows, crossbows, and lances, who will come and kill us on this island."

"And so we must begin again, and I am sure that you will soon kill me, for I am already near death, and have lost all my strength and power. I cannot defend myself any longer. I am sure you will cut off my head and be left lord of the island. But of one thing I am content, for love of chivalry: that you, surviving, can leave here at your will, and can make known to my brothers and all my kin how I passed from this life, so that they will no longer expect me back. They do not know now if I am alive or dead, for no one knows I am here but you."

Tristano, hearing Amorotto's pitiful words, and seeing him so dangerously wounded, began to weep for pity. He thought hard, and then he said, "Amorotto, let us begin our fight again, and attack each other as hard as we can. Then I will let myself fall on the ground, and you cut off my helmet

and make it look like you are cutting off my head, then go back to your palace. When the moon rises, come back to me and I will show you the bridge so we can be on our way."

Amorotto replied, "This makes me very glad, except I do not want you to lie on the ground. It is not a fitting thing that the son of the most honored king in the world be left in such a way on the earth."

But Tristano said, "Amorotto, don't make anything of that, because I seem to kill you, the lady of the island who has had your love for so long, will come with other people to honor you, and will find out that you are not truly dead. That would not be good, but they will care nothing for me."

Amorotto said, "Certainly, this is true."

The two knights came thus to an agreement, and recommenced the battle, giving each other great blows, but with the flats of their swords. After they had fought for a while Tristano let himself fall down, as if he could do no more, and Amorotto pretended to cut off his head and hurled his helmet away.

When those in the palace saw that their knight had won the victory, they began to make the greatest celebration in the world, and they went to the damsel Tessina and led her before their lady. At that point, two knights and two ladies who were officially appointed came there to look at her, because the custom was that whatever maiden or lady came to the palace must be thus inspected. And if she were as beautiful as their lady, she might ask of them any boon she pleased, but if she were not, they would cut off her head. Their lady had decreed this, because she did not want anyone to come bearing offers of marriage, for she did not want to commit herself forever, but wanted to change her lover every year for her delight. Thus the damsel Tessina was found not beautiful enough, and they cut her head off her shoulders.

If anyone asks me the name of this castle or the name of the lady who held it, I will speak the truth. The name of the castle was Crudele, and the island was called Perfida; the lady who held them both was known as Medeas, also had four sisters, none of whom would take a husband because each of them could be more lecherous without one. These sisters were named Lavina, Agnena, Bresenda, and Pulizena. The fifth was this Medeas, and all five were daughters of the sister of Amore, a descendant of the pagan queen Calistra, queen of the realm of Femminoro, the seat of all lechery. Know now that when evening came, Amorotto bound up his wounds and returned to Sir Tristano. Together they went to the shore, and on the bank of the wide river Tristano took out the ring which the beautiful Isotta had given him. He gazed into the jewel, then showed it to Amorotto, who then saw the iron bridge openly and clearly, and they crossed over it. When they reached the palace, Amorotto told Tristano how Tessina's head had been cut off, and Tristano was very sad about it.

They left the castle and went on their way, except that Amorotto could scarcely walk, he had lost so much blood because of his wounds. But they rode a day and a night until they came to the house of a vavasor named Triadan, one of Amorotto's very good friends. Triadan received the knights with great honor.

Here they rested for a few days, and Tristano treated Amorotto for his wounds as best he could, and Amorotto treated him. When they were ready to leave, the vavasor gave the knights three large palfreys, and with that they took their leave and rode on. As they rode together across a very beautiful meadow they met a knight named Brunoro the Black, also known as the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat, brother of Sir Dinadano and Sir Daniello, the one whom Lancilotto had killed. As they approached each other, they called out challenges to joust, as the custom was.

Sir Amorotto was the first to ride against Brunoro, and Sir Brunoro sent him to earth with ease, but Sir Tristano nobly evened the score. After Brunoro was beaten, he approached Tristano and asked his name, so Tristano told him. And the knight, that is Brunoro, when he heard that this was Tristano, went down on his knees before him, doing him the greatest honor in the world. Then Tristano told him what his brother Dinadano had done at the tower of the mountain of Cietre.

Brunoro said, "Sir Tristano, know that Sir Dinadano is crazy, but even so he loves you more than any knight in the world."

Tristano said, "By my faith, he is very changeable about it."

The three knights rode together by the shore and found at the edge of the ocean a stone of red marble, into which was thrust a naked sword and a lance. There were words carved in the stone that said this: "With this lance the son will strike the father, and with this sword the father will deal the son a mortal blow, and in those days the joy of the Tavola Ritonda will diminish. This sword cannot be moved from its place except by the hand of the most gracious knight in the world."

Sir Brunoro and Amorotto pressed Tristano to try himself in this adventure, for surely it was meant for him, but Tristano refused to have anything to do with it. So they rode on together until they came to a place where the road divided and went in three directions. Then Tristano said to them, "My lords, it seems better to me that each of us take his own way, because if we should encounter anyone he might be afraid to joust with us, for it would be too much for one knight to take on three."

And so the knights agreed, and said they would meet at Queen Ginevara's tournament. Then each one chose one of the roads. Taking leave of the others, Sir Brunoro took the road toward Camellotto, Amorotto chose the one that ran along the shore, while Tristano rode directly across the great wasteland of Cartaginale.

Know that in less than seven months in this same wilderness Sir Amorotto and Sir Adriano his brother were killed by three brothers who were the sons of King Lotto.²³

LXXX.

In this part the story tells how Sir Tristano and the young Alcardo rode through the wilderness two days without finding an adventure, but on the third day at the hour of vespers they found themselves before a fine, strong castle enclosed in white marble walls set with many lovely crystal windows. It was all crenelated in coral, and the doors were made of metal; it was called Palaus, and its lady was Fata Morgana, sister of King Artù and the Dama del Lago. When Tristano approached the main gate, he received permission to come inside. He rode through the town, then through the main doors of the castle; when he came to the palace, he was received with great honor.

When the time came, the tables were set, and after supper the knights were led into a lovely room all painted and decorated, where there were two rich beds. Here Tristano rested until morning. When day came, he got up and armed himself, but when he went to the door he found it fastened shut.

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Then Tristano called to Fata Morgana, and she appeared at a barred window, saying to him, "Knight, if you hope ever to get out of here, I want to know your name. In no other way can you get free."

Tristano, because he was very late for the tournament at Rocca Dura, told her who he was, and the lady said, "Tristano, one of the strongest wishes I ever had was to see you." Then she unfastened the door and, taking him by the hand, led him into the great hall of the palace, where they sat down to talk.

Tristano told her how he was late for the tournament at Rocca Dura, and the lady said, "Tristano, this tournament was decreed by Queen Ginevara only so that Sir Lancilotto would come back to court, but in truth, she will be disappointed this time, for he is not even in the country."

Then Tristano said, "For courtesy's sake, will you tell me who you are, you who keep such a beautiful castle?"

She replied, "Truly, I am Fata Morgana, who loves you very much, and would love you more if I thought I could be loved by you. But this cannot be. Just as the four foods are given for the maintenance of nature, you have given yourself completely to the noble service and lovely pleasure of Isotta the Blonde."

And Tristano smiled at that. As they sat talking, there came a maiden who carried in her hand a basin of gold and a little vessel with rosewater in it, and a silken towel: with these she washed Tristano's hands and face. At that moment there came in a twelve-year-old girl, as lovely and charming and graceful as nature might form, blonder than golden thread, with lovely dark eyes. Her voice was low and sweet, and in her hand she carried a golden cup. Another chaste maiden accompanied her, and together they offered Tristano a drink and gave him rare confections to eat.

Tristano looked very amorously at that maid, and thought to himself that she was very beautiful and charming. Then Fata Morgana, who knew many things and was wise, noticed Tristano's look and said to him, "Sir knight, this is my daughter, and since she pleases you so well, truly I will give her to you as your wife."

But Tristano replied, "By my faith, lady, this cannot be, for I have a wife just as beautiful and charming."

Then the sorceress said, "Tristano, it is true that you had such a one, but you don't have her any more, because for sorrow at your leaving she grew sick and died. But for all that, you can have no lady who can make you happy, for you are bound to the most beautiful woman in the world. There is but one life between you and there will be one death, if the powers I have from Merlin do not lie."

Then Tristano stayed until the hour of tierce, and the sorceress gave him a fine, powerful destrier, the biggest and best that might be found, and then

she had a strong and beautiful shield brought in, all green, on which were painted the figures of a king and a queen. A knight was painted above them, with his feet on the heads of the king and the queen.

She said, "Tristano, since you are going to the assembly, I am giving you this shield, for I want you to take it and carry it for my sake."

Tristano said that he would do it gladly, much admiring the figures painted on it, saying, "Lady, for courtesy's sake, tell me what this means? Why are the feet of this knight so rudely placed?"

But the enchantress replied, "I know nothing about it, except that my father, King Uter Pandragon, used this shield, and it is in memory of him that I send it to the tournament with you."

But know that the sorceress deceived Tristano, for she had had this shield made to dishonor another. The image on the shield meant that Sir Lancilotto had stepped on and dishonored King Artù and Queen Ginevara.

Tristano stayed until he had eaten, then he mounted, took leave, and went on his way, and so rode with the false shield that he soon reached the crest of the great Montagna Petrosa, a league distant from the castle of Palaus. There he met an armed knight, the lover of Fata Morgana and father of Gaia Pulcella: he was called Onesun the Bald. When Onesun saw Tristano with his own lady's shield on his shoulder, he shouted, "Knight, give me that shield or defend it!"

Then the two knights rode against each other, and Onesun gave Tristano a great blow on his shield, so hard that his lance was broken, but Tristano hit him with such force that he knocked him off his horse, and sent the point of his lance a handspan and more through his chest, so that Onesun died there from the blow. Afterwards, Tristano went on his way.

When Fata Morgana found out that Tristano had killed Onesun, her loyal lover, she was the most miserable lady in the world. She had Onesun's body brought to the castle, where she drew the point of the lance out of his chest and closed the wound. She had him buried with great honor in a beautiful tomb, and on the tomb she had letters carved. They said this: "O Tristano, you who have killed Onesun who lies here, know surely that your death will be more sorrowful than his ever was, and you will be killed by the same blade with which you killed him. This will not fail."

LXXXI.

The master storytellers say that Tristano rode on until he came to the bank of a wide river, and here he met a proud and noble knight who carried insignia all white except for one vermillion garland. He was a knight very much in love. When he saw Tristano he greeted him courteously, saying, "Sir, may God save you, have you seen anywhere a knight whose insignia is all white except for two vermillion bands across?"

Tristano answered him, saying, "I have met a lot of knights with many different armors. Tell me the name of the one you search for, and who you are, and I will give you help and counsel in how to seek him out." The knight replied, "Truly, sir, you would not recognize my name, nor do I mean to tell it to you or anyone until I have first taken vengeance on the knight who is known as Lancilotto del Lago. If you can direct me to him, I would be very grateful for it."

Tristano said, "Sir, tell me what disservice Lancilotto has done you and I promise to guide you or tell you the way to the place you can find him, or else the knight who is dearest to him, the one he loves more than he loves himself. In that way, if you are as excellent as you seem here to be, you can take high vengeance on him."

He replied, "I will be very glad to tell you the way that Lancilotto has done me great wrong, but only if you can lead me to him, or at least to his family or friends who are willing to take the burden of vengeance on his behalf, so that I may vindicate myself and erase my shame. That is why I want you to know how Lancilotto did me harm."

"I am a knight who loves one maiden only. She is called Gaia Pulcella, truly the most beautiful creature nature ever made. She is the daughter of Sir Onesun, born of Fata Morgana. I loved Gaia Pulcella for more than a year and thought only of her: for her sake I left off all other chivalry and all other delight. Then one day as I rode near the Castle of Palaus, I looked into the garden and I saw my love and the heart of my body, the one for whom I was languishing night and day. It was Gaia Pulcella, and she was attended only by three maidens.

"Seeing her there, I was the happiest person in the world. I did not hesitate, but lifted the damsel in my arms and placed her before me on the saddlebow—it was with great joy that I took her away. It is true that the damsel yet felt no love for me, and she wept continually. When we were three leagues from the castle, I found a lovely spring, where I lifted her down and tried hard to comfort her, washing her face and her beautiful hands. I flattered her and offered her all my service, and it seemed a thousand years until evening, when we would come to my fortress, eight leagues farther on.

"All this time I gazed at the damsel, and saw how beautiful and graceful she was. I looked at her lovely, lovely face, and I began to kiss her soft red lips and touch her small white breasts. Then I undressed her body with my fine limbs, so delicate and tender, and when I saw her so desirable, I could not restrain my will.

"Then courteously I lowered her onto the pretty grass, and softly I lifted her robe and her white silken shirt, and gently I mounted over her delicate white body and held her, to request her love. But she, who felt no love yet, began to weep and cry out.

"At that moment this Lancilotto passed by, the one that I am seeking, and when he saw the maiden crying he told me that I was not behaving courteously. I said to him that he should go away and not hinder me in taking this love I had desired so long, but he would not. Instead, he dismounted, took me by the feet, and threw me to the ground. Then he drew his sword and I drew mine, and we began a fierce battle, dealing such heavy blows that we were both wounded in many places. We would have fought like that until one of us was dead if it hadn't happened that Onesun, the damsel's father, came there and led his daughter away as pure as she was before. When I saw this, I was the saddest knight in the world, for I was certain that now he would keep her under such a guard that I would never be able to see her again.

"So after we had fought a long time, because of weariness and the pain of our wounds we left off the battle. At that point we called a truce, swearing that the next time we encountered each other we would fight until one of us lay dead on the ground.

"And so I beg you to tell me where I can find him, for I am determined either to die myself, or to kill him, the one who despoiled me of all my light."

Then Tristano said, "I promised to guide you or to find Lancilotto for you, or at least find some knight who would fight for him, and I am certain you will find him willing. It seems a great injury that he did you, but I marvel at it greatly, for it is not like him to do such things. Anyway, I do not know where in the land Lancilotto may now be. I assure you, though, I am a knight who loves Lancilotto more than any man who lives, and he loves me as if I were himself. If any injury or dishonor should come to me, it would be as if he received it on his own person. So now I tell you that I am the one who will champion Lancilotto, and any injury he has done to you, or you to him, I will take upon myself, and your shame may be avenged.

"And the death I may suffer, Lancilotto will receive in his own person and have for himself, and if I kill you, Lancilotto will be as satisfied as if he had done it with his own hands."

Hearing these words, the knight was convinced that this was Lancilotto himself who had by chance changed his insignia, and he said then to Tristano,

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"Knight, I truly believe you are the one I have been searching for. I summon you to joust—defend yourself if you can!"

Tristano answered, "I swear that if you gain a victory over me, your revenge will be complete."

Then the two knights separated more than a bowshot, and came to the encounter, as knights do. Each struck the other's shield so hard that their lances burst into many pieces, but neither was unseated. As they finished their course they unsheathed their swords and began a hard, cruel battle, giving many harsh and heavy blows and allowing each other no respite.

When they had fought a long while, they rested from the first assault, and after they had rested a little, they started to fight again. Their strokes were so heavy that their armor was stripped from their backs and their flesh was livid from the blows. Their blood covered the ground.

Each of them marvelled greatly at the strength of the other, and Tristano said to himself, "Alas, Lord God, is this Lancilotto himself, who is trying to test me?"

And the knight said to himself, "Alas my hard fortune, for I am certain I am fighting with Lancilotto, but he seems to have doubled his strength!"

The two knights fought in such a way that the first and second assaults were ended, and at the third the ground was even more stained with their blood. But finally it is true as always that Tristano was superior to the other knight, who could not endure against him, but grew tired, so that all of his blows grew fainter, while Tristano's blows grew always stronger.

Then the knight stepped back, saying to Tristano, "Sir, strike no more. I acknowledge my defeat." At once he dismounted, took off his helmet, and cast down his sword and shield. He fell on his knees before Tristano, asking him to spare his life for courtesy's sake.

Sir Tristano pardoned him, saying he would not take his life as long as he would reveal his name and promise to go as a prisoner wherever he would send him. The knight said he was prepared to do this. He said he was called Sir Burletta of the Desert, and was the nephew of Sir Lucano the Great.

Tristano then said, "Burletta, if you would like to escape out of my hands, cross the bridge and go straight to the city of Camellotto. There wait until Sir Lancilotto appears, then give yourself up to him as prisoner on behalf of Tristano of Cornovaglia."

Burletta, seeing that there was nothing else he could do, said he was ready to go. He mounted and set out on his way. On the crest of the bridge, he had a thought, and stopped; Tristano watched him, thinking that he repented his promise. Burletta thought hard, wondering if it wouldn't be better to die at once than to put himself into the hands of the worst enemy he had in the world. Then his heart swelled with pride and despair, and he swung

himself over the saddlebow and threw himself into the rushing river, where quickly he was drowned.

Seeing this, Tristano marvelled greatly, and recommended Burlena to all the devils who have fallen from the sky. Then he told Alcardo to take the knight's horse and mount it himself, and they left, riding beside the river at great speed, because the hour was late and they saw no habitation.

As they rode along, they heard the whirr of a windmill, and turned toward it. When they got there, they found the place was kept by three churlish and villainous millers. Tristano greeted them courteously, asking them to share their roof and their bread, and give fodder to the horses, but they said they didn't want to, because they had earned that day only enough for themselves, and had none to give to horses.

Tristano said to them, "My lords, we don't want your provisions for nothing. We will give you money for them, as much as you say."

Then they agreed. The knights dismounted, tying their horses outside, then they went in under the roof and passed the night as well as they could. The next morning they got up still armed as they had been the night before, and paying the millers what they asked for, rode on across the great plain.

LXXXII.

Tristano rode one day after another until he found himself on the meadow of Rocca Dura, where Queen Ginevara's tournament was to be held. There they found that so many knights had gathered, anyone who had a place to lodge considered himself rich. Set up around the field were many tents, shelters, and pavilions, and many people were staying here because the camp was full, and could not hold everyone. Tristano went looking for a place he could best lodge. As he was going along, he met a knight called Sir Adriano who asked him, "Sir, where have you come from?"

Tristano said to him, "Sir, I come from the kingdom of Sansogna."

"Now tell me," said Sir Adriano, "Could you give me any news of my brother, Sir Amorotto of Gaules? I have not seen him for a long time, and I do not know if he is alive or dead."

"By my good faith," said Sir Tristano, "I can tell you a good deal about him. He was a prisoner on the Island of Perfida, but not twenty days ago he was set free and soon he will be here, along with the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat."

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Then Sir Adriano said to Tristano, "Sir knight, I ask you for courtesy's sake to lodge here with me in my pavilion, where you can be at ease. It is in the most beautiful place on the field." Tristano accepted the invitation because he had need of it. Know that by now most of the people were assembled. On one side was King Artù, all the kinsmen of King Lotto, those of King Pellinoro, King Allielle, King Agalone, and all the kinsmen of King Bando except Lancilotto, and even all of the knights errant. On the other side was the King of Scozia with all the knights of his family, the King of a Hundred Knights, and the Kings of Sobicio and Gualagne; the King of Ingres, and the King of Sansogna with all their forces. Then Tristano entered himself on the side of King Artù and the knights errant.

Trumpets and cornets were sounded from one side and the other, once, then twice. At the third call, every knight began to fight with his lance. At once King Artù lowered his lance and struck the King of a Hundred Knights; King Artù's lance was the longer, so that he knocked his opponent out of the saddle and onto the ground. Then the King of Scozia overcame the King of Norgales.

And the good knight Sir Tristano rode onto the field, doing such deeds of arms that all the people were astonished by them. He overthrew the King of Sobicio and the King of Gualagne, the King of Scozia and many other knights. Before his lance broke, he had sent sixteen knights and kings to earth. Then he took his sharp sword in hand and began such deeds of arms that it was impossible to believe them. So bold and strong did he strike that no knight dared stand up to him, and for fear of him everyone gave way and made him room. Before evening he had won the field on behalf of King Artù against all the foreign knights, and all the people cried, "The knight of the false shield has won the tournament!"

At that, each knight returned to his own pavilion. When morning came, King Artù made a proclamation on behalf of Queen Ginevara, that each knight should return to the field and fight until midday. Then, with permission, they could go on their way. This time Tristano entered himself on the side of the King of Scozia and the foreign knights. When the trumpets had sounded and the people were seated, the knights began the attack.

In this mêlée Sir Calvano knocked the King of Scozia down, and Sir Prezivale overthrew the King of a Hundred Knights. Sir Giuriano, the King of Scozia's nephew, beat Amorotto of Gaules in a very fierce battle.

Sir Tristano, when he rode out, beat Sir Briobris, Sir Calvano, and Amorotto. After Amorotto had been knocked down, the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat approached him, saying, "Sir Amorotto, did you recognize the knight with the false green shield, the one who beat you?"

Amorotto replied, "I know him well, for I recognized him here yesterday. He may have recognized me, too, since he did not give me a very hard blow."

He may have recalled with fondness our good companionship on the island called Perfida."

When the knights had broken their lances, they took their swords in hand. Then there was such a loud noise of blows being struck and horses neighing that it was impossible to see or hear. Many knights could be seen to knock each other off the backs of their horses, and many a good steed went with empty saddle. The field was strewn with hands, legs, and heads cut off; knights and barons sustained many great wounds; many were killed on one side and the other.

Sir Tristano again showed great prowess, and dealt such great blows that no knight dared stand against him. This time he beat the King of Norgal, King Alliele, Sir Brunoro, and many other knights, and killed with his own hand sixteen knights on both sides. All gave way in fear before him, making room for him and shunning him, and all said as one, "This is surely the bravest and best fighter that anyone has ever seen, the best of the whole assembly."

No one knew his name yet except Amorotto and the Knight of the Ill-^{out} Coat, who had been with him at the stone of the magic lance and sword.

Know that when Fata Morgana had given the shield to Tristano, she had also commanded one of her maidens to ride to the field at Rocca Dura and make sure she spoke with King Artù himself. She told her to point out the shield that Tristano carried on his arm, and to tell the king what those figures on it stood for and what they meant. Morgana did this to make King Artū hate his wife Queen Ginevara, for she herself hated Ginevara very much simply because Lancilotto loved her, and the enchantress would rather that she herself were his beloved. Also the queen had stirred up discord between Morgana and her brother.

When the damsel received her lady's commands, she mounted her horse and rode so that she soon came to the field where the tournament was held. While Tristano was fighting so bravely, the maiden approached King Artū, saying, "Sire, do you see that knight who is doing such great deeds? Look at him well, because the shield he carries on his arm signifies your great shame, and it was to shame and dishonor you that the shield was made."

Then the king, looking at the shield and recognizing its meaning, was very angry. Gladly would he put the knight to death if he could find a way.

Nonetheless, Tristano rode over the field beating barons and knights, doing so much that none dared stand before the blows he dealt; everyone avoided him and gave him room. Before noon he had won the field again, and overcome King Artū's side. The king, seeing the advantage taken by one he hated so much, was very unhappy. He thought that this must be Sir Lancilotto carrying the shield to shame and dishonor him, since a short time ago Lancilotto had departed, disdained by the court.

But since he was not sure of this, he wanted to find out. He summoned

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Sir Ivano to accompany him, and they secretly set out. They rode straight to the wilderness of Ramoano, where they thought the knight of the false shield might come to rest himself. Then after Tristano had won the tournament, and had scattered all the people, he and Alcardo left as secretly as they could and rode into the great wilderness.

When King Artū saw them, he approached them and said to Tristano, "Knight, I ask you for courtesy's sake to tell me your name; this would please me more than anything that could happen."

Tristano, not realizing that this was King Artū, answered, "I am a knight from a distant land who came to this tournament for love of a lady."

"And who gave you this shield?" King Artū inquired.

Tristano replied, "In truth, the shield was given to me by Fata Morgana, sister to King Artū. She asked me to bear it at this tournament for her sake."

Then the king said to Tristano, "Sir knight, do you know what these figures mean?"

Tristano said, "No, by my faith, for she would not tell me. She said it was made for her father Uter Pandragon, and asked therefore that I carry it in this tournament."

Then the king knew that Tristano was not guilty and did not carry the shield to spite anyone, but that the evil had been done by his own sister, who wanted to dishonor him along with Ginevara, his queen. At that the king said to Sir Tristano, "Knight, after all I would still like to know your name, because you seem to be the best knight in the world."

But Tristano said, "By my faith, sir, I will by no means tell you my name."

"Then I challenge you to fight," said the king.

Tristano grew angry, saying, "Alas, villain knight! As you know very well by looking at me, I am tired; yet you summon me to do battle! Still, by my faith, I will not fail you, and I think I can make you regret your challenge."

Then they drew apart more than a bowshot, and coming together struck two great blows, so that their lances shattered. But Tristano hit King Artū with such force that he sent man and horse to earth, and broke one of his ribs. Then he took another lance and came toward Sir Ivano, saying, "Sir knight, are you also full of the desire to know my name and to joust with me?"

Sir Ivano replied, "I want neither to joust with you nor to know your name, but I will take vengeance for my companion if I can."

Then the two knights challenged each other and drew apart, and at their meeting Sir Ivano gave Tristano such a blow that his lance was shattered, but Tristano sent him to the ground badly wounded, then afterwards rode on his way. The king, in great pain, got to his feet and still smiling said to Sir Ivano, "Let us go back to Rocca Dura, for by my faith now well and pleasantly has this knight told us his name."

Sir Ivano answered the king, saying, "Sire, he has certainly satisfied me, for this whole month I will ask no other knight for his name, you may be

sure of that. Let him be from whatever realm he wants and let him be whoever he can be, for a man does not grow old except by minding his own business."

Then with great effort they remounted and rode back to Rocca Dura. When they reached the palace they sent for fine doctors and had themselves treated. In a little while the king summoned Sir Calvano and Sir Chieso the Seneschal and told them how the knight who had won the tournament had beaten and wounded them, and how he was riding now through the middle of the wilderness of Ramoano.

Chieso said, "Sire, don't say such words, because we would pursue him against our will. Even though we are sorry about your hurt, still it is the better injury compared to a worse one; our going would not vindicate your shame and dishonor."

And the king said, "By my faith, I would so gladly know his name I would give a rich city for it."

Sir Calvano said, "By my faith, I marvel greatly that no one knows this knight at all, and that he got away so secretly. But, by my faith, Sir Adriano ought to know who he is, because he was lodged in his pavilion."

Then the king summoned Sir Adriano and asked him, "Sir, do you know the knight with the false green shield who today did such deeds of arms?"

Sir Adriano replied, "I do not know him, but he said this much to me: that he had been the companion of Amorotto and the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat."

Then the king had those two brought before him and commanded them to tell who the knight was who had won the tournament.

They said, "Did you not recognize him?" And the king said no.

Then Amorotto said, "Know surely, my lord, that the knight who carried the honors of the assembly was the valorous Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia, who always goes through the world winning the honor and prize of all chivalry. He does this for love of the beautiful, noble queen Isotta, she whom he loves so much. And know that just the other day he freed me from prison in the island of Perfida, out of the hands of Medeas."

The king, hearing that this had been Sir Tristano, was the happiest king in the world. Tristano was so praised for bounty, beauty, and prowess over all other knights in the world, that King Artù felt compensated for the injury he had suffered jousting with him in the wilderness. Then he had it proclaimed throughout the assembly that the knight who had won the tournament had been the noble Sir Tristano, son of King Meliadus of Liones. At that, all the knights were consoled, for they held it no dishonor to be beaten at the hands of the noblest knight in the world.

When the next day came, each king, count, and baron returned to his own country. King Artù, with the knights errant and Queen Ginevara, returned to Camelot. Here they found that Lancilotto had returned to the court, all unhappy because he had been beaten that day by a bold knight.

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He had even left his shield hanging on the wall of the tower that belonged to the knight who had beaten him with his lance alone, and because of this, Lancilotto felt himself greatly disgraced. But he was comforted when he looked at the clear and lovely face of Queen Ginevara, and secretly he took with her pleasure and delight.

Know also that when Tristano left the assembly he rode one day after the next until he came back to the castle of Palau, that is, to the town outside. He gave back the shield to Fata Morgana and, picking up his own, set out to seek adventure without delay.

LXXXIII.

The masters of the story tell that Sir Tristano continued to ride through the great wasteland of Spinogres, riding until he encountered a knight all armed except for his shield. Tristano did not challenge him to joust, for two reasons: first, because he saw that the knight was not fully equipped, and second, because Tristano never challenged anyone unless he believed him to be a knight of great name and great prowess.

So when they met, each greeted the other courteously; and Tristano asked the stranger why he rode without his shield, something knights errant did not usually do. The knight, who was Sir Arpinello, lord of the castle of Bautiganero, said to Tristano, "Know, sir, that this is not without good cause, for the other day when I was passing a great tower, by my misfortune I sounded a horn which happened to be hanging there. At this summons, a knight came out to joust with me, and he was the biggest, bravest fighter in the world. He beat me, than commanded me to write my name on my shield and hang it on the wall of the tower with the others that were already there. If I refused, I would have to stay three months in prison."

"So I, hearing that I had such a choice, wrote my name on my shield and hung it up as a sign that he had beaten me, attaching it to a ring on the tower with the others. I am not terribly ashamed of all this, since there were as many as 140 shields hanging there. This knight is a man of great prowess: his name is Sir Carados the Thirteenth."

When Tristano heard what this knight said and heard him mention Sir Carados, whom he knew to be a knight of the Tavola Vecchia who scorned the knights of the Tavola Nuova, he was very anxious to meet him in combat. So he then said to Sir Arpinello, "Well, knight, for courtesy's sake and

the love of chivalry, I ask you to guide me and accompany me to Sir Carados' tower. I ask you to do this because I promise one of two things will happen: either I will be killed, or I will recover your shield for you."

Then Arpinello said to Tristano, "Sir knight, I am ready to do as you wish, but first, truly, I would like to know your name." Tristano, because he so much wanted this knight to show him the way, told him his name; then Arpinello, when he heard that this was Sir Tristano, a man of such high fame throughout the world, thought a little and said, "Tristano, I am ready to go with you wherever you please. But I strongly advise you not to go there. Do not go seeking trouble, shame, and dishonor, which used to belong to some of the boldest knights in the world; Sir Carados has beaten giants in jousts with the lance and battles with the sword. Therefore, don't go looking for trouble, for the greatest evil in the world is that which a man creates for himself."

Then Tristano said, "Sir Arpinello, your advice gives me pleasure, but I will be even more grateful for your help. So I beg you to guide me to this tower."

The knight agreed, and they began to ride together through the great wilderness. They rode this way until the hour grew late, when they came upon a stronghold belonging to a courteous and worthy knight. He was a contentious man much hated by his enemies, and he was called Sir Adanain. When he saw the two knights he did them great honor, gladly receiving them at his dwelling. He had them disarm, then had the tables brought. As they were eating, the host, seeing how handsome, strong, and well-made Tristano was, was very pleased with this youth, and asked him his name.

But Tristano replied, "Noble host, I am a knight from a distant land. Don't be troubled if that is all I can say, for I have taken a vow."

The knight was very angry and unhappy about that, because he gladly would have found out Tristano's name, so delighted was he by the young knight's size and gracefulness. He thought truly that he had seen him before, but he could not remember where, and because of this he became even more inflamed.

Nevertheless, he honored him greatly and entertained him courteously and well. When they had eaten they were led into a fine rich chamber, where there were three rich and noble beds. But all that night Sir Adanain thought of nothing else except how he might find out who Sir Tristano was. He decided to accompany him to the tower, since there he would find out his name when he had to write it on his shield and hang it up on the tower wall.

In the morning Tristano and Arpinello armed themselves well, and Adanain did the same, and Tristano made his farewells, thanking his host very much for the honor he had done them.

And his host said, "I am pleased to do you honor, if only you would tell

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"me your name. But by my faith, I believe I will know it before noones, because you will have come to a place where you will have to tell it, whether you want to or not; whether it pleases you or not you will not be able to get out of it or keep your vow."

And Tristano laughed at that, saying, "If I'm made to tell my name by force, I won't be forced to tell the truth."

LXXXIV.

In this part the story tells how all three of the knights were riding down the great slope of a mountain. As they crossed a little in front of the mountain and rode onto level ground, they saw five armed knights approaching them along the broad highway. When Sir Adanain, Tristano's host, saw their insignia, he knew at once who they were. Then his whole face was altered by fear, and it seemed as though he wanted to turn back. Tristano, seeing the fear in the countenance of his host, asked what so disturbed him, and Adanain said, "Sir knight, I am sure I see the Count Balie coming, my most mortal enemy in all the world since I killed one of his brothers. So I will just ride back at a great pace to my castle, for I no longer care about your name or your kin."

Hearing these words made Tristano very happy. He immediately leaned over and took Adanain's horse by the bridle, saying, "Noble host, by my faith you shall not leave me. Not, at least, until you have found out my name."

"Eh, what?" said Adanain, "Will you hold me here to my death? I tell you, I see this count accompanied by four knights. As soon as he catches sight of me, he will put me to death!"

"I don't think that will happen," said Tristano, "But even if it might, you shall never leave me until first you find out my name."

At that Adanain counted himself as dead. He wanted to unsheathe his sword and strike Tristano, but when he saw this, Tristano pretended to be very angry, saying, "Knight, if you hold your life dear don't unsheathe that sword. If you do, I will cut off your fist."

Then Adanain said to Tristano, "Alas, sir, you are a very villainous knight, to do me so much evil. I had you, as my guest, honorably served and nobly treated; now you force me to await death at the hands of my enemies. I beg you for the sake of the greatest courtesy that you allow me to turn back, for I am tired of finding out your name."

Tristano did not reply to him, but continued leading him by the bridle. Soon they met the count and his company, and as soon as the count saw Adanain, his mortal enemy, he prepared to strike and put him to death. Adanain was desperately frightened.

Tristano said, "Noble host, how is it with you? Do you still want to know my name?"

But Adanain, because of his great fear, answered nothing. Then Tristano rode forward and spoke to the count, saying, "Sir, what do you mean to do? Don't you see that Sir Adanain is under my protection?"

Then the count came forward, saying, "Who is the knight who would defend a traitor?"

Tristano replied, "Sir, I am the knight who will defend Adanain." At that, the count challenged Tristano and Tristano returned the challenge. They rode together, lances set, and delivered two great blows. The count broke his lance against Tristano, but Tristano kept his whole; he sent the count to earth by the length of it, badly wounded.

Then Tristano took his unbroken lance and with it beat the second knight and the third, wounding them both; the fourth he sent dead to the ground then knocked down the fifth man, horse and all. When Tristano had delivered all these blows, he called to Adanain, saying, "What do you want me to do with your enemy the count?"

Adanain replied, "If it is possible, I want him to pardon me his ill-will, for I would gladly be rid of so much hatred. He has six sons, all of whom want me dead."

Tristano, upon hearing these words, drew his sword and said, "Sir, truly of two things you must choose one. Either offer peace to Adanain or get back on your horse and fight me with the sword. But if I win, I will certainly cut off your head."

The count, seeing how things were, said to Tristano, "Knight, an evil deed is better than death, so I will do your will and make peace with Adanain. I swear never to offend him in any way."

Afterwards the count and his men left and went on their way. Then Tristano turned to Adanain, saying, "Noble host, I pray that God be with you. Return to your house, since you are secure from your enemy and satisfied about my name."

But Adanain said to Tristano, "Sir, I can never repay you enough for the great service you have done me, for you have delivered me from death and freed me from a terrible feud. I assure you that I will always be your obedient servant, but even so, I will never leave you until I have found out your name. For you must know that I am more curious now than I was before, because of the great prowess you have shown, and the great nobility that reigns in you."

Tristano smiled at these words and said, "Noble host, I am sure if you

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"In this part the story tells that the three knights rode down the broad highway, continuing on so that by the hour of nones they found themselves before Sir Carados' tower, that is, Torre Vittoriosa. They looked at the fort, and the fine, strong tower, and saw that in front of the gate there was a column of vermilion marble, to which six ivory horns were attached by a silver chain. There were letters carved into the column which said:

"You, O knight, passing here on adventures to win honor and the great prize of chivalry, sound these horns if you feel bold and proud and you will joust with the lance and fight with the sword against the best knight in the world. If you win, you will vindicate the shame of all the brave knights who were beaten here and who have left their shields on the tower where you see them hanging. But if you lose, you must stay three months in my prison, or else hang up your shield with the others and swear that for three months you will carry no shield at all."

Sir Tristano read those words, then looked under a pine tree standing in the meadow. He saw there twelve good horses saddled and ready for battle, and four poles of armor decorated and furnished for a knight's use. Then Tristano admired this baron over all others in the world.

Then he stepped forward and gave a great blast on one of the horns. At the sound Sir Tristano made, Adanain approached him saying, "I am sure, knight, that the time has come for me to find out your name, believe me. For truly I believe you will be writing it on your shield and hanging it with your own hands on this tower with the others. Then your name will be known to me and to anyone else who pleases to look."

Tristano made no answer to this but had Alcardo prepare him and his

own good horse in all the necessary ways. Then when Tristano had waited a little time, out of the tower rode an armed knight the size of a giant, prepared to do battle with him. When he came before Tristano he greeted him courteously, saying, "Knight, if your horse or armor has any flaw, make use of the other beneath that pine, for they are the best in the world. Take whatever pleases you."

Tristano answered him, "Many thanks, noble sir, but I have no need of horse or arms: mine are good enough."

Sir Carados said, "Then I know of nothing else to do except to fight." Tristano said that he was ready, that he had come there for no other reason. At that each knight challenged the other as well he knew how, each with lance in hand. Truly they resembled a pair of ferocious lions. Their horses were strong and swift, and the two knights were eager, brave, and vigorous. In their first encounter they traded two such great blows that they burst chest-, girth-, and cinch-straps, unhorsing them both, saddle and all, in such a way that they were stunned by the fall.

But soon each one got to his feet and unsheathed his sword, beginning a fierce, cruel battle on foot, giving many great blows. So they fought in the first assault until most of their armor was useless. Truly, each one of them was covered with wounds, they had both lost a lot of blood, and neither had gained the advantage.

At that point, the day was waning, and they had fought so hard they could scarcely see each other. So by agreement they stopped the fight, and Sir Carados went back into his fortress to rest and have himself treated. Tristano and his companions rested in another palace outside the wall, a house where the foreigners lived. Here they were treated as honored guests, and all their needs graciously met. Arpinello and Adanain ministered to Tristano's wounds.

When the next day dawned, at six-thirty in the morning, Sir Tristano and Sir Carados rode back out to the field on their good destriers. Meeting, they challenged each other, then eagerly rode to strike each other on the shield, hitting blows so heavy that both lances were shattered. But neither knight bent the other over the saddlebow, and they finished their course.

As they wheeled their horses around, each man took his iron mace in hand and began to deliver such great, strong blows that it was a mighty marvel to watch. Soon most of their armor lay in pieces on the ground.

In the third assault each one was so badly wounded that his flesh was stained and livid with blood and sweat, but still they both seemed always to find greater strength, because so much depended on this battle. Sir Tristano greatly exerted himself to surpass the experience that the other knight had acquired in the passing of time, for Sir Carados had been doing deeds of arms for over forty years. And the older knight was afraid of losing, fearful of losing his reputation, because he claimed to be the best knight in the world.

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Then it seemed to all the people in the fortress, and to Sir Arpinello and Sir Adanain, that Tristano was getting the best of the battle. Carados was very tired and his efforts were diminishing, while Tristano seemed always fresher. During the battle the knights had to dismount because their horses were so exhausted they could not stand up.

In the fourth assault, most of the ground was stained with their blood, and Sir Carados said to himself, "Alas, lord God, who can this knight be who is so bold and such a mighty warrior? He doesn't seem to be Sir Sigurans the Brown, nor yet the high prince Galeotto, nor Lancilotto, nor Palamidesso, for I have tested them at other times, and made them hang up their shields against their will."

And on the other side, Tristano marvelled greatly, saying, "Alas, lord God, this is surely a bold knight! He has truly in himself great and powerful strength, without using magic arts: he is one of the greatest knights I have ever met or found in this world. Neither Brunoro the Brown, the high prince Galeotto, nor even Lancilotto comes near him."

And the perilous battle went on. In the fifth assault Sir Carados put forth all his strength and struck Tristano on the shield so that it broke down the middle, and Tristano's left arm was seriously wounded. Then Tristano was infuriated, and struck Carados on the helmet with the edge of his sword, hitting with all his strength. That blow was so heavy that it sliced through helmet and iron cap, making a great gash in his head, so that Carados fell senseless to the ground, and lay a long time without getting up, pulseless and unmoving, because he was unconscious.

When he came to himself, Tristano said to him, "Knight, knight, sir, let us not fight any more."

Carados replied, "Surely, noble sir, I did not believe there could be a man who could fight as long and as hard as I, nor finish a battle with me. Always I have come out the winner and held the honors: that is evident in the many shields you can see hanging from the high tower wall. Among them are those of the best knights in the world."

"Now all this honor and all this praise is for you, because you are the knight who has beaten and conquered me. You have vindicated the shame of all the others, and have acquired for yourself the honor and praise I have won over such a long time."

"You have treated me so that if I were now as fresh as I were at first I would not make another assault on you for all the gold in the world. From the beginning you were the most graceful knight I have ever seen, and as the battle came to an end you became a crueler, fiercer fighter than all others, striking so hard that you seemed to lack all pity. For courtesy's sake I ask you, and by the honor of your chivalry, tell me your name and who you are, and from this moment on I will leave the fortress and all its land to you, putting my own shield up where the others are hanging and promising

you that I will go into the wilderness to serve God, because all of my honors
fade and are false compared to yours."

Then Tristano told Carados his name and Carados replied, "Truly,
Tristano, many times I proved myself in feats of arms with your father
Meliadus, the fountain of chivalry and courtesy, but he was as nothing com-
pared to you. Through your great prowess and reputation you have taken
from me both the fame and the shame of our battle."

Then Carados wrote on his shield with his own hand the words I will
tell you, then hung it on the wall of the tower above all the rest. The words
he wrote were these:

Tristan and
Carados

LXXXVI.

Being in vainglory where no fame lasts,
I, Carados, had in myself so much noble skill,
That neither Uter Pandragon nor the barons of the Tavola
Vecchia
Did I fear or have to consider,
And all the knights of the Valle Bruna retreated before me,
And King Artù and all his courtiers,
Sir Lancilotto and those of high standing.
Giants and knights of fortune were afraid of me,
But when I was on the crest of my wheel there came a young
knight and noble boy
Who, by his prowess and boldness,
Took from me the prize and honor and conquered me
completely.
Truly one can say: This was Sir Tristano, son of King Meliadus
of Liones.

Tristano stayed on until a month had passed, until he and Carados were cured of their wounds. Then Carados, unarmed and on foot, went into the wilderness of Andernantes to a monastery, there to stay and serve God and do penance for his sins.

Afterwards, Tristano gave the fortress and all of its holdings to Sir Arpinello, and left orders that the shields not be moved from their place except by the hands of those to whom they had belonged, who had hung them there by Carados' command.

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Tristano's host, that is, Sir Adanain, hearing that this was Sir Tristano of Liones, the noble and valiant knight he had so often heard of, got on his horse at once and rode as quickly as he could to King Artù's court to tell of the marvel and the great battle which Tristano had done and which he had seen with his own eyes. As he rode, he told the news about what had happened to every knight he met.

And know that when Tristano counted the shields at his leisure, he found there were exactly 138. Of this 138, 15 came from knights of the Tavola Vecchia, and 126 were from knights errant.²⁴ Two were from Sir Lancilotto, and twelve were from great giants, and the others were all from bold foreign knights who fought for the honor and prize of chivalry.

Tristano had the horns taken off the column and the letters effaced. Instead he had written there that whatever knight errant should pass that way could shelter there and please himself until the end of six days, and other people three days, at the castle's expense, that is, the expense of the people of the castle. And to any knight errant who needed it, a good palfrey would be given, to other knights, a roncel, and to the man on foot, a pair of good shoes. For it happened that few people ever came that way except knights on great adventures, because the country was in such a deserted place.

Then Tristano and Alcardo left and went looking for adventures in many lands. Here the story stops telling about Sir Tristano, and we will speak of a proud knight of the Tavola Vecchia who went to the court of King Artù to vindicate his great shame, telling how because of his coming King Artù and all the knights errant were in danger of death. This is the truth.

LXXXVII.

The true story tells that there was a lady in a distant country, the Isola di Vallone in the Soriano Sea. She was very learned in all the seven arts, and her name was Escorducarla. One day she found out through a certain messenger that a knight errant in the service of King Artù had killed four of her sons, and that Artù himself had cut off the head of her daughter Elergia before the marvellous Palace of Grande Disio. Because of this, she became the saddest lady in the world, and night and day neither thought of nor busied herself with anything except plans for a high vendetta against King Artù and his knights. She wanted to manage it so that not even a single knight errant would be remembered.

When she had thought about this for a long, long time she sent for her brother, who lived in the Fortress of Ancisa on the Isola Riposta in the Uziano Sea. When this knight, who was called Sir Lasancis, received his sister's summons he went to her, and she received him with great honor, saying, "My brother, well you know the great injustice that King Artù and Tristano of Cornovaglia have done me, killing my five children, your nephews and your niece. Now you ought never be consoled, nor think of anything else except of taking high vengeance on them. As quickly as you can I want you to go to the kingdom of Longres and take great revenge."

Then Sir Lasancis said, "Lady, lady, what is this vanity you speak? I may once have been a bold knight of great strength, but you see that now I am getting old. Thus I am not able to make a high vendetta, for even if I manage to kill one knight or two, the others would soon kill me, because the strength, boldness, and courage of the knights errant are too much for me. So, dear sister, if I go it will only be to make two evils out of one, and to accrue worse damage and dishonor."

But the lady answered him, "My brother, don't think I would send you to a distant land because I wanted you to die, for I love you more than I love myself. I know you are a knight who could defend yourself against one knight or two, but I will give you enchanted armor made in such a way that it can by no means fail you, and I will give you a lance of such power that if you joust with it for the space of a year it will never bend or break. I will have the lance set with iron so strong and made with such art that no matter how lightly you touch a knight with it, he will fall to earth at once, and in this way you will always be the winner.

"Now I want you to follow my directions. Go to the city of Camellotto, and when you reach the gates take shelter in the great palace kept there by the foreigners: you will see it at the crest of the meadow. Make sure that you get the key to the great hall in your possession. Then ride out and demand a joust, as is the custom of these bold knights. You will have no occasion to become distressed or tired, for all you have to do is touch the knight with the iron of the lance, and he will be unhorsed at once, it is certain.

"When you have beaten this knight, have him tell you his name, then make him a prisoner in the great hall of the foreigner's palace; lock it well and keep the key safely with you. Stay here jousting thirty days, so that you lure all the knights errant to Camellotto, especially Tristano, who killed your nephews. And when you have imprisoned King Artù and all the defeated knights, then set a fire so that no one can escape, and burn down the palace with everyone inside.

"Afterwards, when you see you have the advantage, ride into the city and kill as many people as you can find in Camellotto. When you have done this, you and I will have accomplished the greatest vendetta in the world. But of one thing be very careful: you must not fight with a woman, for if

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"you do, the power of the lance will be lost."²⁵
At that, Sir Lasancis said, "Noble and beloved lady, I am ready to do your will."

Then they prepared him with everything he might need, and his sister gave him the enchanted armor and magic lance, along with a strong destrier and insignia which displayed the head of a lady on a vermillion field. Thus prepared, Sir Lasancis rode away, travelling one day after another, passing fields and mountains, woods and knolls and forests, until he found himself on the great plain of Longres. Then he rode on to the city of Camellotto and found out that King Artù and many other knights and barons had just returned from the great tournament at Rocca Dura, and that Sir Lancilotto also was in the city.

At that point, Sir Lasancis of Isola Riposta dismounted at the great palace of the foreigners, taking shelter in the lower hall and closing the hall above on both sides. He rested there that night, then in the morning arose and rode to the center of the meadow. Putting a fine large ivory horn to his lips, he blew a loud blast, with that sound demanding a joust.

At once, Sir Ivano rode out to the encounter. When Lasancis saw him, he quickly prepared himself to joust, and they rode against each other. But Lasancis, by the special virtue of his lance, sent Sir Ivano to earth the moment he touched him. Then he took him by the noseguard of his helmet and demanded his name, and imprisoned him in the great hall of the palace. Afterwards he kept the key safely with him.

Following that, he defeated Sir Chieso, Sir Calvano, and Prezzivale, Astore di Mare, Amorotto, and Briobris; before his lance might twist or bend he had sent fifteen knights to earth, and locked them all in the great hall of the foreigners' palace. When he saw that night was coming, he returned to the palace and rested there, and had four of his squires stand guard.

King Artù and Sir Lancilotto greatly marvelled at the prowess of this knight, believing that he might be Sir Sigurans the Brown, who was praised for strength and skill above all other knights. When the next day came, Sir Lancilotto rode out onto the field demanding a joust. As he met the knight, he saluted him very courteously, and Lancilotto said, "Who are you, knight, you who have shown so much prowess against the knights errant? Are you Sir Carados or Sir Sigurans the Brown?"

And the knight replied, "My name and my origin you may not yet know, but I will say this much: I am a knight from a distant land who, that I may serve a lady, has sworn to dwell in this palace a month and to joust with as many knights as will meet with me here. If I am the winner at the end of that time I will ask of them whatever boon I please. I am called the Knight Aspetta Ventura, because I so greatly desire to do the will of the lady by whose commandment I come here."

Lancilotto said, "Sir, it will be too much for you to joust with as many

knights as will challenge you now, for know that the honor you acquired yesterday must be abandoned today."

Then without further exchange they rode apart, but at the lowering of the lances Sir Lasancis touched Sir Lancilotto first with his enchanted weapon, sending him quickly to earth. Commanding him to say his name, he imprisoned him in the great palace with the rest. He returned to the field where he soon overcame King Artù, Sir Bordo, Sir Brunoro the White, Sir Lan cha, the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat; Lionello, Sagramore, Dodinello, and some twenty others, the flowers of the Tavola Ritonda.

Queen Ginevara, when she saw that King Artù, Lancilotto, and some sixty knights errant were imprisoned, was the saddest lady in the world. She was afraid that they might never be set free if they were not delivered by the prowess of Sir Tristano. She gave the city into the keeping of Sir Agravale and a number of other knights, then mounted at once with four maidens to attend her and set out toward Cornovaglia and the city of Tin-toile, to look for Tristano.

As she rode thus, she told every knight she met what had happened, and sent him in great haste on toward the city of Camellotto. Among these were Sir Palamidesso, Sagris, Gariette, Dondonello, and many other knights errant. She rode on in haste, always weeping, and as a sign of her great distress she carried a round ball in her hand, and a hollow reed. These things, according to the custom of the time, were carried by ladies or knights who have lost the thing they love most.

When she had ridden ten days and had reached the borders of Guascogna, she encountered Tristano there near the castle of Barfonalle. When she saw him she recognized him at once by the insignia he had carried at the tournament at Rocca Dura. It was his custom to change insignia from time to time, and he did this because knights who recognized him would not willingly joust with him, or try to prove themselves against him at arms.

Seeing it was Tristano, the queen greeted him courteously, saying, "Knight, for love and courtesy to the one you love most, are you Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia?"

And Tristano replied, "Lady, you have no need to entreat me so, because I never conceal my name from a lady or a maiden. Know that I am called Tristano. But who are you, who ride so like a lady disconsolate?"

Then she approached Tristano and embraced him and kissed him more than a hundred times, saying, "Well found, falcon of the knights errant! Now know that I am the unhappy Queen Ginevara. I have come looking for you, and the news that I bring you is the most evil and cruel in the world. One foreign knight—I do not know from what place or country he comes—has arrived at the city of Camellotto and has overthrown my lord the king, and with a single lance, and has imprisoned them in the great hall of the for-

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"Igners' palace, and I don't know if I will return to find them alive or dead." Tristano, when he heard that this was Queen Ginevara, and when he heard what news she brought, at once leapt off his horse and knelt to her, then began a great lament before her, saying, "Alas, Lord God, now how is the Tavola Ritonda so disgraced by the virtues and prowess of a single knight?"

Then he remounted without other delay, and they began to ride swiftly back toward the city of Camellotto. They rode all that day through the great wasteland of Capetrenalle, coming that evening to a lovely hermitage held there by a holy hermit. He received them with great honor for the love and grace of the Holy Spirit, and also because of the virtue of the ring Tristano wore; he knew the course they took, and why they were going there.

The hermit said to Tristano, "Sir knight, your great prowess is necessary, because you are going where the need is great. I tell you truly that I am certain, if you do not vindicate their honor before seven days from now, King Artù and all the knights of the Tavola Ritonda will die an evil death.

"But your strength will not avail against the virtue of wit, because the knight you must combat wears armor all enchanted in such a way that no weapon can damage it at all, and his lance is wrought with such mastery that he has only to touch a knight or his horse with it to send him to earth at once. See, therefore, that you by no means joust with lances."

Tristano thought much about this matter, and in the morning he and his companion remounted and rode hard, night and day, until they arrived at the city of Camellotto. Here they found it was true that all the knights errant had been defeated and taken prisoner. Above the great tower of the city was placed a reed and a ball, a sign of heavy mourning. The empty, useless reed showed that their good firmness was lost, and the round ball, with no fixed point, signified that happiness could in no way be depended on.

Sir Tristano, upon finding out this news, was very sorrowful and worried. But then, cleverly, he went throughout the city hiding lances and spears and anything that looked like a lance. Afterwards he armed himself with care to great advantage, wearing his best armor and grasping in his hand a heavy iron mace with three big iron balls hanging from it on strong chains: each one of those balls by itself weighed 100 pounds. Then at once he rode out to the meadow all armed; here he found Lasancis and greeted him courteously saying, "Sir, I am a young knight, as you can see, and I am not very used to jousting, by my faith. And what is more, I tell you that in all this city I cannot see, or touch, or find a single lance. Thus I ask you, on the honor of your chivalry, that we may have together an encounter or two with sword or mace."

It happened that the knight, who was very proud, believed that he had already accomplished everything he had come for. The month would be

up in three days, then he would burn King Artù and all the knights and afterwards go back to his own country.

He spoke to Sir Tristano, saying, "You seem to be such a young knight that I care nothing for your mace or your sword, so you may fight with me using anything you please."

Then Sir Lasancis propped his lance against a tree, and the two knights gripped their swords and began a dangerous battle. The knight, who had great prowess of his own, struck Tristano's shield so hard that whenever he struck, that part was knocked to the ground, and Tristano struck him on the helmet but did not damage it at all, for his sword just bounced off. Nonetheless, the struggle between the two knights was a great one. Tristano was wounded in every part, and his armor was sliced to shreds; and all of the blows he gave Lasancis were useless and did no damage to his armor, it was so thoroughly enchanted.

But neither could Lasancis overcome Tristano. He marvelled greatly that the young knight had the breath and strength to endure against him. Queen Ginevara and the ladies and aged knights who were watching held Tristano for dead, and indeed both knights were exhausted. Gladly they rested after the first assault.

In a little while, they began the second, and continued to fight until daylight was gone. Tristano was very glad to see it go.

Then Lasancis said to Tristano, "Knight, knight, I advise you not to let yourself be killed. It would be better to yield yourself prisoner like the others, for as you can see you haven't enough strength to hurt me at all."

Tristano answered and said, "Knight, I pray you that in the morning you will meet me for one more assault. If I cannot harm you then, I will yield myself your prisoner."

Then the knight agreed, and turned back toward the great palace. Through either overconfidence or ignorance he left his lance behind, so Tristano took it and buried it in the ground a good distance away. When the knight reached the palace, then he remembered his lance. He rode right back for it, but found that Tristano was still there. He looked for his lance, but could not find it. That made him sad, but still he did not care a great deal because he did not think he would have need of it. He went on back to rest.

Tristano rested in the city that night, for he had great need of it, and he had his wounds and bruises treated. In the morning he armed himself with new armor, since his own was bent and broken, and he had his squire carry two great lances, each made just like the other. When he came to the field, he found that Lasancis had already arrived, and he said, "Sir, would you like to prove yourself with a lance? Here are two just alike: take whichever pleases you and we will joust together."

Then the knight took a lance, though not as willingly as he would have taken his own. They rode apart from each other at once, and at the en-

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counter traded two such great blows that the lances shattered. When they had ended their course, the knight unsheathed his sword and Tristano grasped his heavy mace. He would have brandished it in the air the day before, had he not been afraid that Lasancis would then resort to his enchanted lance. The knights began a cruel battle, such that after the first assault Tristano's knight was again in shreds. But Tristano took his heavy mace and hit the horse. Lasancis begged Tristano not to fight with the mace, but Tristano would not agree to this. Rather they began a second assault in which Tristano was wounded all over his body, so that the ground was stained with his blood, for the other knight was an excellent fighter. But Tristano, with that heavy mace, delivered such great blows that even though he could not damage the armor, still he bruised bone and flesh very heavily and with great force made blood spurt out of his opponent's mouth and nose, even out of his eyes and ears.

He could hardly see for the huge blows Tristano gave him on his head, so the knight asked Tristano for a respite. Tristano, realizing why he wanted it, would not agree. He did no villainy in this, since he did it out of fear and concern for all the good people in prison. He knew that this knight could not be beaten by force of arms in a fair fight, and for that reason he was cruel beyond his nature.

The two knights fought on in this way, but Sir Lasancis could not last against that heavy beating. Soon he let himself fall to the ground, claiming mercy from Tristano and admitting defeat. Tristano dismounted and, leaping at once to his side, drew his sword and unlaced Lasancis' helmet, saying, "Tell truly who you are!"

Then Sir Lasancis told Tristano everything that had happened: why he had come there, who he was, and all that he had plotted to do. Then Tristano made him hand over the key to the palace so he could set free the king and all the prisoners — there were 137 in all.

When the king and all the knights were on the field in front of the two combatants, Tristano commanded Lasancis to tell them from the beginning who he was and why he had come and everything that had happened, and to tell the truth to all.

Then the knight, who had no choice, said again to all the people how he was called Lasancis of the Fortress of Ancisa on the Isola Riposta, and how he had come on behalf of his sister, the lady of the Isola di Vallone, to be revenged for the shame of the maiden Elergia and his four nephews whom King Artù and Tristano had killed at the enchanted Palace of Grande Disio. And he told how it had been planned that he, for vengeance, would have set fire to the palace and would have burned the king with all the barons and knights. He told how his armor was enchanted, and how he had defeated them all by virtue of his magic lance.

The king and Lancilotto and all the other knights, when they heard what a villainous death Lasancis had planned for them, wanted to kill him, but Tristano would not suffer it, for he was more courteous than any other knight. Instead, he got angry, saying, "My lord King Artù and you other barons and knights, what a great boast you make now against this warrior. You should have killed him when you fought with him, not now that he is my prisoner." Then the king and the others were quiet.

Tristano quickly turned to Lasancis, saying, "An evil and terrible thought you had, to want to kill so many good people in such a way. It would have been too great a wrong to make them suffer for another's fault. But now I declare that I am that Tristano who killed the four knights at the enchanted palace, in the service of King Artù. But I will do this, if it please you: let you rest as many days as you need to, then afterwards we will joust with the lance and fight with the sword, and there will be no enchanted armor or lance, and I will not use my heavy mace. If you defeat me, then boldly take your vengeance on me and go on your way, safe and fortunate, but if I am the winner I will take whatever vengeance these good people want upon you."

Lasancis replied, "Tristano, according to what I have heard before, and what you have at present proved, there is not a knight in the world who can endure against you in direct battle, and if I had known who you were from the first I would not have laid aside my lance so courteously for all the gold in the world. This much I tell you for sure: for the rest of my life I will never strike another blow against you, and I hereby give the power of life or death into your noble hands. Give me whichever pleases you, for the proverb is ugly that says, 'Where the ass falls, he will not want to re-turn.'

"Thus whoever proves himself the first time in battle, one does not fight a second time against him. Therefore I give you all my armor. Take it, and there will be no knight in the world so invincible as you will be, of this you can be sure."

Then Tristano took the armor and retrieved the lance and had them melted in a hot oven, saying, "Best is the knight who is pleased to have and to wield prowess of his own, to be bold in deeds and have courage in his heart, to have strength in his limbs and wisdom and cleverness in battle, and who does not mock his own skill with enchanted armor."

Then he had Sir Lasancis taken to the great palace of the foreigners and had him locked up, with only one barred window for access. He had him provided, well and willingly, with whatever he needed, and attended by four squires who stayed with him the rest of his life.

And in the meadow King Artù had a white marble column erected, and carved with letters that told the prowess of Sir Tristano, and all the things he had done in his struggle with Sir Lasancis. He had another great lodge

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built for the foreigners, and it had neither doors nor walls, but was all made of great marble columns, and was very, very beautiful.

LXXXVIII.

In this part the tale tells that when Tristano had rested for thirty days in great solace, love for the beautiful Isotta the Blonde began to prick his heart so sharply he could hardly bear it. It was for that reason that he took leave of King Artù, Queen Ginevara, Sir Lancilotto, and all the knights of the Tavola Ritonda. All the knights and ladies kept him good company for pleasure's sake for more than three leagues outside the city; then afterwards, when they parted, the people all knelt down and prayed that God would give him a long and happy life, because it was he who had defended the Tavola Ritonda and restored all the knights.

When Tristano had said good-bye he went on, riding with Alcardo until they came to the country of Cornovaglia and the castle at Cornasin. Here Tristano was received with great honor because the people loved him more than they loved King Marco. Then, through Alcardo, Tristano made known his return to Isotta, the sister of his heart. The king, receiving Alcardo, honored him greatly, and soon Alcardo found the opportunity to tell Isotta that Tristano was back.

Hearing this news made her rejoice and flower like a tree in the springtime. At once she arranged it that Tristano could come to her disguised as a priest to confess her. And when the two loyal lovers were together again, as they had desired to be for such a long time, each one embraced the other. With their arms around each other they went to lie on a rich and noble bed, and here they began to take great joy of each other, not sleeping all that night until morning.

When day came, the ladies of the castle called for Isotta as was their custom, and waited outside her door until half-tierce. The king, when he saw that Isotta did not get up, was very surprised. He went to her chamber and opened the door, and saw Isotta and Tristano sleeping. He at once turned away and summoned forty knights to arm themselves and take Isotta and Sir Tristano. He imprisoned one in one tower, the other in another, and swore that he would never let them out.

And know that when the news had spread throughout the land that Tristano was in prison, King Artù and all the knights errant thought of

nothing else but how to set him free. Tristano was imprisoned thus for seven months. Now the tale stops telling about Sir Tristano, and we will speak of a worthy knight errant who arrived in Cornovaglia and, through his prowess, set Tristano free.

LXXXIX.

The story tells here, my lords, how a knight errant of the fellowship of King Artù who was riding in search of adventure through the kingdom of Cornovaglia came to the castle of Dinasso the seneschal. Dinasso received him with great honor, gladly welcoming him. In the morning, as he was getting ready to go on his way, he looked toward the city of Tintoile and, seeing how beautiful it was, asked who maintained it. Dinasso told him that it was under the lordship of King Marco of Cornovaglia.

Then the knight, who was Prezzivale lo Galese, remembered Tristano. At once he asked Dinasso if Tristano were in prison there, as it had been told. Then Sir Dinasso, who was a perfect friend to Sir Tristano, began to weep mightily, saying that indeed it was true that here was imprisoned the flower of courtesy and virtue of all the knights in the world. Prezzivale stood thinking a little, and afterwards asked Dinasso, "Could I in some way call this King Marco outside and joust with him?"

Dinasso answered yes, because every Thursday morning the king went to amuse himself along the shore, holding fine jousts. Then Prezzivale decided to stay there, and swore he would never leave that kingdom until he saw Tristano out of prison and free.

He stayed at the castle for four days, until the morning that King Marco, attended by ten knights, rode outside the walls to amuse himself. At this, Prezzivale waited no longer, but armed himself at once and also had Dinasso and three of his nephews armed and provided with disguised insignia, and rode out to the king.

When he drew near, Prezzivale presented himself and demanded a joust. Then one of the knights, who was called Sir Falcone, accepted the challenge. When they rode against each other Prezzivale struck him very courteously and sent him to the ground. Dinasso had told him that this was not the king, so he asked for a second joust; he defeated Sir Adriette and two other knights, then remounted and challenged the king. Marco, seeing that he josted so courteously, armed himself at once and rode against him. Dinasso

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handed Prezzivale a great, strong lance with a very sharp point, saying, "Be comforted, knight, for this is the king, through whom Tristano can be delivered."

Then the two men rode against each other, and the king hit Prezzivale, though not hard enough to break his lance. Prezzivale hit the king with such force that he broke two ribs in his chest and sent him off his horse badly wounded. Then he unsheathed his sword, saying, "King Marco, of two choices make one: either release Tristano from prison at once, or resign yourself to death. I would have you know that I am Prezzivale lo Galese, and the others you see with me are four of the best knights King Artù has in his train. My lord King Artù has sent us here for no other purpose than to set Tristano free."

King Marco, hearing this and seeing how things were, called Adriette and gave him the key, commanding him to let Tristano out of prison. He did so, but not very willingly.

Tristano then arrayed himself in robes of delicate colors, mounted a palfrey and came before Prezzivale, greeting him courteously and thanking him with great warmth.

Then Prezzivale said to Tristano, "I ask you a boon." And Tristano said, "Ask anything you please."

Prezzivale responded, "Give me your glove."

Tristano gave it to him, and Prezzivale said, "Here are King Marco and Adriette. Now I ask that you make them try out the prison where they kept you."

Then they went back to the city where Tristano imprisoned the king and Adriette, and set Isotta free. Prezzivale stayed with them twelve days, then took his leave. Then Queen Isotta begged Tristano to take her out of Cornovaglia and bring her to Gioiosa Guardia, as he had promised before. Tristano, seeing that this was truly the queen's will, and that she so much wanted to see Gioiosa Guardia, had himself equipped with gold and silver, good horses and armor, and many fine clothes of silken cloth. He told Dinasso to let the king and Adriette out of prison after ten days.

Tristano and Isotta, with Brandina and Alcardo, went by the main road and arrived at the kingdom of Sobicio. Here Tristano had a monk's robe made and wore it over his armor, in order to proceed more secretly.

After they rode thus for a few days over the plain they came to the kingdom of Longres and crossed the great plain of Lutrinoro. There, one morning, they encountered a fully armed knight. When the knight saw the lady, who happened to be riding in front, he greeted her courteously and bowed to her. The lady returned his greeting gently and well, as she ought to do. Then the knight began to gaze and stare at the lady, saying to himself that he had never seen such a rare and lovely creature.

When Tristano rode up in his monk's disguise, the knight said, "Bold man,

by my faith, you are not wise to have a lady so graceful and beautiful under your guard, for I do not know of any knight so honorable that he would not take her away from you. And I tell you this much: if you go through the great forest of Polones, she will surely be seized. That is nothing to marvel at, for she is so beautiful, graceful, and charming, truly if she came of a high lineage she would be more beautiful than any other woman, except Queen Isotta and Queen Ginevara."

Then Tristano answered him, "Knight, go on your way. Whoever takes her from me will have to be stronger than I am."

And the knight said, "By my faith, I do not know of any knight who would not be stronger than you are at deeds of arms, for even if you are strong and well made, you would have neither the skill nor the spirit for fighting."

"By my faith," said Tristano, "just because we must obey the rules of our order, you knights hold us in too much contempt. This habit does not rob me of my strength or my heart's courage."

Know that the knight was much troubled by those words, and this was because the lady pleased him so much and so delighted him that he would gladly pick a fight with the monk in order to take her away from him. Then he said, "I believe, O servant of God, that this must be the wife of one of your friends, and I am a knight errant who, out of reverence for your habit, will accompany you through all this savage land. And I want you to know that I will treat the lady as if she were the wife of King Artù himself."

Sir Tristano, recognizing that the offer was made because the knight desired Isotta and did not want to leave them, said to him, "Knight, go on your way; I do not need your escort. I would rather go on alone than be badly attended, and if any knight does or says anything to me, I will know how to answer him. For no other reason do I have this shield, helmet, and lance carried by these two squires."

Then the knight, seeing that the monk did not want his company, spoke to him and said, "By my faith, the helmet and shield will do you little good. You are doing a villainous and shameful thing, for it is not suitable that anyone in religious orders escort a lady, especially one like this. Tell me at once who this lady is, and who you have stolen her from, for surely I ought to know. And where do you think you are going?"

"By my faith," said Tristano, "You neither ought to know nor shall you know who she is, or where she came from, or where she is going, you may be sure of that. Do the best you can or expect the worst, for you want to be a guardian when you have not been asked, and give trouble in things that don't concern you, and help that is not needed."

Then the knight said, "Surely, monk, you answer roughly, for by my faith, such words would be too much from Sir Tristano of Liones, who is the best knight in the world. But you anger me such a little I will pay no attention to you, neither to your cape nor to your habit, rather I will throttle you,

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you are so insolent. Now leave the lady at once; go on your way and do something else."

Tristano answered him and said, "In good faith I swear to you I will not leave her with you, not for your threats or all your pride. This would be too much, by my faith, from Lancilotto del Lago, who is the flower of all knights errant. Don't think that against such an insult I hold my profession worth a penny."

Then he summoned his two squires and laced his helmet on his head, took his shield on his arm and gripped his lance, saying, "Sir knight, if you want to pick a quarrel with me, I can do no less than this, for my rule and God command it. That is, Cristo permits it, and says, 'Help yourself, and I will then help you.'

The knight laughed loudly at these words. He knew he had done wrong to put the monk into such a temper, but the beautiful lady pleased him so very much that he could do nothing else. He said, "Servant of God, my conscience warns me against such villainy, but my will compels me to take this beautiful lady. If you will give her to me without a fight, I will be very grateful, but if you won't, I will take her by force."

Tristano answered him, smiling: "As for the sin, freely I pardon you and stand ready to give you penance. Now to the proof of it, for I challenge you."

The knights rode apart, then turned to strike two such great blows that their lances shattered, but neither bent the other over his saddlebow. When they had run the course, they each unsheathed a sword and began a cruel, heavy battle with mighty blows. They fought so hard that their armor was becoming all bent and broken.

In the second assault their flesh grew livid with blood and bruises and their horses could no longer stand. Each one marvelled greatly at the strength of the other, and the knight said to himself, "Alas, evil monk of ill fortune! What a waste to give yourself to God! How can you have so much strength?"

And Tristano said to himself, "Alas, lord God, what misfortune has sent me today to encounter this knight?"

As they fought on in this way, dealing great blows, it happened that the knight's sword fell out of his hand. At once, Tristano called to Alcardo, saying, "Take this sword and give it to the knight."

Alcardo dismounted at once and took the sword by its point, lifting it up for the knight to take. As the knight reached for the sword he recognized Alcardo, knowing him for the squire who had been at Camellotto with Tristano when he had fought Sir Lasancis. Then he said, "Valet, valet, alas for courtesy's sake, tell me the truth. Were you at Camellotto with Sir Tristano when he fought Sir Lasancis? Tell me, for courtesy's sake."

"Yes, I was there," said Alcardo.

Then the knight began to weep and sigh mightily, saying, "And is it true, valet, that Sir Tristano is in prison as they say, kept there by King Marco?"

And Alcardo said, "Who are you, sir, that you ask so strongly?"
The knight answered and said, "Truly, I am a knight who loves Tristano very, very much, and I am now on my way to Cornovaglia either to set him free, if God be with me, or to die in the attempt. I am called Lancilotto del Lago."

When Sir Tristano heard that this was Lancilotto del Lago he came forward at once and embraced him tightly saying, "Knight, many thanks, but you need go no farther, for here I am, sir, your Tristano, freed by the great prowess of good Sir Prezzivale."

At that, the knights let fall their swords, unlaced their helmets, and together showed the greatest joy in the world, and so did the beautiful Isotta. Then Tristano took off his cape, and they went to a nearby castle called Garbrano. Here Isotta cured the knights' wounds, for both of them were hurt. Afterwards, they got back on their horses and went on their way.

When they neared the city of Camellotto, Tristano asked Lancilotto not to reveal his travels, for he wanted to go and stay at Gioiosa Guardia. Lancilotto then rode on ahead so that Tristano would not be recognized because of him. He found King Artù waiting outside the city with all the court, very sad, because the certain news had come that Sir Amorotto and Sir Adriano had both been killed in that week.

tristan and
lancilotto

XC.

The true story tells that when Lancilotto had left Tristano and his company they came on behind him and rode thus until they came to King Artù's pavilion. Then Tristano lifted an ivory horn to his mouth and began to sound it, and by that sound he demanded a joust.

Then against him rode Sir Calvano, the son of King Lotto of Organia, and they began to fight vigorously. Sir Calvano struck Tristano such a blow that his lance shattered all to pieces, and Tristano hit him with such force and vigor that he sent him to earth, but kept his own lance in one piece. That was considered by all the knights watching to be one of the most magnificent blows on earth, because it was given between the hours of sext and nones, when Sir Calvano had three times his normal strength. This special power had been given him by the holy hermit who baptized him, and it lasted for one hour between sext and nones.

After that, Sir Tristano defeated Mordarette, the son of King Artù by

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his sister, the wife of King Lotto, and then he beat Sir Agravano and sent Sir Troiano dead to the earth. Before his lance broke he had beaten ten knights on the field.

In a little, then, Sir Lancilotto rode out to Sir Tristano, and the king and queen and all the others watched closely, thinking he was going to vindicate the shame of those ten knights. But when Lancilotto reached Tristano's side they put Isotta between them, and taking her by the hand went on their way.

They rode until they came to Gioiosa Guardia, where they were received with great honor. Here Tristano and Lancilotto knighted Alcardo and gave him the name Sir Lantris; from now on our book will call him Sir Lantris. After Lancilotto had stayed there for six days, he took leave and returned to the city of Camellotto. King Artù asked him where he had been, and who the knight and lady were that he had gone away with. Lancilotto was not willing to tell him anything then; he only said that he would tell him later. But then he told Queen Ginevara, and one night she revealed it to King Artù.

Know that one of the strongest wishes King Artù had was to see Queen Isotta, to find out if it were true that she was as beautiful as he had heard she was. In order to see her, he thought up and devised the greatest event, one which cost many barons and knights dear, because they were killed and destroyed in it. The king decided to sponsor a great tournament outside the castle at Verzeppe, because that castle was set above a very beautiful plain and surrounded by a wide river called Lago Soriano. Also, it was only twenty leagues from Gioiosa Guardia, and forty-four from Camellotto.

XCI.

In this part the story tells how one morning King Artù got up, summoned Lancilotto, and said to him, "Knight, it seems to me that we are growing lazy, for it has been more than sixteen months since we have had a tournament. That seems to me a great wrong and an insult to chivalry."

To this Lancilotto responded, "Certainly, sire, you speak the truth. It would please me very much for you to have a tournament announced wherever you would like to."

"This I will do," said the king. "And I will arrange for it to be the biggest, the finest, and the one with the most people ever made in Grande Bretagna."

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Then King Artù had the bells rung with hammers, and the trumpets and drums sounded, and had letters and messages sent to every country to announce and make known that three months from then, at the feast of Pentecost, all kings, dukes, counts, marquises, barons, princes, vavasors, and heads of families, and all knights errant and foreign knights of great reputation were to gather before the beautiful castle at Verzeppe to hold a tournament.

And every king or true son of a king was to bring the lady, be she maiden or mistress, he loved the most, with the understanding that if she were taken along the road by any single knight, he would never see her again, and the one who took her might keep her then without reproach. And whatever king or son of a king might refuse to bring his lady would be thought cowardly and vile, afraid that he could not defend himself. He would forfeit horse and harness, and would lose the respect of all the knights errant and foreign knights. To that intent the sentence was set by King Artù, and the sentence could never be removed, or lengthened by anyone else.

The sides were announced in the proclamation: that is, on one side was King Artù and all the kinsmen of the knights errant, and on the other, King Amoroldo, the King of Scozia, the King of a Hundred Knights, the King of Liones, the King of Gualagne, the Kings of Sobicio and of Ingres, and all the other kings and barons and foreign knights who should come to that assembly.

Thus did King Artù order the tournament that was to be held before the castle at Verzeppe, only that he might see Queen Isotta the Blonde. Because of this, many proud knights would be killed, because it was to be the biggest assembly ever called since King Artù had assumed the crown. And as the proclamations and messengers and envoys went out, each king and baron made ready to come as well-equipped and as honorably as he could.

Now the tale leaves this, and we turn again to Sir Tristano.

XCII.

The true story tells that the brave and courteous Sir Tristano expected to remain at Gioiosa Guardia as long as he pleased. Here he rested, and was happier and more joyful than he had ever been in his life. He found adventures in the country around, because more knights came through there than through any other place. Tristano was then twenty-eight years old. No one knew he was at Gioiosa Guardia except these three: King Artù, Queen Ginevara, and Lancilotto. The people of the castle, even though Queen Ginevara, and called Isotta, Dama Avvenante.

Tristano was their lord, did not know his real name, but called him Nobile Cavaliere, and called Isotta, Dama Avvenante.

One day when Sir Tristano was riding through the countryside alone he came to the Fountain of Cuparia, where he dismounted to rest. After a little, here came the Beast Graxisanti to drink. She was very tired because the courteous Sir Palamidesso had been pursuing her; but as soon as she had drunk she ran back into the forest.

At that, there came a knight who was called Breus senza Pietà. When Breus saw Tristano he shouted out thus: "Who are you, knight?" And Tristano replied that he was a knight from a foreign country.

Know that Breus had this custom: whenever he met a knight he shouted out like this and showed himself at once. If the knight responded timidly or with a shaking voice, Breus said, "This is for me," and at once attacked him vigorously. But if the knight answered fearlessly then Breus said, "Not for me," and rode away at once.

Now he went to let his horse drink. At that moment the courteous Palamidesso rode up, and as he reached the fountain, he called out loudly, "Knights, have either of you seen the Beast Graxisanti pass by here?"

Then Tristano, who saw immediately by his insignia that this was his enemy Palamidesso, answered to make him angry and said, "Certainly, knight, we saw her very plainly. Even so, we don't want to tell you which way she went, for we are just as anxious to go on this hunt as you are."

Palamidesso replied, "By my faith, sir, it is not courteous of you to want to join my hunt, for I would rather fight her myself than accept such companionship."

At that Breus spoke up and said to Palamidesso, "Sir Knight who wants no companions in your hunt, it is in just such a situation that the one who wants all loses all. Be careful that nothing happens to you like happened to King Marco of Cornovaglia, who did not want anyone to share the beautiful Isotta with him. Now the word is everywhere that the bold and courteous Sir Tristano has taken her and led her away. At least so it is said

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Palamidesso

around here, but nobody knows where she is for sure, and King Marco is still in prison himself."

Then Palamidesso was greatly dismayed and said, "And how, sir, was Tristano delivered out of King Marco's prison?"

"Said Breus, "Truly, it was through the prowess of Sir Prezzivale lo Galles, by my faith," said Palamidesso, "I am very happy about it, for it is a reasonable and just thing that the most beautiful woman in the world be with the boldest knight in the world. She was badly matched with King Marco. Now I will leave the entire hunt to you, because I do not expect to stop looking until I find out where the courteous Sir Tristano and the beautiful Isotta might be."

While they stood there speaking thus, a squire rode up, in great haste and covered with sweat. When he reached the great fountain, Tristano asked him the news, saying, "Valet, where do you come from?"

"My lord," said the boy, "I am a vassal of King Artù, from whom I bring the news to you and all knights errant and all foreign knights that in the beautiful month of May there will be a tournament before the castle at Verzeppe, and that every king or true son of a king must bring his lady or his mistress, the one he loves the most." And he told them the conditions as they were written above. "This is the news I bring, and I ask that you make it known to others just as I told it to you, and tell them not to keep it a secret from anyone." And at that, the squire rode on his way.

Then Palamidesso said to the two other knights, "My lords, at a good hour did I come to this place, for here I found news that delights me greatly about King Artù's tournament and about Sir Tristano's being delivered out of King Marco's hands!"

As they were talking thus there came a worthy knight who was called Sir Briobris. When Palamidesso saw him he rode toward him at once and demanded a joust. Each one struck the other with his lance, and Briobris knocked Palamidesso down, horse and all. When Breus saw him make such a noble strike he spurred his horse and began to go on his way in a great hurry, so that Briobris went after him, intending to make an end of him. Thus Breus fled and Briobris pursued him until they encountered three knights who were Breus's mortal enemies: one was Prezzivale, another was Astore di Mare, and the third was Sir Arecco. When Breus recognized the three knights, he thought he was dead. In order to slip out of their hands he devised this subtlety: he began to cry out to them loudly, saying, "Sir knights, for the sake of courtesy and the honor of chivalry, help me and don't let me be killed by this most scurrilous knight in the world, who says he is called Breus sanza Pietà!"

Then Sir Astore came forward saying, "Knight, have no fear, for by my faith there is not one of the three of us you won't find willing to put him to death, for Breus is our mortal enemy."

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At that, Sir Briobris rode up, and seeing Breus with the three knights surprised that they had taken him into custody. But suddenly Sir Arecco came against Briobris, thinking all the time he was Breus, and each struck the other with great force. It happened that Sir Briobris beat Sir Arecco and then defeated Sir Astore di Mare, and when he jostled with Prezzivale the two of them went to earth with their horses. When Breus saw the four knights all overthrown, he waited for nothing, but rode among them striking them with his horse's chest and feet and with the lance he held in his hand, shouting and saying, "Aha, evil knights, and therefore I want to take you!"

In this way he wounded each one of them somehow, but as he looked around he saw that Sir Arecco had remounted. Then he dared not stay, but began to retreat at great speed, and got out of there as if he were being chased by a bolt of lightning.

Then Briobris stood up and said to the others, "Sir knights, you are much to blame. You certainly make a great mistake to come to the defense of a person such as this Breus sanza Pietà, because the way he lives is a shame and a dishonor to all knights errant."

"What, knight?" said Prezzivale. "Was that Breus who just did this and then fled away?"

"Yes, it was, by my faith," said Briobris; "it was certainly he." Then the knights were all confused, and, recognizing Briobris, they told him how they had been deceived. And afterwards, with a good laugh, they got on their horses and rode back to the city of Camellotto.

Now we turn back to Tristano, who had stayed at the fountain all alone because when Briobris went chasing Breus, Palamidesso had pursued Briobris to vindicate his shame, for Briobris had knocked him down horse and all, even though Palamidesso was by far a better knight than he.

So Tristano went back to Gioiosa Guardia, returning to Queen Isotta all happy and cheerful to tell her about the way the tournament would work which King Artù had ordered to be held before the beautiful castle at Verzeppe.

XCIII.

Tristano and
Dinadano

After Tristano had gone back to Gioiosa Guardia, he woke to find the next day bright and clear. He armed himself, got on his horse, and went straight to the fountain where he had been the day before. Here he waited to see if any knight might come by who could tell him for certain about the plans for the tournament. When he had been there for quite a while, an armed knight rode into the clearing. Seeing Tristano, he greeted him saying, "Who are you, knight?"

And Tristano replied, "Truly I am a knight errant resting beside this fountain. But who are you, that have asked my name?"

Then he said, "I am a knight searching for a knight I cannot find. Every day I meet knights, but never the one I am looking for. Truly, sir, I am called Dinadano. The one I am looking for is a knight recently come to this country, and he is my great friend and my lord. He is called Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia."

Know that this was the same Sir Dinadano who had loved Tristano so much before, because Tristano had saved him from an evil death at the hands of Sir Lancilotto during the defense of Gioiosa Guardia. Tristano also loved Dinadano very much, and loved to tease him.

Seeing him now made Tristano very happy, but he replied just to irritate him a little, "Knight, you say you want to know my name, and I say that I am a knight errant."

Then Dinadano got very angry and said to Tristano, "Knight, where do you get such nerve to talk back to your betters? For, by my faith, I will find out your name whether you like it or not."

"And how, sir?" said Tristano. "Would you force me to tell it?"

"I will force you and dishonor you," answered Dinadano, "and I will drown you in this fountain for saying I am deaf."

Then Tristano, to make him even angrier, said, "By my faith, when I first saw you it seemed to me that you were a wise knight, but now on the contrary: you look like a fool. Has love made you forgetful, that you want to fight with me because I won't tell you my name?"

Then Dinadano replied, "Knight, fighting is not a bit crazy,²⁶ because in a fight a man either wins or loses, but in love he can do nothing but lose."

"What?" said Tristano. "Aren't you a lover? Yet you told me that you were a knight errant."

"But I am not an arrant fool, and as such I hold the man who is hindered by love," said Dinadano.

"By my faith," replied Tristano, "It was not very long ago that a knight who was never embarrassed by love happened nevertheless to fall in love

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with the lady Losanna of the Torre Antica. Because of this infatuation he grew angry with his companion, and was wounded by him in a fight. This companion was called Tristano of Cornovaglia. Perhaps you remember hearing about this?"

Dinadano answered and said, "That is who I am looking for."

"By my faith," said Tristano, "I saw him just the other evening near the cross roads at Croce. I jousting with him, and beat him twice, and he was

also defeated by two knights near the water mill."

Dinadano, hearing this, grew very angry. He lost control of himself and struck Tristano on the chest with the butt of his lance, saying, "What evil loss has occurred? Is Sir Tristano such a knight to let you beat him thus? For, by my faith, if you were with Lancilotto and ten other knights errant he would not give way to you, for he is the most redoubtable knight in the world. I don't know of any knight who could make Tristano turn his shield in fear; he has accomplished more adventures in thirteen years than other knights have managed in a hundred."

Then Tristano said, "Then I must be mistaken, for the knight of whom I speak is now well over eighty."

"Mistaken and foolish I hold you," said Dinadano, "And whoever has anything to do with you."

Then he left and rode on toward Gioiosa Guardia, and Tristano let him go, quietly staying where he was.

While Tristano lingered by the fountain, two more knights errant came along: one was Palamidesso and the other was Gariette. When they came together, Sir Palamidesso challenged Tristano to joust. They spurred against each other and, at the lowering of the lances, delivered two great blows. Palamidesso broke his lance on Tristano, but Tristano knocked him to earth, and then did the same to Sir Gariette. When Tristano had beaten Palamidesso, he did not let him remount, but demanded that he tell his name, so Palamidesso told him.

Tristano thought a little, then said, "Palamidesso, have you any mortal enemy in the world?"

"By my faith," said Palamidesso, "I don't believe I have a single one, except for a bold knight who is called Tristano of Cornovaglia. Our quarrel was over a lady who is now in his power."

"Would you kill him," asked Tristano, "if you could?"

"By my faith, no," said Palamidesso, "for I would like very much that he become my friend, since as his enemy I have nothing but dishonor. But I am sure he would never make such an agreement with me, for gladly would he kill me. Right now, in fact I am looking for Sir Tristano, for I have been told that he is in this neighborhood, and I think he may be staying at Gioiosa Guardia."

"When I was jousting with Sir Lancilotto the other day, he said to me,

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'Now, Palamidesso, Gioiosa Guardia is worth more than any other place in the world, for it holds a noble treasure.' Therefore I imagine that this treasure is Sir Tristano and the beautiful Isotta, because those two are the ones who excel all others in the world in beauty, prowess, and courtesy."

When he heard these words, Tristano allowed Palamidesso to remount and then let his lance fall, since Palamidesso had broken his. Then he spoke in this way: "Palamidesso, Palamidesso, here is this Tristano you have been searching for. Come and fight me, if you want to. If not, I am willing to stop because of those words you spoke. I am your enemy, but I am ready to make peace with you. Still, if it would please you to fight, I am ready to do battle with you. You may choose whichever pleases and delights you the most."

Palamidesso replied, "Surely, Tristano, the man who could have you for a friend would be foolish to want you for an enemy. Therefore I ask that there be peace and good friendship between us."

It was in this way that the two barons who had been enemies for a long time reached an accord. Gariette was very glad of their reconciliation, and asked Palamidesso to say which knight seemed boldest to him, either Tristano or Lancilotto.

Palamidesso replied, "I have tried them both, but it would be villainy to choose between them in the presence of one of them. Still, by my faith as a knight, I will tell you the truth, as it seems to me: there is as much similarity between Lancilotto and Tristano as there is between silver and gold."

Then Tristano asked the two knights to stop this discussion and be his guests at Gioiosa Guardia. The knights then rode in that direction, and when they arrived at the main palace they found the lady, Queen Isotta, all happy and joyous, attended by ladies and maidens. When Tristano told her how he and Palamidesso had made peace, she was very glad of it, and welcomed the knights with much honor. Then the tables were set out, and they all sat down to eat.

As they were eating, a squire came into the hall saying to Tristano, "Sir, there is a knight errant outside who wants to come in, and because the gate was not opened as quickly as he wished he said he was going to burn the castle and whoever held it. He is staying in the town outside, and he carries this insignia."

Tristano, when he heard these words, began to laugh out loud, saying, "By my faith, we are going to entertain our Sir Dinadano." Then he said to the queen, "We will go into the next room and you send for Dinadano, but don't let him recognize you. Then get him into a conversation about love and listen well to what he says, for he will certainly make you laugh and give us all great pleasure."

Then the queen sent a graceful squire to summon him, and when the

squire came before Dinadano, he said, "Sir knight, the lady of the castle asked if you would please come and speak with her."

"Pretty darling friend, I believe you must be wrong, or that you have badly understood your errand, for I am sure she would not send for me."

"Sir," said the squire, "do come to her, for I am certain she sent me for you. She is a lady who gladly honors all knights errant."

Dinadano said, "I'm coming." Then he entered the fortress on foot, because no one entered there on horseback except Tristano or Lancilotto. When Dinadano came into the palace, the queen honored him greatly and had him sit down beside her, treating him with great courtesy and engaging him in conversation. After they had eaten, they went to sit beside the great fire that the season made necessary, and the queen said, "Sir knight, as God gives you good fortune, what is your name?"

He answered at once, "Truly, lady, I am called Dinadano. I don't know if you have ever heard of me."

"I have certainly heard of you!" said the queen. "And it wasn't long ago that I heard you loved a beautiful lady for whose sake you rode through the world doing deeds of arms."

"Lady," declared Dinadano, "surely the one who told you that deceived you, or you did not hear him well, for love has never so afflicted my heart that I would wear myself out in deeds of arms. It was not long ago that I became arrogant because of love, but it was the wine that made me do it. I fell in love with a lady and because of her I grew angry with my great friend Sir Tristano, and he gave me such a blow that I nearly died. That was the first time and it will be the last that ever I was troubled by love."

"What!" said the queen. "If you find a lovely, noble lady who loves you, will you not return her love?"

And Dinadano answered, "I promise you, such foolishness will not do for me. The one who loves uses his life in vain!"

Then Isotta said, "Knight, you are very wise, and such wisdom cannot exist without prowess."

Dinadano replied, "By my faith, I know of no knight who could make me turn my shield in fear."

"Truly, by my honor," said Isotta, "it is good to see you, and I hold your coming worth much, for I have strong need of your great prowess. I am sure that you will counsel and defend me well."

"Lady," said Dinadano, "I have already righted many wrongs, and I have defended and saved many ladies and maidens, since for no other reason am I a knight errant except to defend right against wrong. So if I can be of use here in that way, command me boldly."

Then the queen said, "Dinadano, three leagues from here there is a very bold knight who, against all that is right, demands tribute from me. So,

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Isotta

if you are willing, I want you to free me from his demands."

Dinadano, hearing these words, believed they were true and did not answer. Then Isotta said, "Knight, will you answer me? Will you help me, as you said you are supposed to do, and as you say you have done in the past?"

Dinadano said, "Lady, you say I should fight for you against a bold knight. Lady, surely, talk is cheap and fighting is very dangerous. The first prayer I make every morning is that God will not send any knights of too great boldness against me, for by such as those I have been many times disgraced. I am very dear to those who brought me up in this world, and I don't want to get mixed up in anything that might do me harm."

Then the queen said, "Dinadano, for God's sake, don't abandon me in my need, or to so great a danger! From now on I will be your servant, and you may command me however you please!"

Dinadano replied, "For such words I will do worse than ever, and if you say any more to me, I will leave this fortress at once, this evening! You say that I should fight and put myself in danger of death for your sake, but don't think I will be such a fool. For if I lose, I will bear all the damage, and that will not do you any good."

"Then you are not as bold as you said?" Isotta asked.

"I am as bold as any other knight," said Dinadano, "but I am still suffering from a blow I got the other day."

Then the queen said, "Noble sir, tonight I will make you a good and precious bath, then your pain will soon go away. Then when you are cured you can fight for my sake."

Dinadano replied, "By my faith, such words will make the pain come back. I know for certain that if I were well and happy I would not fight unless I could see I had a big advantage. But now I want to conserve my strength and not fight with anyone until the tournament at Verzeppé, for I am a knight in whom King Artù has great hopes."

The queen said, "Dinadano, the hour is late. If you please, let us go lie down, so we might take great pleasure and delight with each other."

Dinadano replied, "Whoever vexes himself with such pleasures abuses his body and damages his soul. Such merchandise is not for me."

And the queen answered him, "Sir Dinadano, don't say anything more, because with such words as those you will make me fall out of love, you'll destroy all desire."

"Lady, you be quiet, for it is my words that glorify and chase all sorrow away!"

At that point, the queen commanded to be brought in a costly steel helmet which had a noble crest of azure silk and was engraved with two fine golden coronets. Then she said to Dinadano, "I give you this elegant helmet, that you may wear it at the assembly for my sake."

"Lady," said Dinadano, "This I will gladly do, if only I may keep it until

the end of the tournament, so that no other knight, on seeing it, might take it away from me for love of you. Because, lady, lady, I have no wish to die for the sake of your infatuation."

And Queen Isotta: "Truly, Dinadano, if you like I will come with you." "By my faith, by my faith, don't do it!" said Dinadano. "Because I have decided not to buy trouble. If you must come, I will ride ahead of you, so that if any knight says anything I will not have to defend you; on the contrary, I will say you are not under my guard."

And Isotta said, "Alas, sir, that would be to your great shame!"

And Dinadano replied, "Shame is a bad thing, but a wound is worse." At that, their conversation ended. The queen had Dinadano led to rest in a luxurious room, then Tristano, Palamidesso, and Gariette returned to the great hall to have the biggest laugh in world. They ordered that the room be locked from the outside in the morning, to make Dinadano think that he had been taken prisoner.

When morning came, Dinadano got up, armed himself, and went to the door of the room to go out. Finding it locked, he called out in a loud voice, and at that Isotta came to a window and said, "Sir knight, you are in my prison and you will never get away if first you do not swear to do battle for me against all other knights."

Dinadano answered and said, "Alas, lady, you said you would not be false, but I can well see that if others are bad you are far, far worse, and thus you have deceived me falsely."

As Isotta and Dinadano stood talking thus, a squire came up who said to Isotta, "Lady, three knights errant have arrived, and one is called Sir Tristano, another Palamidesso, and the other is Gariette. Come and greet them."

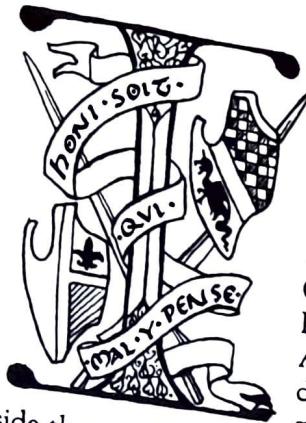
Dinadano, hearing this, said to the squire, "Alas, valet, for courtesy's sake, ask these three knights to come to me."

The squire did so, and the three knights came to him, and Dinadano begged Tristano to deliver him from the hands of this false and evil woman. Then Isotta opened the door, and when Dinadano came out of the room he put his hand to his sword as if he would strike the queen.

Then Tristano pretended to become very angry, saying, "Alas, my dear Sir Dinadano, I did not know that I had offended you so much that you would do me such a great dishonor. Not only did you strike me at the fountain day before yesterday, but now you speak and act villainously to Queen Isotta, and have not a care for my love."

Then Dinadano thought a little, and when he truly realized that this was Queen Isotta, he became very sorry, and threw himself down on his knees, saying to the queen, "Highest lady, for God's sake and for pity's sake, pardon me. For, by my faith, I never recognized you, and I am sure that Tristano has made you do what you have done. God will surely take vengeance on him on my behalf!"

At that point, they all had the biggest laugh in the world, and everyone took great pains to console Dinadano. Their joy was great, and all four of them decided to go to the tournament together, and take with them the beautiful queen, Isotta the Blonde.



XCIV.

In this part the story tells that when the time came appointed for the tournament, King Artù, Queen Ginevara, Sir Lancilotto and all the kinsmen of King Bando, King Lotto, King Pellinoro, King Allielle, King Agalone, and the king of Orbellanida, along with all the knights errant and their kin, gathered at the castle of Verzeppe. On the other side there gathered twelve crowned kings and foreign knights from twelve countries.

Meanwhile, at Gioiosa Guardia, Sir Tristano called Palamidesso, Dinadano, and Gariette to his side, saying to them, "My lords, my lords, we ought to be on our way to this assembly, and Queen Isotta with us. For myself, I have decided to go as secretly as I can and enter myself as a foreigner on the side of the King of Irlanda, so I can prove myself against all the knights errant. For I am not now a knight errant or a member of the Tavola Riton-assembly, and since she is a foreign lady, it seems right to me that I enter myself as a foreign knight."

Then Palamidesso, Dinadano, and Gariette said that seemed good to them, for the honor of Queen Isotta. At that they got together everything they needed in order to travel most honorably. They made some insignia all in green, and others all in black, and these banners both had on them a golden coronet for Queen Isotta's sake, in whose service they rode. Tristano also had two sets of insignia made secretly for himself. One was vermilion, with a coronet of gold for love of Queen Isotta, and the other, in her service, was her own emblem, an azure field crossed by a band of silver, each side of which was bordered with gold.

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Then the four knights armed themselves to great advantage, and Queen Isotta dressed herself in fine silken robes covered with embroidery, with buttons on the bodice and the sleeves worth more than a thousand bezants. The robes were secured with a marvellous belt made of golden wire inlaid with eight hundred precious stones, of which the least one was worth a hundred gold dinars. Then she had set on her head a crown made all of gold and set with very precious stones; it had three carbuncles set in the lower part that even in the darkest night shone with such splendor that they could light the way for 300 ladies and just as many knights (that crown was worth a good city). Finally, she put two gloves on her hands worth more than 300 bezants of gold.

Then Sir Lantris and Sir Gulistante lifted her onto a costly white palfrey covered with samite and cloth of silk all embroidered with birds and graceful deer, with a saddle of crystal and ivory which was covered with gold and precious stones.

Dinadano and Gariette rode in front, then after them, preceding the queen, came sixty young men dressed in very beautiful silken clothes of fine cloth in beautiful colors. They were all young and unarmed, and all wore azure caps embroidered with a golden crown. Then came sixty officers of the court in silk vestments, elegant robes of azure with golden coronets embroidered on them. After them rode the beautiful, well-born Isotta, between Sir Lantris and Sir Gulistante. Behind the queen rode sixty damsels all dressed in the elegant robes of a religious order, and in the rear rode Sir Tristano and Sir Palamidesso.²⁷

They rode thus until they reached the lovely plain of Falonorsa. There they met along the way the King of a Hundred Knights who was riding to the tournament accompanied by 880 bold foreign knights. When the king saw Dinadano, riding in front, wearing that helmet with its graceful crest, he challenged him to joust. Dinadano, who was feeling proud because of the good company surrounding him, rode forward. At once they attacked each other, and traded two strong blows.

Dinadano broke his lance on the king, but the king struck Dinadano so skillfully that he knocked him off his horse. Then the king unsheathed his sword, saying, "Knight, either you give me that helmet, or I will cut off your head."

Then Dinadano, without another word, unlaced the helmet and tossed it to the king. Then he said, "As long as you can be its owner, I won't be."

The king, who was very courteous, said to Dinadano, "Knight, don't anger yourself too much about this helmet, for if you please, for courtesy's sake, I want to give it back to you."

"Don't do me this courtesy," said Dinadano, "because since the thing pleased you so much, it will be likely to please another who will do worse by me than you have done. I have a cool heart; I don't know why my head made

me act so warmly. But, since all evil comes from the head, this helmet might have made me break all my bones."

Then the king commanded his squire to take the helmet, but at these words, Tristano came forward, saying, "Valet, valet, don't touch that helmet!"

"Why shouldn't he touch it?" asked the king. "Have I not won it fairly?"

"Yes, you have," answered Tristano. "But now I want to win it back from you myself."

Then without further exchange they separated and began to fight. The king struck Tristano a great blow on his shield, but Tristano hit him and sent him sprawling to the ground. Afterwards Tristano picked up the helmet to give it back to Dinadano, and the king remounted and went on his way.

But Dinadano told Tristano that he would in no way wear that helmet any more, and said that it was not made for him.

Tristano said, "How can you say you won't wear it, when you have taken it and promised Queen Isotta that you will?"

Dinadano answered, "If I promised her, I now unpromise her. I don't want such trouble because of her helmet, not I! She doesn't come forward to take the blows herself, but just laughs and mocks, it seems to me, when someone else is beaten. What an evil thing the city of Londres did when it sent her to Cornovaglia, and you when you took her there, and King Marco when he received her. I well believe you will all live to regret it."

Tristano asked, "Why should King Marco regret it? Don't you think the queen is good enough for him?"

"Yes, she would have been," said Dinadano, "except that evil intervened. For if he had her first, you now hold and possess her, thus wronging King Languis and robbing King Marco. So I tell you you aren't going to force me to wear others' baubles against my will. Wear it yourself. You defend it better than I do."

At these words, Tristano was silent, but Palamidesso said, "Dinadano, courtesy of tongue costs little and is worth much. Therefore I beg you, speak courteously, and don't say evil things about others, because such rudeness does nothing but shame the speaker."

"Do you know how it is, Palamidesso? You talk big," said Dinadano, "because you have made peace with Tristano. But I am sure this peace will not last long, since you have not made it for love, but out of fear and because you are in love with Queen Isotta, who as it happens loves no one at all except Sir Tristano."

Then Palamidesso became so quiet and as small as he could. And Gariette said, "By my faith, Dinadano, Palamidesso is not to blame if he reminds you that you ought to be courteous of speech."

Dinadano answered him at once: "Yes, by God, and you are a courteous guest. You showed it well in the forest of Lionferero, when you killed the

"unarmed vassal just because he did not want you to rape his daughter."

Then Gariette hung his head and said nothing more.

Know that Dinadano was so unhappy because he had been beaten in front of the queen. Tristano, to make him feel better, took his helmet and gave him his, which had a golden lion cub for a crest, saying, "Dinadano, for courtesy's sake, guard this helmet well, for it was given to me by the most desirable, prettiest damsel in the world, she for whose sake more than twenty bold knights have died."

When he heard this, Dinadano did not want to take the helmet, but rather said, "By my faith, I am not prepared to seek trouble, because I get into enough without looking for it, and I certainly will not bear the penalty of another's wrongs." Then he took back his own helmet and, drawing his sword, sliced off the crest, saying, "Bad luck to the gaudy thing and to the one who gives it!" And the queen, laughing heartily, said, "Dinadano, you are not wise and you do not act courteously to destroy the gifts given you by your betters."

And Dinadano replied, "Lady, lady, if I am not wise, teach me; you have learned so well for yourself. Well it shows how wise you are that you have left King Marco and the kingdom of Cornovaglia, and go now through the world playing jokes on people. But it is nothing to marvel at that you've learned this in Cornovaglia, where the people are so gifted. The men are all cowardly, proud, and greedy, and the women are drunkards, liars, and whores—they are bartered ten to one, like baubles for money."

Then Brandina said, "Alas, Sir Dinadano, why do you speak thus against the queen, with no regard for Tristano's love?"

"Don't push me, Brandina, don't," said Dinadano, "for I know about you. You guarded Isotta for King Marco so well on board that ship that you gave Tristano the potion, and because of that, King Marco has no more happiness."

Sir Lantris said, "Dinadano, if you try to answer every word, you are trying to do too much."

"I will not answer you, Sir Lantris, for you are a new-made knight. But you will be new right up to the end, if you learn nothing more about high prowess but how to accompany the ladies."

At that point Tristano and his companions all had a good laugh, then they were quiet. As they rode across the broad plain beside the great river, they saw drifting with the current a small boat covered with black samite. In the boat was a bed on which there lay a king newly dead, and he had the iron tip of a lance embedded in his chest. In his hand there was a letter, and he was accompanied by ten noble barons.

Tristano and Palamidesso approached these men and asked what this meant. Those in the boat answered that this was a king who had been killed by a bold knight who was his vassal: "But who and where he is we cannot say. The letter he holds tells what happened; whoever opens it must do what the letter says."

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silk and decorated with cords of silk vermillion. Sir Lantris and Sir Gubstante helped Queen Isotta to dismount and led her into one of the pavilions. Then Tristano asked Agravale how the tournament would work, and whether many people were gathered yet.

"My lord," said Agravale, "truly the most important people in the world are assembled here, the greatest barons of greatest name since the Tavola was built. Tomorrow after nones the first mêlée will begin, one for new-made knights and those of lesser reputation. You should enter this, if you want to, because you are a young knight."

Now know that Agravale spoke as he wanted to and not as he should. He did not know that this knight was Tristano, and so he did not know about his prowess and his courage. Be assured that neither great size nor great age makes a bold knight, but rather it is good courage and a bold heart along with nobility and courtesy — these are the things that make a knight proud and brave and noble and secure. Therefore, when a man just starting out has the help and power of a proud heart, the blood which swells through his heart gives him comfort, courage, and natural power.

As they stood speaking thus, Tristano said to Agravale, "Then tell me, as God may save you, where does King Artù hold his court?"

"Sire," said Agravale, "King Artù and all the knights errant are staying in the castle of Verzeppé, except for Sir Lancilotto and his kinsmen, who have raised three pavilions on the field, in the great meadow. They are the guardians of the field."

"Queen Ginevara and the other ladies of the knights errant will all stand on the walls of the castle to watch, and all the ladies of the foreign knights will be on the great wooden stand built in the center of the field. King Artù is well prepared to hold the first encounter with the first foreign knights."

"By my faith," said Sir Tristano, "King Artù's people are very fine, but they will have much to do, so many people have come against them."

Agravale asked Tristano what country he was from and Tristano replied,

"Truly, we are with the foreign lady from the country of Irlanda."

The next day a proclamation was sent through the field saying that every young knight, after eating, should arm himself and mount his horse to come to the first assembly. There were to be four assemblies in four days, and that knight who was victorious, the one who showed the greatest prowess, could take the standard which was set in the middle of the field and carry it to the winning side. The victory would be declared after the last battle on the last day; that is, the tournament having been finished, the decision would be given.

Then Palamidesso, who was very proud for Isotta's sake, stepped forward and took the letter, opening it to see what it would say. The letter said thus: "To any knight errant or foreign knight who may read this letter: the truth is that I was killed by a treacherous knight who was my sworn vassal. I was from the city of Vermiglia, and was called Arduano, king of the realm of Tuscia. Much I loved the knights errant of my household and honored chivalry; therefore, to whomever will take on himself the task of avenging my death I will give the lordship of the city of Vermiglia."

When he read the letter, Palamidesso was very saddened by what it said, because he was reluctant to leave this company. Still, he did take leave of them, thinking he would soon come back to the assembly. Then he got into the boat.

They coasted along the great river until they came to the city of Vermiglia, where they rested a little. They went on past Arnuale and came to the castle of the Saraziana, above the great port of Mortinale, eight leagues from the city of Quadro.

And there Palamidesso killed the bold knight Passauver, who had done King Arduano to death. Palamidesso was made king of the country and the province, then he left as his viceroy a knight who was called Sir Provaldino, and afterwards departed, heading straight for the piedmont to reach the tournament.

Now the story stops telling about Sir Palamidesso, who has finished his quest, and we will remind ourselves of Sir Tristano and his companions.

XCV.

The masters of the story set down that when Tristano and Palamidesso parted Tristano rode on so that in six days he came to the field where the tournament was to be. Riding through the meadow he saw there were multitudes of shelters, tents, and pavilions, and he looked for the most convenient place to pitch camp. Then a knight who was called Agravale, seeing Tristano and the lady riding so honorably, approached them and said to Tristano, "Knight, you seem to be from a foreign land. I am a knight errant, placed here by King Artù to receive visitors. If you please, you may stay near my pavilion, and I tell you it is the best place on the field."

Tristano said that pleased him very well. When he came to that place, he had set up three beautiful and costly pavilions made all of embroidered

XCVI.

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ISOTTA

Now if I am asked from what side that proclamation came, I will say first from King Artù, captain and leader of the knights errant, and from King Amoroldino of Irlanda, that is, from Sir Gulistante, captain and leader in arms of the foreign knights. These two put an official in the middle, that is, a general master of ceremonies, a man named Sir Ansalerino. He was the king of Norgales, and because of his virtue, loyalty, and wisdom, both sides had confidence in him. All the announcements and commands would come from him, and he was given the power of saying truthfully who had won and who had lost.

He had the standard set in the middle of the field. It was all vermillion with two small shields, one with the insignia of King Artù, and the other with that of young King Amoroldino. The victorious knight, he who was best of all, was to take it and carry it to the winning side, but no one was to move it or touch it without Sir Ansalerino's permission.

When the proclamation went out, all the young knights of unproved reputation armed themselves, mounted, and came to the field. Sir Gulistante and Sir Lantris helped Isotta to mount, then brought her to sit on the great wooden stand with the other foreign ladies. Queen Isotta sat in the center between Queen Vermiglia, the wife of King Amoroldino, and Queen Onia, the wife of the king of Scozia.

At that the officer, that is Sir Ansalerino, had the trumpets sounded, and the knights began to attack from both sides. Into this mêlée there entered Sir Astore di Mare, Lionello, Maraghise, Sir Adolange, Dodinello, and many other knights errant, while on the other side came King Governale, and the king of Gualagne, Dinadano, Sir Lantris, and many other foreign knights.

Tristano and Gariette stood watching, disarmed except for their swords. The knights fought in such a way that they traded great blows, broke their lances, reached for their swords—the clashing of iron blades was loud. As Tristano watched, he saw that Astore and Lionello held Dinadano and were going to kill him; then Tristano, all unarmed, rode at once to his aid, and sword in hand, saw that he was remounted.

Know that in this lesser mêlée the kinsmen of King Bando took the honors, especially Sir Lionello. At that, all the people returned to their places, and Gulistante and Lantris went to escort the queen.

And when she arrived, she made all other ladies disappear. The brightness of her lovely face made the beauties of all other women disappear, and well ladies attended her to her pavilion, and when they parted there, each one said, "Good-bye, lovely rose; you are the flower of all ever born in this world."

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"It would not be surprising if your lord, for love of you, overcame King Artú and all his men, for not only anyone embracing you, but anyone simply looking at you, ought to become very brave and very proud."

When Isotta had returned to the pavilion, the tables were set out and food was prepared, and when water had been brought for their hands they sat down to eat. As they ate, Gariette looked out and saw Palamidesso going by looking for them, and pointed him out to Sir Tristano. Tristano got up and went to meet him, taking him by the hand and leading him into the pavilion, where he disarmed and sat at the table. They all passed that night in great joy.

In the morning, the queen dressed herself in fine silken robes, new and of beautiful colors, with a crown on her head which shone with great splendor and a magnificent belt worth more than three rich castles. The two knights seated her on a palfrey covered with silk, then Palamidesso, Gariette, and Dinadano accompanied her to the stand and seated her with nine queens, who honored her greatly and had her sit in their midst.

Know that Sir Tristano did not choose to take arms that day, because he wanted to give Palamidesso the praise and the honor; he would be very pleased that his friend bore himself valiantly, and he knew that he was very famous for deeds of arms. When Palamidesso rode onto the field, he saw large numbers of knights errant and foreign knights. Most of the kinsmen of King Bando were there, except for Lancilotto, who also would not take arms that day.

The trumpets sounded once, twice, and at the third blast the knights began to joust. King Bordo, who came first, struck the King of a Hundred Knights with such force that he knocked him out of the saddle, and Sir Prezzivale defeated the King of Scozia, and Sir Calvano overcame Agravano, wounding him badly. Bold Palamidesso, accompanied by Gariette, Dinadano, and Sir Lantris, all carrying black pennons, came terrorizing knights and barons, so that Palamidesso with his great strength unhorsed Sir Calvano and Sir Briobris, and did such deeds of arms that it was marvellous to watch.

Although Palamidesso was always a proud, bold, strong knight at arms, he had never before done the half of what he did that day. This was because many times he looked toward the viewing stand where the ladies were sitting and saw the bright face of the beautiful Isotta, and every time he did, the power of his blows was doubled. Because of this, he did such deeds of arms that everyone gave way before him.

In the second assembly Palamidesso truly took all the honors, so that pretty soon Lancilotto couldn't stand it any longer. Seeing that Palamidesso was doing such deeds he armed himself at once, mounted, and entered the mêlée. The first blow he struck was at Palamidesso, and it sent him to the ground. After that Lancilotto defeated many other foreign knights; when his lance broke he drew his sword and began to strike again, and did such deeds of

arms that in a little while he had routed King Amoroldino's side.
This displeased Sir Tristano very much, because Sir Lancilotto showed
a little villainy here to take arms against tired and winded knights. Many
people still agreed that Palamidesso had won the honor of the day.

At that, each side turned back, and Sir Lantris and Sir Gulstante returned
Queen Isotta from the stand and led her to her pavilion. Palamidesso came
back very happy and joyous, strutting about, and Tristano, like a loyal knight,
and a baron without envy, gave him great praise.

When the third day came, before the tournament began again, Tristano,
and Palamidesso and their company decked themselves in green insignia and
led Queen Isotta to the ladies' viewing stand. Coming onto the meadow,
they found that King Artù, Sir Lancilotto, and all the knights errant had
already arrived, and had formed four great ranks, the least of which had
four thousand knights—all those of Grande Bretagna, Gaules, Longres, and
Organia. Queen Ginevara and all the other queens and ladies of the knightly
errant had mounted scaffolding built on the castle walls so they could watch.

On the other side was King Amoroldino and twelve other crowned kings.
The foreign knights of twelve kingdoms had formed six great troops, and
the smallest had six thousand knights.

At the sound of the trumpets, the knights began to fight. So great was
the noise of their spirited horses and the clash of steel and the shouts of
the knights that truly thunder would not have been heard. And so great
was the furor, the unhorsing of knights, the falling of horses, and the clashing
of shields that it seemed like the end of the world. So great was the smoke
of sweat from horses and knights, and so thick was the dust, that the air
was almost like a cloud, and the men could scarcely see each other.

Bold Lancilotto, who first rode out, struck Palamidesso and sent him to
earth, then sent the king of Sobicio dead to the ground, and then he over-
came King Governale. And proud Sir Tristano, who had defeated Sir Bor-
do, Prezzivale, Sir Ivano, and Sir Brunoro the Black, saw that Lancilotto
had beaten Palamidesso and approached him shouting, "Knight, guard
yourself against me!"

Then they rode toward each other. Lancilotto struck Tristano such a blow
on the shield with his lance that he made him bend over the saddlebow,
but Tristano, who was fighting like a lion, struck Lancilotto with such force
that he sent man and horse to earth. Then he immediately defeated the
king of Norgales, Sir Briobris, and Sir Lac; before his lance was broken he
had sent nine bold knights of great name to the ground.

After that, he beat the king of Nerbois; truly this assault between the two
brave knights cost Nerbois his life. Then, his lance broken, Tristano un-
sheathed his sword and did such feats of arms that the people could hardly
believe their eyes. Truly, he gave so many and such great blows that no

THE ROUND TABLE

one dared to wait for him; everyone gave way to him out of fear.
Looking around, Tristano saw that Lancilotto had not yet remounted,
because four knights surrounded him and would not let him get back on
his horse. Then Tristano the courteous struck at the four knights with the
flat of his sword until Lancilotto could remount.

When he was remounted, the battle was very great, and all the people
began to shout, "Viva! Viva! The brave knight of the green pennon! Viva
the foreign knights!"

Then King Artù's knights were all truly put to flight, and never had so
much prowess or so many amazing deeds been displayed by one knight as
when the bold and courteous Sir Tristano, in such a short time, overcame
so many knights. He even took them in his hands and threw them over
their saddlebows onto the ground. Truly, Tristano worked in many ways

to make himself felt by the kinsmen of King Bando.
King Artù, seeing that his people were all dismayed, felt great sorrow, and
anger, and in great wisdom had the gates of the castle shut so that Tristano
could not come inside. That would be too much dishonor because of the
ladies who were there.

When Tristano had conquered the field, he spurred to the castle gate, look-
ing like a fierce and savage lion. I want you to understand well that Tristano,
at that point, had done everything he could to show all the people his great
power and amazing courage, and when he found the gates locked against
him, he was greatly disturbed by it. Therefore he hung his shield on it, to
demonstrate his worth.

Then all the people cried in one voice, "Viva, viva, valorous knight! You
have silenced all the others!"

At that, Tristano returned to his pavilion, and when Agravale came back,
Tristano asked him for news about who had taken the honor and the prize
of the tournament. Agravale replied that a knight with green insignia was
the victor and had won the honor. He had done such deeds of arms that
he would be remembered always. He beat Sir Lancilotto and more than thirty-
five other knights, and he had only fought with the best and most proven
men at the tournament.

"But it seemed to me that Lancilotto knew him, because when Lancilotto
was beaten King Artù rebuked him, and he replied, 'Sire, Sire, it is no shame
to be beaten by a bolder knight than I am.'"

And know that Sir Agravale had recognized the prowess of Sir Tristano
very well, but he didn't want to say so. And Queen Isotta was very happy
and joyous seeing her lover win so much honor; she felt great self-assurance
because of it.

XCVII.

TRISTAN AND

Now the story tells that in the evening, when King Artù and Sir Lancilotto had gone back to the great palace of the fortress, the king was very disappointed and ashamed, saying, "Alas, on this very day how much have I damaged my good name? I have summoned twelve crowned kings and the knights of their kingdoms to battle, and have got nothing from it but shame. I am routed by the power of a single knight! How can there be so much prowess in one man?"

Then Lancilotto said, "You and the knights errant are very unhappy because you've received nothing but shame from this great undertaking. But if you will act on my advice, you will still come out the victor. First, tell me if you recognize the knight of the green insignia who has given us so much trouble today?"

The king said, "Truly, no, I don't recognize him, but if I could find out who he is, I would gladly give a rich castle."

Lancilotto replied, "Sire, if you will give me a castle, I will tell you the name of the knight, and if you will give me another I will tell you what to do to avoid so much shame."

The king said he would be glad to, and Lancilotto said, "Sire, now know that this knight who has done so much to conquer the field is your servant the bold Sir Tristano. He has brought with him the lovely Isotta the Blonde, for love of whom you had this tournament called."

"Ah, Lancilotto, Lancilotto," said King Artù, "Well have you earned two castles: one because you have told me the name of this knight, and the other for the counsel you will give me. Now I will double the gift if you will arrange it so I may speak with Tristano and see the beautiful blonde Isotta."

Lancilotto replied, "Certainly, sire, it seems best to me that we both talk with Tristano, and that you ask him for your sake not to take arms tomorrow, the last day, so that the Tavola Ritonda not be disgraced because of him. But truly it seems to me that Tristano wants the entire prize of the tournament for himself alone, because he has with him the beautiful Isotta. Thus I know of no other remedy except for you to ask Tristano to enter the lists on your side, so that you will be the winner and he will still have all the praise and honor. If you don't do this, you are certain to be disgraced."

The king then said to Lancilotto, "You have certainly spoken wisely. Let us go find him."

So the two of them, alone and on foot, went out of the castle and made their way to Tristano's pavilion, for Lancilotto had earlier found out where it was. When they got there, they lifted the door flap without announcing themselves and went inside. Tristano, seeing two knights entering so privately,

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leapt up saying, "Eh, knights, why did you not call out before you came in? Surely you are villainous knights and deserve great scorn!" Then Lancilotto approached Tristano saying, "Pardon us, sir. We did it for security."

When Tristano looked he recognized Lancilotto at once and embraced him, and Lancilotto said, "Tristano, don't do me so much honor. Look, here is my lord King Artù, who has come to visit you." Tristano fell to his knees at once, saying, "My lord, you are very, very welcome."

The king embraced him tightly, saying, "Tristano, the proverb applies to you which says of the villain, the more he offends, the more you want him for a friend. Thus it happens that we, who have this day been so beaten and injured, have come here to visit you for fear of worse."

"I want you to know that the Tavola Ritonda has never received so much dishonor as it has today, and that no one can reverse this except you yourself. We have come here to speak to you, and to see the beautiful Isotta, and to remind you that the honor and dishonor of the Tavola Ritonda rests mainly with you, because you are the one by whom it has always been most defended and honored. Know that if things go tomorrow as they have for the past three days, the Tavola will never again have honor. Therefore I ask you and command you that tomorrow you enter on the side of the knights errant, so our dishonor may be amended by you."

Without hesitation Tristano asked, "My lord king, do you counsel me to enter on the side other than the one I entered for love of Queen Isotta?"

The king replied, "Yes, Tristano, that is my advice. You came to this tournament to win honor, and you can see that the knights errant are less powerful than the foreign knights. It is more honorable for a man to enter on the less powerful side. There would be no mistake in doing this, for then you would be called the victor over all, and not just over one side."

"Also you ought to do it because you are a knight errant, and you are bound by that. What you have done today, you did to honor Queen Isotta; what you will do tomorrow will bring honor to us and all the knights errant. And if you will not, I will hold you a traitor to your high position."

Lancilotto begged Tristano to do the king's will.

Tristano said to them, "My lords, since it pleases you to command me so strongly to do your will, and since all that I have done through today was to the honor of Amoroldo and the foreign knights, I ask that Amoroldo be made a knight errant, like his father Amoroldo."

The king agreed, and had the book brought to him in which he wrote this down. Then he had the book sealed, so that it could be opened by no one but the gracious Galasso.

Then Tristano said, "King Artù, tomorrow from the first hour until midday I will fight for love of Queen Isotta against you and your knights, there-

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drinks given to the king and to Lancilotto, along with many confections. Afterwards, they took leave and returned to the castle. There King Artù planned a subtle strategy, saying to himself, "If tomorrow Tristano fights two battles, and the one gives me a victory and the other a loss, it will be no honor for me, for King Amoroldo can claim the day a draw."

Then he thought that in the morning there might be a battle which would last the whole day, so that whichever side held the field when evening came would take the prize for the whole tournament. "Thus I could say I am the winner of the whole assembly rather than the winner of one of two battles." The king thought this because Tristano was going to come over to his side for the second half of the battle, and this would make him the victor. Tristano would do as they had commanded in the afternoon.

Then the king sent for Sir Ansalerino, and when he came, the king said, "Marshall, because tomorrow is the last day, let us proclaim one battle that will last from morning until evening, and disqualify all other battles, so that whoever has the victory in the evening will take tourney's prize."

Sir Ansalerino said he was well pleased with that, but first he wanted to find out if the other side agreed. Then he went to King Amoroldo and told him what King Artù had said. King Amoroldo, who did not know about the agreement between King Artù and Tristano, told Sir Ansalerino that he was well pleased.

At that point King Artù summoned sixty knights of Norgales and commanded that on the next day they do no other deeds of arms than to guard the gates of the castle. Then King Artù commanded all his knights of great name that they must henceforward be brave, ardent, and bold, and that they must not give in to fatigue until the hour of nones, since after nones they would have no need to wear themselves out, for another champion would arrive to defend their honor.

At that, all the people went to sleep. When dawn came a proclamation was cried through the field on behalf of Sir Ansalerino that every king and knight errant and foreign knight ought that morning to eat and drink then come to the field, knowing that the assembly would last until evening, and whoever found themselves the winners at sunset would take the honor and the prize of the whole tournament. Therefore every knight should be brave and bold and sure to strike well with lance and sword.

fore be brave and bold to defend yourselves. Then after we eat I will change sides and wield my arms against the foreign knights."

The king thanked him heartily for this.

At that moment into the pavilion came four ladies with lighted torches in their hands, and in the midst of them was the beautiful Isotta, accompanied by ten stewards. Coming before King Artù and Lancilotto, she greeted them graciously, then the king took her by the hand and seated her beside him, saying, "Noble Queen, well met a thousand times, for you are the greatest queen ever to enter this kingdom."

And the queen said, "Great thanks, sire, for doing me so much honor. But I am justified by one thing: that I and all those under me are at your service and the service of Queen Ginevara, whom I desire to see more than any other lady. And I ask a favor of you—one for which you can have little regret—that when you next come before her, you greet her on my behalf."

The king said, "I take this greeting upon myself, to do your embassy, king in the world as my ambassador."

The king replied, "By my faith and by my loyalty, I hold myself too much honored that I receive a command from you, for you are the noblest queen in the world."

As they were speaking this way and taking pleasure, Tristano, for a joke, said, "King Artù, I think you must not be as bold toward your own lady as you are toward the ladies of others."

And the king, laughing loudly, said, "Tristano, Tristano, since I am now in your lodging, it is right that I be friendly to all who are inside."

Tristano replied, "Sire, you will never lose an argument for not knowing how to argue and give good reasons, and you will gladly eat bread made of other men's wheat."

The king laughed and said, "Don't be a bully: the one who has the grain can have the bread. Therefore if you will give me Queen Isotta, I will give you Queen Ginevara and the castle of Verzeppe as well."

Then Tristano laughed and said, "King Artù, surely you know that I am not looking for Queen Ginevara or the castle of Verzeppe. Anyway, if you don't have the gate well guarded in the morning, sometime before nones I may just come in with my sharp sword in hand to win the castle and the queen and all the ladies who are inside."

The king said, "I will have the gates locked."

Tristano answered, "If you do, I will put to the sword all the knights I find there. And I will shame you even more, for you shall not drink in this pavilion with Queen Isotta."

"By my faith," said the king, "if you will have drinks brought, I will not lock the gates."

At that point the queen called for silver flasks and cups of gold, and had

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As our book has shown, in the morning all the noblemen refreshed themselves by eating and drinking something, then armed, mounted, and rode onto the field. Sir Tristano and his companions wore black insignia, but Tristano, very secretly (so that no one knew except Queen Isotta, Sir Lantris, and Sir Dinadano) dressed himself in the colors described earlier, that is, the vermillion insignia, and underneath them he wore his own arms, the blue background crossed by a wide silver band between two narrow bands of gold. Then he put the queen on her palfrey and led her to the viewing stand of foreign ladies.

Coming onto the field, he saw King Artù, Lancilotto, and five great bands of knights errant and their supporters, and on the other side he found King Amoroldo, the King of Scozia, and ten great bands of foreign knights. Now, at the sound of the trumpets, according to custom, the two bands began to fight. As the knights fought, Tristano took off the black insignia and gave them to one of his squires, and displayed that of Queen Isotta, that is, the vermillion field with the golden crown. Then he rode forward and began to fight.

In one hour he defeated the high King of Norgales, Sir Calvano, and Sir Chieso, whom he wounded badly. He also beat Agravano, and sent King Artù off his horse in a heap, and he beat Sir Sagramore, King Agalone, and Sir Sagris, and at the tenth blow, he struck Sir Lancilotto.

And Lancilotto struck him: with those two great blows each one broke his lance and sent the other's horse to its knees, then they drew their swords. Lancilotto hit Tristano first, with such force that he made him strike his head on the saddlebow. Then Tristano grasped his own sword tightly, and for revenge, struck Lancilotto with such might just on his helmet that he knocked him off his horse and sent him sprawling on the ground.

Queen Ginevara was very unhappy about that blow, but she was not as sad as Isotta was happy, because each of them had given their love, the one to Tristano, and the other to Lancilotto. And when Lancilotto had re-mounted, Dinadano struck him sideways and sent him to earth again.

Then Sir Tristano rode through the mêlée doing such deeds of arms that it was a great marvel. The battle was huge and dangerous, and many barons and knights died on either side, so that many horses ran through the field with empty saddles, and over the ground were scattered many hands and heads and legs cut off, and many dead horses, and almost all of the swords of the barons were running with blood. There was such a great noise of horses and clashing of arms and sound of shouting warriors that it seemed like the end of the world.

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Sir Tristano rode over the field sending horses and men to earth, and all the people cried, "Here is the falcon who storms the whole assembly!" In a short time Tristano had routed King Artù's side and had come to the gate of the castle. When he saw the sixty knights, he looked at them in the manner of a snake and said, "Whoever stationed you here, knights, surely gave you evil advice."

Then he rode through them as a lion might rage through tiny beasts, and in a little while killed nine, so that the others gave way before him in terror. Thus he passed inside and was within the wall where the ladies were. Queen Ginevara gave him a garland of silk and beautiful flowers, and all the other ladies cried, "Viva, viva, the valorous knight who in his great prowess silences all others!" And almost everyone said that King Artù's side had been routed by the prowess of this single knight.

Tristano, having thus scattered King Artù's people, and taken the prize and the honor on behalf of King Amoroldo, retreated quietly to put off the vermillion insignia with their golden crowns and give them to one of his squires. Then he was left with his own insignia, the blue field crossed by the gold and silver bands. Then, at midday, when the sun stood at its highest, Tristano rode in on King Artù's side and began to fight against King Amoroldo and the foreign knights.

First of all he struck King Amoroldo with the butt end of his lance and sent him to earth, then he defeated the king of Scozia, badly wounding him, and then the King of a Hundred Knights, then Palamidesso. Before his lance was broken he had sent twenty-two knights to earth; then he took his sharp sword in hand and began to strike vigorously with that.

When Lancilotto saw this, he said to King Artù, "See, over there, your friend Tristano, who by his virtue will give you the victory in this tournament!"

"By my faith, by my faith, I could hear of a better friend I might remember for better service. This morning he struck me such blows that I will remember the pain of them for more than a month."

Then Tristano rode through the field like a lion with the knights errant rallying well behind him, especially the kinsmen of King Bando. When Tristano met the King of Guascogna he gave him such a blow that he knocked him dead to the earth, then he overcame the King of Sobicio and many other knights. Before the sun went behind the mountain, Tristano had routed King Amoroldo's side. Then he was very tired, and his arm muscles were swollen, especially the ones in his sword arm.

Then all the people began to shout out loud, "Viva, viva, the brave knight of the blue insignia with the silver band who has terrified all others!"

But some of the knights and also some of the people watching reasoned and said, "For certain, truly, the knight of the vermillion pennon is just as bold a knight, and has done just as well as this one has." Thus spoke the

ones who did not know how Tristano had disguised himself and changed his arms, and that he had in himself all the virtue and the valor of the first knight as well as the latter. But everyone talked about it. One said, "The knight of the vermillion pennon with the golden crown is just as bold as the one with the blue and silver flag."

And each spoke the truth, for Tristano had been the bold knight under each banner. And know that Tristano had so much self-restraint that at first he did not do as much as he might, so that the more he fought, the harder he struck. He redoubled his strength in such a way that he was as powerful at the end of the battle as he had been at the first.

When Tristano had routed one side and the other as he pleased, and done such deeds of arms that no other knight had done the half of them, Sir Ansalerino came forward, saying to him, "Knight, knight, as the moon is superior to the stars and the rose to all other flowers, and the lion over all other beasts, so you are superior to all other knights. Now I decree that you take the standard from the middle of the field and carry it to whichever side you wish, since both sides have been conquered because of your might."

So Tristano took the standard and rode with it over the meadow. When he came before Queen Isotta, he knelt and put it in her hand; then afterwards he took it to the castle and gave it to Queen Ginevara, who had it placed on the great tower, flying so high that all the people below could see it well.

At that point, King Artù, the King of Norgales, Sir Lancilotto, and twelve great barons went to the foreign ladies' stand where Queen Isotta was, and with Sir Tristano's permission had her come down and then led her to the castle. Inside the palace, Queen Ginevara embraced her and kissed her warmly. Thus they stood talking for a time, then went to rest on two rich seats of beautiful ivory and fine crystal. Soon Sir Tristano came into the palace, and when they had eaten they went to rest in a room; that is, King Artù and Tristano slept in one, and Queen Isotta and Queen Ginevara in another.

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The next day was bright and clear, and King Artù summoned King Amoraldo and the King of Scozia and all the other kings and queens and ladies and maidens of great family. When all the people were gathered inside the palace the tables were brought and they sat down to eat in this way: King Artù and King Amoraldo were at the head of the table, then beside them Lancilotto and Tristano, and after them all the other kings and knights errant and foreign knights of noble birth. Before them at another table sat Queen Isotta and Queen Ginevara, and with them all the other queens, and ladies born of kings, 930 in number. The knights were 925, not counting the other ladies and knights who ate in the castle and on the meadow outside: these were without number.

When all the people had eaten, Sir Ivano got to his feet, saying to the barons, "In this scroll I have written the decision given by Sir Ansalerino on the outcome of the tournament, and it says this: in the first assembly of new-made knights, the victor is Sir Lionello, nephew of King Bando; in the second, it is Sir Palamidesso. In the third, Sir Tristano, in the service of the foreign knights, took the honors. In the fourth, Sir Tristano won for the honor and praise of Queen Isotta. In the fifth and final battle Tristano took the honors in the service and pleasure of the knights errant. Thus Sir Tristano can confer victory or loss as he chooses."

After Sir Ivano read the decision of the tournament, it was announced at once throughout the field. Then began the sound of instruments, singing, and play at arms that lasted five days. Afterwards, every king, count, knight, and baron returned to his own country.

And King Artù swore never to call another tournament where any weapon of offense except the lance would be used, because this one would have been the biggest and the most beautiful that had ever been held in Grande Bretagna if so many people had not been killed. The dead numbered more than 770 knights.

And King Amoraldo and the King of Scozia and all the other foreign kings swore never again to enter a tournament in which Tristano might bear arms, because he could make the winner the loser and the loser the winner at his pleasure.

Then Queen Isotta took leave of Queen Ginevara with many tears, and to seal their great love they exchanged crowns and mantles, each with the other. King Artù presented Isotta with the castle at Verzeppe, with all the meadowland where the tournament was held, saying to her, "Since this tournament was held because of you, and for love of you Tristano took the honors of it, then for love of him I give you the castle and the lands around it."

Queen Isotta thanked him graciously, then she, Tristano, Palamidesso, Dinadano, and all their company returned to Gioiosa Guardia. The king, remaining behind, ordered four images to be set up in the meadow before the castle, statues of metal to represent the four knights errant, that is Sir Tristano, Lancilotto, Palamidesso, and King Amoroldo. Here in the future there would also be a statue of Sir Galasso. Each one resembled closely the knight for whom it was made.

Know that the figure of Sir Tristano held in its hand the standard of victory, and under its feet were carved letters which told of the prowess he had shown in this assembly. And know that after the destruction of the Tavola Ritonda the five swords of the five knights were hung from their images. Then, after a while, when the good king Carlo Magno created the court of the twelve peers in Francia (that is, in Gaules), he rode into the kingdom of Longres. Passing by the castle of Verzeppe, he saw the five images of the five knights.

Inspecting their shape and their size, he decreed that King Artù had deserved his dolorous death since, having under his lordship and power five such barons, he ought to have had under his rule all Christendom and the Saracens as well. He praised the beauty and quality of Tristano's image above all the others, and inspecting the five swords found Tristano's bigger and heavier and better tempered than any of the others. Because of its weight, no knight after Carlo Magno could use it, except the Danish knight Ugieri.

And these were the deeds of giants. The greatest regret Carlo Magno had was that the sword was not at its best, because it had been blunted. No one was able to sharpen it because no wheel would bear its weight, and it could not be put in a fire for fear of ruining its fine temper. So he used it blunted thus, and for that reason it was called Cortana (short one).

Carlo Magno took Galasso's sword and called it Gioiosa, the virtuous sword. It had been made originally before the time of the wise Salamone, and had belonged earlier to Saint Giuseppe of Bramanzia, and had been called the sword Istragies Ragies. The Marquis Ulivieri had Lancilotto's sword, and he called it Altaclara, that is, the beautiful sword. That of King Amoroldo was taken by Rinaldo of Monte Albano and was called Fulberta, that is, the well-sharpened sword, and Ildusnamo of Baviera had that of Palamidesso.

Now the tale stops speaking of Carlo Magno and his people. We will return to Lancilotto, and tell how out of great ignorance he became the enemy of Sir Tristano and assailed high Gioiosa Guardia. It was to follow the book exactly that I wrote about the swords, but I don't know if it is true. The story says so.

The story is, my lords, that when King Artù and Queen Ginevara and all the knights errant had returned to the city of Camellotto, they had not been there long when Sir Lancilotto set out adventuring to seek news of his son, who had been born to the daughter of King Peles Peschaor. As Lancilotto was thus riding he arrived at Dusbergo, the court of Duke Arigie. There he encountered his mortal enemy, who was called Brunoro the Brown, or rather the Black; that is, the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat.

When the two knights met, they did not greet each other, but rather gave each other cruel and hateful looks, and after a little they began to reproach each other strongly. Brunoro said that Lancilotto had treacherously killed Daniello, his brother, and Lancilotto answered that he had never been a traitor, but that the greatest treachery had been practiced by the king of Orbellanda, who was Brunoro's ancestor. As they were insulting each other in this manner, they agreed to fight in ten days before the duke. They exchanged gloves on it, and agreed that whoever might lose the battle would without further reprisal lose his life.

Then Brunoro departed and rode to Gioiosa Guardia. When Tristano saw him, he honored him greatly, and Brunoro said, "Sir Tristano, I ask of you for courtesy's sake to lend me your arms and your pennons and sword and horse, for I must fight a battle at Dusbergo before Duke Arigie against a foreign knight for love of a lady. Therefore I would use your arms, for they are better tried than mine."

Tristano, who loved him very much for Dinadano's sake, loaned him the arms, but he loaned him his sword very unwillingly. Thus equipped, then, Brunoro returned to Dusbergo, and when he was just outside in the meadow, he sent word to Lancilotto to come and fight. Lancilotto armed himself at once, mounted, and rode onto the field accompanied by the duke and a number of other barons. But when Lancilotto saw the knight and saw his armor, and recognized the sword, the horse, and the hauberk, he thought truly that this was Tristano, and that he had taken Brunoro's quarrel upon himself. At that, he was very unhappy, for he believed he would be killed; still he said nothing, for he did not want to be held cowardly or low.

Then, with angry hearts, each one rode apart from other, and in great fury they met. When the meeting came, they gave each other such great blows that their lances shattered, then they finished the course.

They drew their swords and began to deal heavy strokes, so that in the first assault each one of them was badly wounded, and after the second, a large part of their armor lay scattered on the ground. The duke, seeing that the battle was so perilous, came between them and with great difficulty

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forced them apart. Each one fought vigorously, for Brunoro fought with great valor, like one who has help, or is wearing arms with a vigor of their own, and he did Lancilotto much harm.

And truly Lancilotto was not fighting at the top of his powers, for he believed this to be Tristano. After the battle was stopped, the news ran through all the country that Lancilotto and Tristano had been fighting to the death, and how for the duke's sake they had stopped before they killed each other. Because of this, King Artù, Queen Ginevara, and all the kinsmen of King Bando were very sad.

Know that Brunoro was very much at fault in this, and he did it for his own advantage, for while he fought with Lancilotto, Lancilotto had said one time, "Tristano, Tristano, you have done ill to exchange Lancilotto for Brunoro." At that time, Brunoro did not answer, but remained silent and said nothing, almost as if it suited him to be mistaken for Tristano. Afterwards, Brunoro returned to Gioiosa Guardia, giving back the arms to Tristano, saying that he had fought against a foreign knight.

When Lancilotto got back to Camellotto, King Artù and the queen and all his kinsmen asked if what they had heard was the truth, that Sir Tristano had taken the field for Sir Brunoro in mortal combat against him, and Lancilotto said that it was so.

Then the queen said, "Alas, Lord God, what happened to the great service and great love you bore each other?"

"It has come to this," said Lancilotto, "and to him truly the guilt belongs. But, by my faith, it will cost him dear if I have anything to say about it. About that, you will soon hear great news."

The queen spoke to him, saying, "Lancilotto, I would be pleased for your honor to be vindicated, but I warn you many times not to enter into battle with Tristano; indeed, I pray you not to, unless you be well attended, for you know very well what kind of man Tristano is when he gets angry."

At that they ended their conversation, and Lancilotto returned to his palace. He sent for Sir Briobris, Sir Bordo, and Sir Astore di Mare, and planned with them how to take vengeance on Tristano and put him to death. And Tristano took no precautions against them, for he knew nothing about it, and he still loved Lancilotto with a good heart and a loyal love, as he had always loved him.

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The masters of the story next tell that when they met on the appointed day, the four knights, that is, Lancilotto, Bordo, Astore, and Briobris, armed themselves to great advantage and provided themselves with a newly devised insignia, so as not to be recognized. It had a yellow field crossed diagonally by a vermilion band. They mounted and rode until they came to Gioiosa Guardia, near the Foresta Spinoza, where Tristano was accustomed to hunt. As they waited there, two vavasors of Gioiosa Guardia passed by. Then Astore captured them and stripped them naked except for their pants, then sent them back saying he had done this for scorn of Tristano the traitor—"and if he has anything to say about it tell him to come avenge himself. We will await him here at the forest's edge."

Then the vavasors went before Tristano all naked and told him what had been done to them for his despite and shame. When he heard of the affair, Tristano was so unhappy that he wanted to die. He ran at once to arm himself, as did Palamidesso, Brunoro, and Dinadano, but Tristano got ready sooner than they did, and rode at once to where the four knights waited.

When Lancilotto and his companions saw Tristano coming, they rode to attack him immediately. Each one hit him vigorously with a lance, one after the other, but Tristano defended himself bravely, wounding Lancilotto in the arm, and knocking Briobris off his horse, wounded underneath his shield.

At that, he was joined by Palamidesso, Brunoro, and Dinadano. Then Lancilotto and his companions rode apart, lowering their lances; that is, Lancilotto and Tristano rode together, giving each other two such great blows that both of them landed on the ground, and their horses as well. Afterwards, Bordo beat Dinadano, Brunoro defeated Astore di Mare, and Palamidesso and Briobris each broke his lance. Then all eight knights drew their swords and began a cruel and terrible battle, exchanging the cruelest of blows.

Tristano fought only with Lancilotto, finding him so fierce and so strong he marvelled greatly at it. He wondered who the four knights could be, and where they were from, because he had never seen their insignia before.

The battle they fought was very, very dangerous, because Lancilotto would rather die than let Tristano live, but Tristano did not know who he was fighting or why. Still he fought boldly always, though he did not do all he might because he wanted to save his strength; for that reason the battle grew always worse.

After a while, here came the two viceroys of Gioiosa Guardia, that is, Sir Gulistante and Sir Lantris, fearing that Sir Tristano might be too much

encumbered. They came out of the castle with more than sixty armed knights, to bring him aid and succor.

When Tristano saw them riding that way, so upset, he went to meet them, saying, "Gulistante, and you, Lantris, I command you on pain of your heads not to give me any help if you see me cut to pieces by one knight or two, even by twenty!"

Then they drew back and stayed to watch the battle between the eight knights, whose armor was all slashed to bits; all were wounded in some part, except for Dinadano the Bold, who held back gladly on any excuse. It seemed he took more delight in watching than in fighting.

As Lancilotto and Tristano were fighting thus, and Sir Gulistante was watching the battle, he recognized Astore di Mare, then quietly drew near him and began to say, "Eh, Astore, what are you doing? Why are you against Sir Tristano, who is such a loyal friend to Sir Lancilotto?"

Astore replied. "Knight, don't press me, for you can well see over there that it is Sir Lancilotto who fights with Sir Tristano."

Sir Gulistante, hearing those words, became very sad and ran to that side, saying, "Stop fighting, knights, you are making a terrible mistake! Eh, eh, Tristano, can't you see that this is Lancilotto you are fighting?"

Tristano, hearing this, was greatly saddened and at once dropped sword and shield on the ground and tried to embrace Lancilotto, but Lancilotto would not let him, saying, "Tristano, Tristano, now you act very friendly, but you made me see you otherwise at Dusbergo, before the Duke Arigie, for Brunoro's sake."

Tristano, marvelling greatly at those words, said, "What, Lancilotto? What words are these you are saying? What words are these? I know well I have never been to Dusbergo before the duke, and I don't know what you are talking about. Not for Brunoro or any other have I ever done anything against you!"

Lancilotto said to him, "Tristano, Tristano, don't you think I know your horse and your sword?"

Tristano thought a little, and remembering, said, "Lancilotto, it is true that I loaned my horse and sword to Brunoro, who told me he wanted to fight against a foreign knight for love of a lady."

Then Lancilotto knew for sure that Tristano was not guilty, but that it had all been Brunoro's fault. He ran to embrace him, asking pardon and admitting his guilt, and told his brothers in arms about the great Lancilotto pardoned Brunoro and made peace with Dinadano. They went together into Gioiosa Guardia, where Isotta honored them greatly and treated their wounds. At once the tables were brought out, and water for their hands, and they sat down to eat.

As they were eating, Palamidesso, to start a conversation with Dinadano,

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said, "Queen Isotta, by my faith, I thought I might never return to this palace, for we would all have been killed if it had not been for the great prowess and good advice of Sir Dinadano, who stayed to oversee our battle."

"Now, you are a know-it-all, Palamidesso," said Dinadano, "because you had yourself baptized and have adopted our faith.²⁸ But we don't feel any gratitude toward you for that, since you did it for your own advantage—truly, it will be nothing to the Christians if you regret it: I don't know why you don't just turn your cloak again."

"Eh, by my faith," said Tristano, "he has never been hated by Christians, for I and all the knights errant love him."

"It doesn't matter if you love him," said Dinadano to Tristano; "You love for your own advantage, since he defended you against Lancilotto. But wait a little, the time will come when the mouse will gnaw the purse, as happened before, when he stole Queen Isotta away."

At such words Brunoro became very worried, for fear they would anger Tristano, so he said then to Dinadano, "You are too arrogant with words and evil language, and evil will come of it."

Dinadano replied, "If I use arrogant words, it is still only language. You are arrogant in deed, when you go wearing the armor of another, because you want to be thought bold. Was your horse not shod that you wanted Tristano's?"

And Lancilotto said, "Enough of this. It is discourteous to remember that now."

"You have no room to talk, Lancilotto," replied Dinadano, "For you go attacking others with your insignia disguised so you will not be recognized, and make peace or war at your whim and pleasure. But you made peace for yourself rather than for any other knight, because you would have been beaten already if only the yellow field with its band of vermillion had been seen."

Then Bordo said, "You speak the truth, Dinadano, by right of your great prowess. You fought so vigorously."

"I won't answer you," said Dinadano, "for you say you are chaste, and thereby you wrong God and the world. I still warn Tristano against entrusting Queen Isotta to you. You say you are chaste; nonetheless, you are not a eunuch."

At those words Astore and Briobris laughed heartily, because it was the truth. Then Dinadano said, "You, Astore, and you, Briobris, were made to laugh another kind of laugh by something else from Breus, when you were with Sir Arecco and Sir Prezzivale, near the fountain at the meadow."

At that point, all the knights were quiet, and no one was brave enough to dare a word for fear of Dinadano's rebuking; but they laughed heartily among themselves. Then Queen Isotta said, "Oh, Dinadano does well. He

can silence any knight who tries to insult him."

"What do you know about it, lady?" asked Dinadano. "Being quiet and sitting at ease in your room. You don't come out except to laugh and make fun of others, and inquire who has won and who has lost. Woe to the one who has to receive the blows from it."

Thus they exchanged insults, and the knights took great delight in it. But soon they all left the tables except Dinadano, who stayed there eating and chewing hungrily, saying, "This is one advantage that Tristano will not have over me, to say I did not eat my share."

They lingered there in this way for twelve days, then after that all eight knights, that is, Tristano, Lancilotto, Palamidesso, Briobris, Astore, Brunoro, Bordo, and Dinadano, set out for the city of Camellootto. When King Artu and Queen Ginevara saw them, they made a great celebration and an honorable reception. All the people were happy to see Tristano and Lancilotto and to find out that the news of their discord was not true, but had been a mistake, and Sir Brunoro's fault.

Now the tale leaves the eight knights, and we will speak of the great enmity, with a great battle, between Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto on the plain of Bucifalaso, before the castle of Lerlinte.

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can be sure that one of Tristano's greatest desires was to prove himself against Lancilotto, to find out which of them was better able to harm the other. He went around looking for a way to prove himself against him, a way to meet him on the field in single combat.

Lancilotto was the victim in this, because he had never spoken such words, but seeing that Tristano would not speak to him, neither did he speak to Tristano; so they held each other in great disdain for a long time.

Then, in the way that war and strife arises—out of great error—there developed between Amoroldo of Irlanda and King Alois of Norgales great trouble and a great argument, so that they waged war against each other. All this was over a castle on the plain of Bucifalaso, on the border of Irlanda and Norgales. Each king believed that he had the right to it, and each one wanted it under his rule. The people of the castle had up to then obeyed King Amoroldo, but now the King of Norgales had occupied it, and put there some men of his household.

King Amoroldo had come to retake it, and King Alois to defend it. Each of the kings had pitched camp near the castle, and each had sent out to summon his allies. King Alois sent for Lancilotto without delay, so that he would come to help. As soon as he had the letter, Lancilotto gathered 480 knights, among whom were Sir Brunoro the White, Sir Astore di Mare, Sir Briobris, Bordo, Lionello, and the rest of his kinsmen.

King Amoroldo sent urgent summons to Sir Tristano and his friends. When Tristano received the message, he was very glad, only because he would be fighting against Sir Lancilotto. He did not want to take a greater number of knights than Lancilotto had taken with him, but among these were Sir Palamidesso, Prezzivale, Sir Brunoro the Black, Dinadano, Dodinello, Sagris son of the King of Agalone, Sir Arreco, Sir Lac, the brother of Sir Ivano, and all three sons of King Alliele, and many other brave knights.

When Tristano came to the field where King Amoroldo was encamped, they greeted each other very honorably, and Tristano then had his camp pitched nearer the castle. In this manner the two armies camped on one side and the other of the plain of Bucifalaso, before the castle of Lerlinte.

Then the King of Norgales sent Sir Briobris and two other knights to King Amoroldo, summoning him to battle. When the three knights came before the king, they greeted him courteously, saying, "King Amoroldo, King Alois has sent us to tell you that in the morning he will be on the field with his bands of knights, and that of two things you should choose one: either join in battle, or leave the field."

Then Tristano, with the assent of King Amoroldo, got to his feet and said to them, "My lords, King Amoroldo answers in this way: in the morning he and his horsemen will be on the field and past the middle of it. And let Lancilotto know that he will find on the field the son of King Meliadus. Tell him I have come here for no other reason than to prove myself against

CII.

The true story tells that the enemy of the human race who, because of his pride, was cast out of heaven to earth, that is, from celestial glory to infernal punishment, that he, out of envy and through his subtle operations, saw to it that the peace between Tristano and Lancilotto lasted only a short time. Thus there occurred between them the greatest and most mortal battle that ever was between two knights. This happened because a few people, moved by envy, told Tristano that Lancilotto had been boasting how he had attacked Gioiosa Guardia, and how he had had the best of the battle, and how only for the honor of chivalry had he stopped before putting Tristano to death. These false, made-up words came only from Sir Calvano, and he said them because he hated Sir Lancilotto very much. Lancilotto also hated him, because Calvano and his brothers had killed Sir Amorotto and Sir Adriano.

And when Tristano heard all this, he would not speak to Lancilotto, and Lancilotto, seeing Tristano so haughty, stopped speaking to him. And you

him because of the way he has boasted of assaulting me at Gioiosa Guardia, saying that if I had not made great excuses to him, he would have killed me. Truly, of that coming of his I knew nothing, but I will make mine well known to him."

Then the three knights returned with their messages, and told King Alois and Lancilotto what had happened. Lancilotto held their news in great disdain, saying he would gladly fight until one of them was dead.

The battle thus arranged, each side busied itself with great preparation of arms. When the next day came, each king summoned his troops, and they were all assembled for review at once. The trumpets sounded on each side, and every knight threw himself into the fray. Tristano and his people attacked Sir Lancilotto's troops and began to deal out great blows. Here there was much splintering of lances and striking of horses and unhorsing of knights, and many good destriers were seen with empty saddles. When lances broke, good swords were unsheathed, and the cries of the knights, the clash of iron against iron, and the raging of horses was so great it seemed like the end of the world. Whoever saw knights spilled, and severed heads, hands, feet, and legs lying over the ground, along with many dead knights, would have said never before had anyone seen a crueler battle.

Tristano and Lancilotto drew somewhat apart from the other knights; then they began the crudest of battles openly between themselves. Here no one could say they did not recognize each other, nor were they playing, for one would gladly kill the other; here the final decision on their prowess would be made. All the other troops dropped back out of exhaustion, and only Tristano and Lancilotto fought on the field. Not for anything would they take respite.

When their lances broke, before either had bent the other over the saddlebow, they took their iron maces in hand and gave each other such great blows that their helmets rang on their heads, and their shields broke on their arms, their flesh was bruised and their bones broken.

After this, they grasped their swords and struck at each other so vigorously that in a short time their hauberks were all smashed and their exposed flesh was livid with blood and sweat. They no longer had shields on their arms, but each one would rather die than be the loser. Constantly they said to each other, "You are Tristano and I am Lancilotto. Now we will find out for sure which one of us is the better knight!"

And each of them swore that if he lost he would never again bear arms. For all that, they were very, very tired and exhausted, but each one was afraid to ask for a rest.

And Tristano said, "Lancilotto, here is Tristano, who has attacked you neither privately nor secretly, as you did me at Gioiosa Guardia. I have not changed my insignia to keep you from recognizing me. Now defend yourself well, as best you can. By my faith, I will kill you, you may be sure!"

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"Tristano, Tristano, you see here the son of King Bando, who cares little for your threats. Surely I will make your great pride cost you dear, for in no way could you resemble my kinsmen."

To this Tristano replied, "Lancilotto, Lancilotto, we haven't come here to defile our tongues with slander, or to vaunt ourselves. I am the son of King Meliadus, the most courteous king in the world, and of the highest and most gentle family; but the boast of the mouth is worth little. A good heart, a strong arm, and a sharp sword will settle our dispute."

And then they gave each other such great blows it was a marvel, and impossible to watch, and they still fought with great vigor. Know that they both were wounded in some part, and the ground was stained with their blood, and their horses could no longer stand. As they fought on, Lancilotto wanted very much to rest, but Tristano would not agree to it. He wanted to finish the fight in that assault, that is, in the first. It was the second, however, which would show the better fighter.

Tristano said to Lancilotto, "We are in battle; defend yourself well. You may be sure that the end of the fight will come soon. I want our encounter to end thus: that in this first hour it will show which of us is the boldest and best able to harm the other."

Lancilotto, who was very tired and could hardly defend himself against Tristano, replied, "Truly, you are not warlike, but rather proud and crazy, and you are no courteous knight, when I ask for a rest, if you do not grant it to me. I protest: you should do no more to me until I have rested."

Tristano answered, "Lancilotto, the man of war is not crazy, but rather has an ardor which comes from the heart. Therefore defend yourself boldly, for I challenge you!"

And he struck him with new energy, and brought him to such a pass that it was all Lancilotto could do to defend himself. Lancilotto thought it certain he would have died had it not been for Sir Astore and Sir Briobris, Sir Bordo, Sir Brunoro, and Sir Lionello. They, seeing that Lancilotto was exhausted and that Tristano would not let him rest, and knowing that if the battle lasted much longer Tristano would kill him, were very worried and had great fear of losing him. Therefore they all left their own frays and came to help Lancilotto against Tristano.

Tristano defended himself bravely against them, and acted with great boldness and vigor of heart, responding to all who attacked him, striking out with his good sword. As for them, they were all trying to kill him. Soon Palamidesso, the Knight of the Ill-cut Coat, Prezzivale, Sagris, and Gariette, who were on the side against Lancilotto, began a cruel battle against the others.

Tristano, seeing the five knights who had come to his aid, spoke great and arrogant words which showed his boldness of heart: "Ah, knights, what business is it of yours to come in such a hurry? Know that your coming

will take the honor and prize of the battle away from me." He said this because when he had seen the five knights who came against him he had comforted himself in his heart, and had found new strength to strike even more strongly, so that he thought he would scatter them all. He had told himself this: "Better one proud knight alone than six knights, some bold and some cowardly."

The knights fought thus until almost all of them were wounded and until the daylight failed them. Then the King of Norgales and King Amorolfo sent word that each knight should retire to his own pavilion, and on both sides they returned to their camps.

When the next day came they buried their dead and found that on the King of Norgales' side 270 knights had died, and on King Amorolfo's side, 216. At that, the King of Norgales, who was clever and wise, thought to himself, "These facts don't argue well for me, for if I fight in open combat I will lose, because Tristano alone will rout my forces, so great is his prowess. Therefore I will engage in single combat with King Amorolfo, even though he is worthier than I. Still it will be I alone who wins or loses."

Then he sent two knights to deliver the message written below:

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his boast will not be true that he had advantage over me, and the King of Norgales will surrender the castle to King Amorolfo."

At that, the two messengers returned to their lord and reported on their embassy, and Lancilotto was very sorry about it. Then King Alois and Lancilotto, with some twenty knights, mounted their horses all unarmed and went at a walk to speak with King Amorolfo. Then the two kings spoke together and arranged that the combat take place between their two champions.

Then Lancilotto came forward, saying, "Sir Tristano, you have sent to say that you want to fight with me, and you seem to be my opponent in everything. Therefore I would gladly know from you if this is true."

And Tristano said, "Lancilotto, it is very true. There is nothing in this world I want so much as to fight with you."

"Tristano, Tristano," said Lancilotto, "I have served you always and honored you until this day. But from now on I hold you as my mortal enemy and I am well pleased that this battle is to be between only you and me."

Then Tristano was not slow to respond, but stepped forward pulling off his ermine glove and giving it to Lancilotto, so that their battle might be assured. The encounter was set for ten days hence; they could not fight before then, they were so badly wounded from their first encounter. Then they returned to their pavilions.

Sir Astore and Sir Lionello were very sorry that this battle had to be, for love of Tristano, and for fear that Lancilotto could not match him, and also for love of chivalry; they thought much about how they might prevent the fight. Then they sent for a wise squire, one in whom they trusted greatly. They sent him quickly to King Artù, to tell him what was happening. At once the squire took a swift and ready palfrey, and rode day and night so that he came to Camelot. Coming before King Artù, he knelt and delivered his letter. At once the king opened it, to find out what it said. The letter contained this message:

CIII.

My lord, King Alois has sent us to say that too much damage will occur in the fighting of people against people. Therefore, if it pleases and delights you, he alone wishes to fight you alone, so that whichever of you wins will remain as lord of the castle, while the loser will then go on his way and take care of other needs."

At that, Sir Tristano got to his feet saying to them, "My lords, as you see, King Amorolfo is wounded in two places: in the face, and in the arm. Thus he cannot at present take on a battle of this sort, on which the honor of the country and the glory of chivalry rests; he is far too badly wounded. But he will send to the field one knight to be his champion and defend his cause, and I will be that knight."

"Not that I think King Alois wants to fight with me, but I am sure that he will select Lancilotto as his best knight, and thus we will decide two questions. If I lose, King Amorolfo will drop his claim to the castle, and Sir Lancilotto will have proved the vaunt he made against me when he said that he had done me great harm before Gioiosa Guardia. And if Lancilotto loses,

CIV.

To the noble and powerful king of Longres and Brettagna, lord of all countries and provinces, maintainer of chivalry, my lord King Artù, sum of power, nobility, and wisdom, crowned with virtue and benignity, mercy and pity, we greet you and kneel down to you. Let it be known that on the plain of Bucifalaso, before the Castle of Lerlinte ten days from now will occur the destruction of all chivalry. There has been a great battle between Tristano and Lancilotto that almost caused their deaths: their hearts are so hardened that they want to fight to the death. The glove has been given on this, so that nothing can stop it short of your great decree."

When the king had read the letter and heard the messenger, he told the queen and many barons who were there, who were very sorrowful at the news. Then the king commanded his son Mordarette and Sir Ivano to mount 300 soldiers and go quickly to the plain of Bucifalaso, and thus it was done. When this embassy came to the camp before the two kings, Sir Ivano dismounted, saying to them, "My lords, we have not come here without great reason, we who are viceroys of the high king, Artù: here is the sealed letter confirming it. Therefore we command that you, King of Norgales, and you King Amoroldo, and you Tristano, and you Lancilotto, on pain of being named and held traitors to the high throne, leave here at once, and within six days be at Camellotto, there to defend and prove your rights to the Castle of Lerlinte."

When the kings and the knights heard the high command, some were glad of it and some were sorry. Lancilotto was glad, only because now he would not have to enter the field against Tristano, for he had been uncertain of the outcome; and all the knights of his family were also pleased. Tristano was sorry because now he could not disprove the boast Lancilotto had been said to have made against him. The King of Norgales left the castle to King Artù's people, then everyone made their way to the city of Camellotto.

King Artù, when he saw that Tristano and Lancilotto would not speak to each other, was the saddest king in the world. Then he said to Tristano, "I ask a boon of you."

And Tristano replied, "My lord, ask anything you please."

The king said, "I want you to send for Queen Isotta to come for a visit to Queen Ginevara."

Tristano said he would do it; then he sent Sir Prezzivale and Sir Dinadano to her, with 400 noble knights, and he sent his ring as a sign. The knights rode until they reached Gioiosa Guardia, where the queen met them with great honor. When she saw the ring she gave commands, prepared herself,

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then mounted and rode back with them to Camellotto. When they were still two leagues outside the city, Queen Ginevara, King Artù, and other ladies, barons, and knights met them, and from the other side came Sir Lancilotto and all his kinsmen.

Lancilotto greeted the queen with much honor, and had her ride in a litter, all painted and decorated, borne by four rich and large palfreys. High over her head was a costly and noble silken canopy carried by four knights: Sir Astore di Mare, Sir Briobris, Sir Brunoro, and Sir Lionello. Beside her rode King Artù and Lancilotto, telling her of the great enmity which had grown between Lancilotto and Sir Tristano, and Lancilotto excused himself, saying how he had never in word or deed meant any offense.

Then King Artù and Queen Ginevara begged Queen Isotta to influence Tristano so that there might be peace and love between him and Lancilotto.

At the palace, the queen dismounted. Lancilotto handed her down and led her into the great hall, where all the ladies of the country were assembled to show their great joy in Queen Isotta. When they had rested, the two queens took Sir Tristano by the hand and had him sit between them, and begged him to give them pleasure by making a sure and good peace between himself and Lancilotto.

Tristano, hearing the prayers of the two queens, and hearing how Lancilotto swore he had never said those words, and also for love of King Artù and of chivalry, made peace with his friend, and all the court was very happy about it.

Then Tristano and Lancilotto decided to set out on an adventure in the countryside nearby. Tristano left Isotta in the care of King Artù and Queen Ginevara, saying they believed they would soon return. Then they mounted their horses and set out.

CV.

The two noble knights rode on all that day, but met with no adventure. Then they rode a second, a third, and a fourth day, so that on the fifth they found themselves at the head of the Valle Bruna, near the foot of a high mountain. At the crest of it was a mighty fortress called Rocca Forte. As they rode in that direction they encountered an ancient knight who was more than 170 years old, very big and strongly made. When this knight saw the two companions he saluted them courteously, and asked them who they were.

Lancilotto said to him, "We are knights errant, of the household of my lord King Artù."

Then the old knight asked them to his castle, saying, "My lords, come and rest, for I am a man who loves knight errantry very much, I used to be a knight of the Tavola Vecchia, and I am called Sigurans the Brown."

When Tristano heard that this was Sir Sigurans, the knight from Agragone, the greatest fighter King Uter Pandragone had had in his court, he felt very glad. Then he came forward: "Sir," he said, "I ask you in courtesy please to joust one time with me, for I would gladly put your prowess to the test."

"By my faith," said the old knight, "I marvel greatly at these words, because I did not believe there was a knight of the Tavola who had not already tried me. But tell me your name, and I will satisfy your request."

Then the two knights told him their names, and when Sir Sigurans heard that this was young Tristano, whose fame was so great throughout the world, he said, "Knight, I tell you, you don't have half the desire to joust with me that I have to joust with you. I want to see if you are half as good as your father King Meliadus was. I have already tested Lancilotto many, many times."

Then he had his armor brought from the castle, armed himself, mounted, and rode out on the field. They came against each other as only their good horses knew how to go, and at their encounter exchanged two blows so great that both lances shattered in pieces. The knights struck each other on chestplates and faceguards with such great force that both of them went to the ground with their horses, and Sir Sigurans' horse was killed outright. Both knights lay stunned for a good while—almost an hour.

Tristano was the first to recover. He took Sir Sigurans by the hand to help him up, saying, "Knight, how do you feel?" Sigurans swore that never in his life had he received such a great blow, and Tristano said neither had he.

After the old knight had rested a little, he asked Tristano to lend him his horse, so that he might try a pass with Lancilotto, and Tristano loaned it to him. Then Sir Sigurans mounted and rode against Sir Lancilotto, and they exchanged two great blows; but Sigurans defeated Lancilotto, then returned the horse to Tristano, warmly inviting them to come and rest at his castle. Lancilotto would not accept the invitation, though, because he was a little bit ashamed.

So they took leave and rode until they came to an abbey and a monastery. Here they rested, and here Lancilotto was treated for the wound which had been given him by Sigurans the Brown.

Every day Tristano sought adventure in the countryside around, and at evening came back to the abbey. On the third day that he rode out, he rode so far that he was nine leagues away from the abbey. At that moment, he encountered a lady on the road, one who rode very nobly, attended by thirty damsels. It was the Dama del Lago, who was returning from a visit

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to the high prince Galeotto, and going to her own country, to the Castello del Lago.

When she met Tristano, and saw that he was all alone, she asked him who he was, and Tristano told her. When she understood that this was Tristano, whom she had wanted to see for a long time, she was very glad. She asked about Lancilotto, and Tristano told her that he was staying at the abbey, and was slightly wounded.

Then the lady thought a little, and so worked with her magic that she made once she had a pavilion raised, and so worked with her magic that she made it seem to be a beautiful palace; then she commanded two of her damsels to do as you will soon hear.

For, as Tristano and the lady were talking, two damsels appeared right in front of them before Tristano noticed them or could see where they came from. When the two were before the Dama del Lago and Tristano, who were speaking together as they rode, one took Tristano's horse by the bridle, and the other took the lady's, saying, "My lord and my lady, when it suits you, we invite you into this palace. Here you can rest and refresh youself; then you can go on your way."

"Damsels," said Tristano, "I have no need for rest just now."

But the damsels replied, "Sir knight, for courtesy's sake, don't be so ungrateful. We pray you not to refuse the good custom and usage of the palace, for we take oath that since it was built no knight ever passed who did not rest a little and drink something, for in the valley you see before you there is no villa or habitation for more than ten leagues, no place where a man might rest and refresh himself."

The Dama del Lago pressed Tristano to accept the invitation, and Tristano said he would do it gladly, for he was no knight to break a good custom. They rode in that direction, and when they dismounted were led into a large, beautiful garden which seemed to have a high wall all around. The damsels brought them drinks and confections there. When they had drunk, they found themselves locked up in the garden, off which there appeared to be beautiful rooms. Then the lady revealed herself to Tristano, saying, "Tristano, you will never leave here until I have within Isotta, Lancilotto, and Queen Ginevara, because quickly I intend to have them here."

Then the lady sent for her servants and had them bring bread and wine and other food in great abundance, and other things to give delight. Tristano, locked up this way, felt very sad, but there was nothing he could do about it.

By magic the Dama del Lago made a dead body which looked as if it were Tristano's, and dressed it with Tristano's insignia. It was all bloody, wounded in three places, and she had it put in the middle of the roadway, and had a shield put with it, and shattered lances, as if he had died fighting many knights. And then she had a horse put near the body that seemed much like Tristano's, but Tristano himself knew nothing about this.

Lancilotto, staying at the abbey, expected Tristano to return in the eve-

ning as he always did. When he saw that Tristano did not come back to him that night he could do nothing but wonder what had happened, saying to himself, "Of two things, it will be one. Either Tristano has had an accident or he has gone adventuring through other countries."

In the morning at tierce the abbot came in and Lancilotto, along with the monks, went to the tables to eat, when there arrived a damsels disguised as a squire who told the abbot that ten leagues from there she had found a dead knight. "Surely the handsomest and best made of all I have seen.

His armor is all broken, and a good horse stands nearby." Sir Lancilotto, already very apprehensive, on hearing these words became miserable. He got up from the table at once and walked to and fro in the hall, unable to rest, sighing and making a great lament, "Alas, alas, my dear companion, my faithful Tristano, my dear friend! What new anguish is this? Oh, prowess and courtesy of the world, why have you abandoned me? Oh, true honor and praise of chivalry, why have you died in this way? Oh, falcon and guardian of knights errant, where will I ever find you?"

Surely Lancilotto made the greatest lament and complaint in the world, even though he was still not certain. But after a little, one of the abbots' shepherds returned, and when he saw Lancilotto, he said, "Sir knight, I bring you very sad and bitter news, for I saw the knight who came with you as your companion dead and lying in the road. I saw him yesterday, and he was wounded in many places. He is in the middle of the road in the valley called Basingnana, and I knew it was truly he lying there because I recognized his standard and the good horse that was near him."

Lancilotto, hearing this, said, "Alas, what dolorous news is this?" Then he fainted from grief, and was a long time coming back to consciousness. When he did recover, he armed himself and mounted without further delay, and so rode that he came to the place the shepherd had described to him.

He rode straight down the road, and saw the body, and Tristano's horse. When Lancilotto saw him, he threw himself to the ground, embracing and kissing the corpse for a long time. Then he searched its wounds, making the greatest lament and the greatest complaint in the world, the greatest ever made for any knight, saying: "Oh, woe is me! Tristano, so full of noble courtesy and prowess, surely all the people will say that I have killed you out of envy! Alas, unhappy me! My heart is so grieved for you! For truly Lord God, send me some counsel in your pity and mercy, so that I may find out who did this great wrong! For surely you were killed through a great treachery. It could have happened in no other way, for if you had not been killed by deceit, whoever came against you would have been made very sad and sorry for his act."

Then Lancilotto made the greatest lament in the world, and swore he would stay in that neighborhood two months and put to death as many knights

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and people as he could find, whomever he met, or die himself. As Lancilotto was thus grieving, two damsels approached him and tried to comfort him, begging him to take some counsel in his heavy sorrow, and asking him to come and rest at their palace nearby. "For there you can find out some news about how this knight died. We will not abandon the body until you return."

Then Lancilotto, who was glad to seek out news about how Tristano had been killed, left the damsels at once and rode to the palace. When he came inside he saw the Dama del Lago, and marvelled greatly, but still he greeted her with great honor. Then the lady took him by the hand and said, "Be comforted, knight," and led him to where Sir Tristano was. When they came together, they felt great joy and made great celebration; for a moment their joy was so great they could not speak.

Then Lancilotto told Tristano his most recent news, and Tristano marvelled at it, but they knew well that all this was the work of the Dama del Lago.

She said, "Knights, think of nothing beside a good time and lovely pleasure. I swear I will make you happy and joyful, and it will content me to see the thing I have wanted to see for such a long time, that is, you two together with the two queens."

Then the lady had two beds of rich silk carried into the garden, and had equipment brought for playing music, reading, fencing, and for telling the fine and noble stories of ancient times. And to give them joy she brought them twelve beautiful girls who always sang and danced and played music and made the knights happy, giving them great delight. But still, the knights knew that they could not get away.

By magic the lady made another body, dressed in Lancilotto's insignia, and made two horses, one dead and the other wounded, and put one body a little distance from the other. Then the news was spread over the countryside that Tristano and Lancilotto were dead in the great valley of Basingnana. The news scattered over the country of Longres, but no one believed it for certain. Now we will be quiet about the two knights, and tell how the news was made known in Camellotto.

CVI.

In this part the story tells how the Dama del Lago, having managed it so that she had Tristano and Lancilotto in her company, thought about how to have Queen Isotta and Queen Ginevara as well. She sent two damsels to King Artu's court to take word of the deaths of the two knights. The damsels rode day after day, so that in ten days they arrived in the city of

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Camellotto. They dismounted at the palace, tying their horses to the ring provided, then mounted the stairs into the great hall.

Here they found the king, the two queens, and many barons, all very troubled by the news they had had about the two knights, though they could not believe it for sure. At that point, the two damsels greeted the king and the other nobles courteously, saying, "My lords, we bring you dark and evil news. Two knights errant have been killed in the valley of Basingnana - and here they described the knights' insignia - 'and they have been terribly wounded. But who they might be we cannot say for sure.'"

Then the king, the two queens, and all the others became the saddest people in the world, saying, "Now we can see clearly that the news we heard before was true."

Then all through the palace there arose such a great complaining and lamenting it was as if the whole world were dead, and the two queens made

such a great lament that no one had ever heard anything so pitiful.

Queen Ginevara said, "Alas, Lancilotto dearest, lovely nobleman and prowess of the world, champion of King Artù and all the knights errant! O courteous Tristano, are you dead like this, and are we nevermore to be joyful because of you?"

And Queen Isotta made a complaint so sorrowful and a lament so sincere that it made everyone who heard it weep. She said, "My lord King Artū of the great pride of Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto, now weep in your hearts, and be sorrowful, and think of the high beauty given form in each of them, think of their prowess, courtesy, and nobility, ornamented with great virtue and frankness, for those who honor them will feel darkness in their hearts."

And then Queen Isotta said, "Alas, sorrow, oh, wasted nature, oh cruel death! Alas, how have you abandoned me! Oh Iesu Cristo, you created and gave us such beauty; now you have left me in great sorrow. Oh, death, sorrowful and villainous, why have you cast us down, so that we don't see what we should do? Now how can we ever find consolation anywhere?" Then she cried out in a loud voice, "Oh, Tristano, Tristano, why have you died this way? You were my delight and my pleasure, comfort and guide and light of all my well-being. For love of me you have left kingdoms and parents, and I have done the same for you. Now I have lost you, and for sorrow I will never be happy again. Oh, courteous and delightful Lancilotto, how are you dead like this? For it is against all good reason that all the prowess and nobility in the whole world should die. I do not believe that it could happen! It is my own misfortune."

Queen Isotta's lament was so great that it made all the people weep.

Then, with no further delay, King Artū and the two queens, with sixty ladies and fifty knights errant, mounted and set out in the company of the two damsels, and so rode day and night without resting until they came to the place where the two dead bodies lay. They looked at them and recog-

nized their insignia, and when they were sure who it was they began the greatest mourning in the world, tearing their clothes and rending their faces. The beautiful Isotta, trembling all over, embraced the body of Tristano her lover, kissing him everywhere, wishing she could die there with him. In her heart and in her lament she said, "Oh, Sir Tristano, oh, my soul, I carry you in my heart, shaped as you were in the form of your own nobility. Now where are you? Where have you gone? Do you remember me now, the one you brought to life? I will surely die for you, seeing you like this! I pray you, oh King Artū, that you listen to what I ask of you. Tell me, tell me, sire, for God's sake, if Tristano and Lancilotto are dead, and will nevermore return to your court. For the faith and courtesy you bear to Iesu Cristo, tell me, sire, if they are alive or dead!"

And the king answered her, "My daughter, sorrow locks my heart when I hear those two remembered by name, and I will weep for them night and day, through peace and war. Sir Lancilotto is dead, and I do not know how; Sir Tristano the young knight is dead, and because of them I will never be happy again."

And Isotta said, "Alas, my lord king, thus is it true that he is dead, my hope and my delight? Let it not please God that I live any longer, or that I ever again wear mantle or fine golden crown, for my life is emptied of all happiness. Alas, Lord God, let me stay no longer in this world alive and wasting away, for too clearly I see that I am deprived of all good; I am alone, and I can find no remedy!"

At that point, the beautiful Isotta was beside herself, and for sorrow fell into a swoon. It seemed as if she were dead, for no one could find a pulse or any other sign of life, and everyone feared that she, too, had died.

Then eight damsels came out of the palace, and with the consent of all took Isotta in their arms and bore her into the palace, laying her to rest on a richly decorated bed for the great need she had of it, and Queen Ginevara went with her to keep her company.

Then the Dama del Lago, who was inside, led Queen Ginevara into the garden, and when Lancilotto saw her, together they made the greatest celebration and the greatest joy in the world. But Tristano, seeing Isotta unconscious, was so sorrowful in his heart that he almost died.

When Queen Isotta recovered herself she gave a great sigh, saying, "Oh my love, oh, heart of my body, my Tristano, where have you gone? Who has killed you? I surely do not want to live any longer!"

As she was saying this, Queen Isotta opened her eyes and saw that Tristano was here, right next to her mouth, looking like one overcome with sorrow and grief. All the time he held one of Isotta's hands in his, then both of them, stroking them always, and rubbing the pulse in her arm. On the other side of her, she saw that the Dama del Lago was doing the same to her other arm.

Then the Dama del Lago began to comfort her, telling her all that she

had done by magic to bring them together, because of the great desire she had had of seeing them. — "But for what I have done I am rather sorry, because of the unhappiness the beautiful Isotta has endured." Many times she begged her pardon, and Tristano's, and then said, "I pray that you will be comforted, and have a good time here, and so be restored for all past sorrows."

Then the two knights and the two queens did so. All day long they gave each other comfort and pleasure, and took together delight and contentment good and fine, at their leisure.

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CVII.

The true story tells and recounts that when the Dama del Lago had the two queens inside the palace, she threw a powder over it that covered it by magic with a dense, dark cloud so large that King Artù and the other knights, because of the great darkness, could not even see each other. At that point, the palace vanished, and so did the two dead bodies. For those within, that is, Tristano and Lancilotto, there was no darkness, rather they remained in the pavilion in great happiness.

When the darkness passed, King Artù could no longer see the palace, the two bodies, or the two queens; at this he marvelled greatly. Then he redoubled his great lament, mourning for Tristano and Lancilotto, and Isotta the Blonde, but mostly mourning for Queen Ginevara, for he did not know where she had gone, or whether she were alive or dead. King Artù remained there for three days, but found in the valley neither villa nor castle. Then seeing that to stay longer would avail him nothing, he left with his company and in great sorrow returned to the city of Camellotto. There he made continually a great lament, as did all the ladies and barons and other knights of the city, and all the other people.

Tristano and Lancilotto stayed with the two queens in the pavilion in great solace, and continued like this for fifteen days. Afterwards, the Dama del Lago took leave of the whole party, saying they should accuse her ardently to excuse themselves: "When I have the grace of you four, I care nothing for the king and his power."

At that point, the lady had the pavilion removed, and they took leave of each other, the lady returning to her own country, and Tristano, Lancilotto, and the two queens going back to Camellotto. When they arrived at the palace, King Artù and all the people marvelled greatly, and demanded to know what had happened to them.

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Then Tristano and Lancilotto said that the false Dama del Lago had given them such a potion that they could not wake up. . . . "And we thought we would sleep forever. But we well swear that if ever this false one falls into our hands we will not protect her from you, for surely you will take her and have her burnt."

The king declared that he would indeed, and decreed that she should be burned, as he had already decreed for his sister Fata Morgana. And the king, who had been so sad, was consoled because he believed they had slept without waking, as he said . . . "Better this evil than a worse one . . ." And he was almost consoled for his wretchedness because he had his queen back again. Now he guarded his wife more closely than before, so this could not happen again; but generally it was believed that because of the enchantment they had all slept the whole time.

When the beautiful Isotta had rested ten days, Tristano sent her back to Gioiosa Guardia in the company of King Amoraldo, to whom King Artù had conceded the castle of Lerlinte. Palamidesso also went with them.

Now the story stops telling about this, and we will tell how the gracious knight Sir Galasso came to the court of King Artù, and by his coming began the high quest of the Sangradale.

CVIII.



The masters of the story tell how King Peles Peschaor of Organia had one daughter, lovely to see, who was called the damsel Perevida. It happened that a person who knew the seven arts of necromancy made a prophecy to the king and queen of Organia, and told them that if their daughter made love with Sir Lancilotto she would become pregnant with the most gracious knight in the world, who would be virgin and pure, and through his virginity and his prowess, he would be able to accomplish the high quest of the Sangradale.

Then the high queen, wife of King Peles, so managed it that Lancilotto spent a night with her daughter and made love to her, believing that he took pleasure with Queen Ginevara. The damsel became pregnant, and when

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her time came, by God's pleasure she gave birth to a very beautiful and gracious boy, who was called Galeazzo, or Galasso. The queen had him taken and nurtured in a rich nunnery, and made this known to Sir Lancilotto.

After a while, at the feast of Pentecost, it happened that King Artù's court was full of kings, counts, barons, and knights errant. At that time a damsel appeared in the hall, and she was dressed in costly garments. She greeted King Artù and all the other barons; then the king returned her greeting graciously, asking her what she desired.

She said, "Truly, sire, I would speak with Lancilotto."

The king replied, "There he is, talking with Sir Tristano."

Then the damsel went to that side of the hall, saying to Sir Lancilotto, "Sir, I ask you on behalf of the abbess of this nunnery to come and speak with her now."

Lancilotto answered, "For the sake of God, I will come very gladly." Then without further delay he took leave of Tristano, armed himself and mounted. He rode until he reached the convent, where he found Sir Bordo and Sir Lionello. When Lancilotto had rested a little, the abbess appeared leading by the hand a young man, fifteen years old, who was called Galeazzo or Galasso, and she asked Lancilotto to dub him a knight.

Lancilotto said, "Gladly. But I have no sword to give him." Then the abbess brought him the sheath of a sword which had belonged to Giosefette, the son of Giuseppe of Bramanzia, and Lancilotto fastened it around the boy, giving him a blow on both cheeks, praying to God to give him prowess and courage.

At that, the three older knights left the convent and returned to Camelot. When they arrived at the palace, they found that King Artù and the other barons had gone to the great chapel to hear a sermon, and as the three knights gazed at the Seggio Periglioso, they saw letters appear on it, newly written. This is what they said:

"In 366 years after the passion of Cristo, on a day of Pentecost, this seat will be filled by its lord."

The three knights held this a great marvel. When they counted, they found that the time would fall in that Easter season, when the chair would be filled and claimed by its lord. They took a silken cloth and covered the new letters, waiting to see if this would be.

At that moment, all the barons returned from the great chapel. The tables were brought, the king asked for water, and they were just about to eat when Chieso said, "Sire, you may not eat yet, for we have not had any new tidings yet today."

The king replied, "You speak the truth."

Then they waited a little, and into the hall came a young squire who said to them, "My lords, I bring wonderful news. A marvellous stone of vermillion marble has appeared on the seashore—come and see it!"

Then the king and many of the barons went there, and found that the squire's tale was true, for they saw the stone with their own eyes. Into it was thrust a lance and a naked sword, on which letters were engraved which said this:

"No one will be so bold as to take me from my place except the one who will wear me at his side."

Then the king turned to Tristano and Lancilotto, saying to them, "My lords, this sword is yours, for one of you must be the knight of whom the letters speak."

But they said they were not worthy, neither of them, to put their hands to that sword. Then Sir Calvano came forward and grasped the sword to try to pull it from the stone, but he could do nothing with it. Prezzivale and Bordo also attempted it, but to no avail.

Then they returned to the palace, where by then many more knights errant had gathered, all of them except for King Amoraldo and Sir Palamidesso, who had gone to escort Queen Isotta to Gioiosa Guardia. And Tristano was very worried about these doings, because word had come that King Amoraldo had gone on to Irlanda, and that Palamidesso was staying with the queen in Gioiosa Guardia. That was not true; actually Palamidesso had rested there only one night, but Tristano, because of what he had heard, was very jealous. He hated Palamidesso now very much, saying that he never wanted to make peace with him, and would challenge him to fight to the death. In this he did Palamidesso great wrong.

As King Artù and the knights errant remained in the grand palace at Camelotto, a great darkness descended over them, and all the doors and windows of the hall were slammed to and fro. This darkness lasted a full hour, then afterwards into the hall came a holy hermit all dressed in white robes, leading by the hand a young knight fully armed except for a sword and shield, though he wore a sheath belted around him.

When the hermit came before King Artù, he said, "Peace be with you. I present this young knight to you; he is one through whom high adventures will occur. See him here: I entrust him to you in the presence of all these good people."

Then he led the young man by the hand and seated him in the Seggio Periglioso. The seat remained still and did not change, then they all heard a voice which said, "Sit boldly, for from now on the seat will be held by its owner Galasso, who is descended from two great houses."

When King Artù and the others knights saw Galasso sit safely in the seat that so many brave knights had feared, they said that truly this was the knight who would accomplish the high adventure of the Sangradale. Then they did him great honor, saying, "Many thanks, Galasso, that you have deigned to come among us."

Galasso replied, "If I have come here, it is no wonder, because from this

place will begin all the knightly companies who want to take part in the high quest of the Sangradale, for the salvation of their souls is in the power of the holy vessel."

And King Artù said, "Galasso, this morning there appeared on the shore a stone of vermillion marble. Let us go and look at it."

He took him by the hand, and behind them came Tristano and Lancilotto and many other barons. When they came to the stone that held the sword and the lance there on the sea shore, the king told Galasso how none of the knights had been able to pull them out of the stone.

Galasso said, "It is no wonder they have not pulled the weapons out. Look you, the adventure is mine, and because of the faith I have in this sword, I will carry no other."

Then he grasped the sword and the lance and pulled them easily out of the stone, and put the sword into the sheath he was wearing, for it had been made for that very sword. And this is the truth.

TRISTANO AND THE ROUND TABLE

shield had received one blow he was called the best knight in the world, because of the grace and the works of God. But Tristano was the noblest worldly knight ever born on this earth, the gentlest and the most courteous. Then at once the damsel came before the king and said, "Through me the hermit Necienzo has sent to say that in these days the Sangradale will appear in your court, and will satisfy all with celestial food."

The king replied, "Now I know, knights and lords, and believe in truth and see by appearances that the time has come when the Tavola will be deserted, and you will all set out on the high quest which has been prophesied so often. I well know that we will never all come together again; thus, if you please, in memory of our chivalry, let us arm ourselves and hold one last tournament, in which the only weapon will be the lance."

King Artù proclaimed this because he wanted to test and observe Galasso. All agreed to it, and everyone returned to the city, armed themselves, mounted, and rode out to the meadow. There Galasso performed such deeds of arms it was a marvel to behold, for with a single lance he defeated King Artù, Lancilotto, Calvano, and Prezzivale, and many other knights, and he knocked Tristano down, horse and all.

Afterwards, they went back to the palace where they disarmed and sat down to the tables, for it was already noon. But before anyone could bring food to them they felt a shaking and a trembling so terrible that they were afraid the palace and the other buildings might fall into the earth, and there came a great shadow and a deep darkness. After that, there came a great splendor with such a fine perfume that it was like holy paradise. All wondered where such delight had come from, but no one was bold enough to speak, they were so stunned and also held back by thoughts of their sins.

And as they stood thus, through the hall of the palace passed the holy vessel, the Sangradale. It was covered in vermillion samite and carried by hands, but no one could see who carried it. As it passed through the hall it filled and satisfied the knights with all the foods the human body knew or could imagine. Then suddenly the grail vanished, and the knights remained very thoughtful, not knowing where such delight had come from.

Then they gave praise and thanks to God who had satisfied and fed them with such sweet food. At that time the prophecy of Giuseppe was enacted, the prophecy which said: "Grace will be spread among the congregation of the Omnipotent, and all will receive it, and few will observe it."

Know that there were three principal tables. The first was that of the apostles, in reverence for the celestial table. To this table at Pentecost God sent the grace of the Holy Spirit, from which proceeded quickly and surely the power to preach and to endure death or suffering for the sake of Holy Love.

The second table was that of Giuseppe of Bramanzia, to which God sent through His grace the holy vessel or true ampulla made from the earth where

CIX.

The true story tells that when Galasso had pulled that sword from the stone, a damsel on horseback arrived at the place, who looked at Lancilotto and said to him, "Now you will not hold yourself, nor will others hold you, to be the best knight in the world. This is proved by the power of this sword which you were not bold enough to take in your hand."

Lancilotto replied, "Lady, be assured that I have not held myself to be the best knight in the world since I first fought with the knight of the silver band who was then wearing the insignia of two lions."

Know that the damsel spoke the truth, and Lancilotto had met his better, for by the grace of God Galasso was the most gracious and the best knight in the world except for Sir Tristano.

In the book brought by the premier of the king of Francia, which first belonged to Sir Piero, count of Savoia and is now owned by Sir Gaddo de' Lanfranchi of Pisa, this question is addressed, for it says that the one who is given more is held to be more. Wherefore we see that Galasso receives principal graces. One is grace given freely, and the other is grace given as a reward. Everyone receives grace as a reward, but God also gave Galasso free grace, by which he pulled the sword out of the stone. So before his

holy blood had fallen from the wounds of Cristo, and in it was the wine in which those wounds had been washed. Now the blood was no longer there, because when Cristo arose, the blood had left the earth to rejoin the body, or the divinity. The grace of this holy vessel made Giuseppe and his disciples ready and bold and firm in the faith of Cristo.

The third table, in reverent memory of this Giuseppe and designed and made by Merlino, was the Tavola Ritonda. At it was the Seggio Periglioso, and it had been prophesied of that seat that it would be claimed by a virgin knight who, through his virginity, was ordained to sit at the holy table and to fulfill the high quest of the Sangradale. This meant that he ate and drank at the holy table of holy faith and holy hope, which made him drunk with delight. For know that all other joys and experiences are nothing compared to thinking of and serving God. No one for whom the delights of this world have little worth can be deceived, for the glory of the high kingdom never fades away.

Therefore one should contemplate and love God above all of His creatures, and love his neighbor as himself, and do nothing to another he would not like to have done to himself. He should love the soul more than the body, for the body will become the food of worms and the immortal soul will be glorified. For the one who is penitent and does penance for his sins will be blessed, and he will be saved and will receive the recompense he has deserved, to know and see God, the incarnate Word. Thus we pray to Him that at our deaths we will not be held guilty of mortal or venial sins, so that our souls may be saved. And, so as not to be idle or to do evil, we will deliver this sermon to those who will listen.

TRISTAN AND THE ROUND TABLE

And thus swore also Sir Lancilotto and Galasso and Tristano and Prezzivale and Bordo the Chaste and many other knights errant; there were 185 in number, and they were the flower of the knights errant. Then King Artù wept, saying, "Alas, Calvano, how you have deserted and saddened me, for I am certain I will never see you again, you will be going through strange lands for such a long time." And Lancilotto said, "Alas, sire, don't be so unhappy, for even if we all die, we will die blameless, so just is this undertaking."

As they lingered of the high quest, do not be so bold as to enter this high adventure without first repenting and confessing your sins." And the knights did so. When evening came, they all went mounted, riding until they came to the castle of Magani. Here Galasso said to them, "My lords, it seems to me better that we go on alone, or at most two or three together."

The knights agreed to this, and each one chose his own way. Tristano and Lancilotto went toward the Valle Bruna, Bordo and Prezzivale toward Lestenois, and Sir Galasso went to an abbey, where he found the white shield with the red cross which Giuseppe of Bramanzia had left there. No knight had been able to fasten this shield around his neck, because whenever any one had tried to bear it away a celestial knight appeared, all dressed in white, who took it back and returned it to the abbey.

But Galasso took it then and carried it for the rest of his life. When he had taken the shield he went on his way, as our book tells, pursuing the high quest. Now the story leaves Galasso and the other knights on the high quest, and we will speak of Tristano and Lancilotto.

CX.

The true story tells that as the knights errant were still at the tables, having felt the sweetness of Cristo's grace, King Artù spoke first, saying, "My lords, we should give great thanks to Cristo, and be grateful that he has here shown us such a great sign of his love that he fills us with celestial food."

At that, Sir Calvano got to his feet, saying, "My lords, I swear that in the morning without delay I will set out upon the high quest. And I will keep on for a year and month and a day, with great devotion and all the effort my body can make. And I will never return to court if I do not first learn something of the high quest."

CXI.

In this part the story tells how Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto rode on day after day doing nothing but thinking about their sins. They rode so far into the Valle Bruna that they found themselves at the foot of the great mountain of Rocca Forte. They found that Sir Sigurans the Brown had passed out of this life, and everyone thought that he had died of the fall he had taken jousting with Tristano.

The two knights rode on through the countryside until by the road they found a marble column from which there hung an ivory horn. Tristano sounded it twice. At once, two armed knights rode out of a castle; one was Galinas, the son of Sir Gurone, and the other was Sir Trassino the White. Then the knights all challenged each other, and traded great blows, so that Tristano defeated Sir Trassino, and Lancilotto unseated great Galinas.

Then the two knights rode on until they came to a bridge on the other side of which they could see a strong castle. The bridge was guarded by twenty-five bold knights, and no armed person could cross without first jousting and fighting with those knights.

Tristano pressed Lancilotto to allow him the battle, and Lancilotto granted him his wish. Then Tristano made sure of his seat on his good destrier and rode against all twenty-five knights, attacking in their midst like a lion among beasts. He josted so well that before his lance was broken he had struck twelve knights to the ground, dead or wounded; his own horse was dead under him; and he himself was wounded in two places.

Lancilotto dismounted at once and gave his horse to Sir Tristano, who mounted, drew his sword, and began to attack anew, doing such deeds of arms it was a marvel to see. In a short while he had killed or routed all twenty-five of the knights.

Then they crossed the bridge, and the people of the castle came before them crying, "Viva, the best knight in the world!" They made Tristano lord of the castle of Pontefermo and all the country around. Tristano left as his viceroy the knight who seemed best proved in battle, a man called Inamante, and this Inamante gave Tristano his own good destrier.

Tristano and Lancilotto resumed their ride through that country, and on the third day they rode through the middle of a great fortress called Sangranar, and as they passed through, two bold knights rode out against them, demanding a joust and saying, "Sir knights, you can by no means pass this way unless you joust, or unless you leave us your horses and go on foot."

Tristano replied that to go on foot did not suit him; therefore they wished to joust. Then each one rode against another and they gave four great blows; Lancilotto beat Sir Broncone, and Tristano, Sir Sodoc, the son of Amorotto of Lestenois. But when Tristano and Lancilotto started to ride away, the two defeated knights took their horses by the bridle, saying, "Sir knights, you cannot leave the fortress, according to our custom, if you do not first take our horses, because you have earned them well."

So Lancilotto took their horses and gave them into the keeping of squires, and they went on their way. When they had passed through the Valle Bruna they entered the Valle Selvaggia, and in this country they accomplished many fine adventures. There they defeated Sir Cudinello, son of Sir Estorm di Rivello, and they also defeated a nephew of Sir Scanoro the Great. They killed a treasonous and evil giant, and two other giants, his sons. But first

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there was a bitter and dangerous battle, because the giants were very powerful. After that, they rode into the Valle Franca, and as the two knights were riding they met a damsel on horseback who told them that at the head of this valley, at the castle of Ferelois, Sir Abastunagio, son of Prince Galeotto, had gathered a good number of knights to make a tournament in honor of his daughter. He planned to give her in marriage to the knight who proved himself best. Tristano and Lancilotto rode that way.

When they came to the place, they found the assembly just ready to begin. The trumpets sounded once, then twice, and at the third blast all the knights began to fight. Tristano and Lancilotto went through the field like a pair of lions, doing such deeds of arms that all the people gave way to them out of fear: they routed the whole tournament.

As they were fighting like that, fortune brought Sir Galasso that way. He began to fight in the tournament and knocked down both Lancilotto and Tristano, horses and all. He unhorsed many other knights, throwing the whole tournament into confusion, then went on his way so secretly that no one found out who he was. Tristano and Lancilotto rode after him to find out his name, but they could not find him anywhere.

CXII.

The masters of the stories tell that as Tristano and Lancilotto rode through the Valle Franca after they had crossed the Valle Bruna and the Valle Selvaggia, they came to a bridge which spanned a broad river called Labranico. There the two knights encountered four damsels on horseback who said to them, "My lords, it seems to us that you are not well accustomed to this country. Know, therefore, that if you cross that bridge you will enter the Valle Pericolosa, from which no knight has ever returned, so dangerous are the adventures there. No knight of the Tavola Vecchia would ever enter there, out of fear."

"On that mountain over there is a strong fortress, the lords of which are two giants, the biggest and strongest and most vigorous that exist in this world. They kill every knight who comes there, and you can't avoid the castle because the road goes right through the middle of it. So we pray you by the one God that you will not go there to your deaths."

At that, the two knights stopped and began to think, and Tristano said: "Sir Lancilotto, we are knights errant, therefore it would be a great coward-

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ice for us to go out of our way for fear of giants. If you please, I would like us to go on and fight with them, and set the countryside free."

Lancilotto replied that this suited him well. Cheerfully they crossed the bridge and rode straight on through the Valle Perigiosa, meeting many shepherds who said to them, "Alas, my lord knights, if you go any farther you are going to die!"

Still the two knights did not stop going directly on their way, and Tristano kept encouraging Lancilotto very much, saying, "Sir, the more uncertain the countryside, the more likely it is to hold high adventures, so let us not grow dismayed."

Riding thus, they soon arrived at the castle of Sidravalle. There they met an aged knight, who had been one of the company of the Tavola Vecchia and lord of the country, but who now, out of fear, was liegeman to the two giants. When he saw the knights, he recognized them as knights errant, and he began to weep heavily, not because he was not glad to see them, but because he worried about them and pitied them, because he thought they had come to die.

He said to them, "What sin or what misfortune has brought you here to die?"

But Lancilotto replied, "Sir, no sin nor misfortune has led us here. We have come of our own free will to do battle with the two giants. Thus we pray that you will go to them and tell them on our behalf that of two things they must choose one: they must either keep their castle and the countryside as vassals of King Artù, or come and do battle with us."

Then the ancient knight went to the two giants and gave them the message. They armed themselves at once with shields and maces, for they used no other arms. They came to the field and said to the two knights, "My lords, your arrogance will become less, for you have the look of knights errant, and we will have no pity on you, all for the sake of a knight known as Tristano of Cornovaglia, who killed Lucano and Urgano, our own brothers. Because of him we have made all knights errant who come this way die painful deaths. Oh, if only we could get our hands on this Tristano!"

At that, Tristano stepped forward, saying to them, "My lords, your god has sent you special grace, because here is that Tristano of Cornovaglia who killed Urgano the Hairy in the service of Duke Bramante, and put Lucano the Great to death at the tower in the wilderness. It is not enough for me that I am not sorry for killing those two, so I have come to finish you."

The two giants, hearing these words, became so red in the face with anger they were almost on fire. Without another word they rushed at the two knights, striking at them, and beginning a cruel and dangerous battle. The giants were on foot and the knights on horseback, but the giants were so tall that even on foot they were taller than the knights on horses by more than four feet.

The two knights began to strike the giants' shields, first with their lances and then with their swords, but they found their leathery hides so hard, so that their helmets and shields were shattered. The battle was mighty and dangerous, and lasted for a long time, but when the two knights saw that they could do nothing to damage their opponents' leather shields, they sought shelter from the skirmish and they struck the two giants out in the open, so that finally they brought them to an end, although Lancilotto was badly wounded and his horse was killed.

Afterwards, the two knights gave the lordship of the castle to Sir Gabrionello, the old knight. They baptized the knight and all the household, and made them swear to keep castle and countryside under King Artù. When the two noble knights had passed through the Valle Perigiosa, they turned left into the Valle Ombrosa, because on the other side was the Valle Spinoso, through which they could not go, the way was so wild and full of wild beasts and savage men, and was in such deep darkness. On that day Tristano and Lancilotto rode until they reached an abbey of monks. Here Lancilotto dismounted from the horse that Sir Gabrionello had given him, and stayed to rest, because he was badly wounded.

Tristano took leave of him there and went on his way seeking adventure, and Lancilotto asked him to come back in ten days.

CXIII.

The true story tells that as Tristano rode on all alone he entered the Valle Ombrosa. He rode through it for two days without seeing anyone except his own squire. But as he was riding on, one day at the hour of vespers he met Palamidesso. When he saw Tristano, Palamidesso greeted him, but Tristano would not return his greeting, because he had hated him very much ever since the time he had escorted Queen Isotta to Gioiosa Guardia.

Palamidesso, when he saw that Tristano would not speak to him, said, "Tristano, I know that there can be no peace and concord between us because you are always suspicious of me. I had rather die than be in such a state of war; therefore be assured that I will meet you early in the morning by Merlino's stone, and we will fight until one of us is dead." "That will be good, because if I die I will be freed from this state of war and you will be free of your suspicions about me, and if I kill you, I will be free to love and look at whoever pleases me."

But according to what the master book has shown in all other stories and legends, Palamidesso did not arrange to meet Tristano in battle on the next day because he really wanted to fight with him, but rather so that he himself could escape. For when Palamidesso saw that Tristano hated him and would not speak to him, he was worried that Tristano would summon him to battle at that moment.

And it is no wonder, for there was not at that time a knight errant or a foreign knight so bold that he wanted to find himself in battle against Tristano, for his prowess and his reputation were then too great. Therefore Palamidesso is not to be blamed for not wanting to engage in battle with one so much more powerful than he. In all the fights that Palamidesso ever had with Tristano, he was always the loser. Know that Palamidesso was a good knight: bold, gentle, courteous, and he would have been of great reknown throughout the world, except that when he and Tristano were in conflict he never went adventuring where he thought he might meet Tristano, for fear of having to do battle with him. Because of this, he did not prove himself as well in deeds of arms as he might have done, for he was one of the four boldest knights of the Tavola Ritonda.

So, as our book shows, Palamidesso arranged to meet Tristano in battle on the next day, for the reasons given. Tristano, hearing his words, was well content, and so there would be no mistake he went straight to Merlin's stone and spent the night there. But Palamidesso went on his way, saying to himself that he would go to such a far country he would not meet Tristano again that year. Tristano stayed beside the stone and waited for Palamidesso to come, and just past the middle of the night fortune brought Sir Lancilotto to that way, riding in search of Tristano.

Tristano, hearing the approach of a knight, believed that it was surely Palamidesso, and called him to battle. Then they pulled out their swords and began to hit each other very hard, and they fought so roughly that their armor was broken to pieces. Lancilotto, marvelling at the fierceness of Tristano's attack, said to him, "Knight, for courtesy's sake, let us rest from our battle and tell me your name."

Tristano replied, "Palamidesso, Palamidesso, don't make fun of me. We are at the place you named, and only one of us will leave here alive, as we have agreed. If I took Queen Isotta from King Marco, I do not for that intend you to take her from me. Therefore defend yourself; I challenge you!"

Lancilotto wondered greatly at those words, and said to Tristano, "Knight, I have no desire for the sins of Palamidesso to be purged through me, for be assured that I am not Palamidesso, but Lancilotto del Lago."

Then the two knights went out into the road where the moonlight was shining, and recognized each other. Tristano told Lancilotto what he and Palamidesso had arranged, and the two of them waited for him until the hour of nones, and continued to wait until nearly the hour of vespers. Then

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when Palamidesso still did not come, the knights left and rode on. As they rode, they came to a column in which letters had been carved that said this: "O knight passing by, guard yourself well and be not so bold as to go any further. Because you can be neither so strong nor so bold but that you will be killed or imprisoned forever if you do not disarm completely, dismount, and lead your horse by hand. Know certainly that you are about to enter the Valle Scura, through which no knight may pass if he be armed or on horseback. The valley is ruled by a pagan knight who is bolder and more fierce than all the knights together of the Valle Bruna and the Valle Fran-

ca." When the two knights had read those letters they began to think and to hold back their horses, and Sir Lancilotto, who was wise, said to Tristano, "I remember that our Lord God has said there is no use in kicking against a spur; that is, one ought not go looking for trouble. You see that what lies here is no well used road or path, therefore it seems better to me that we go another way, for these letters were not carved here without good reason."

But Tristano, who was vigorous and young, said to Lancilotto, "We did not fear the words of the lady, or the shepherds, or other people who warned us against entering the Valle Perigiosa, and that turned out to be a good undertaking, one in which we claimed many people for Christianity. Now what cowards we would be to be dismayed or afraid because of words inscribed in a stone, and not to find out who this bold knight is who wants tired knights to walk and lead their horses.

"So I beg of you, Lancilotto, be content, for I have hope that with God's help, if we go armed and mounted through this valley it will be to good end. It would be too easy for this evil knight to overcome us if we go disarmed, and so I advise that we go armed and on horseback, well prepared. Then he can do his worst!"

So they rode on through the Valle Scura, and when they had gone three leagues they saw a strong fortress and great castle called Derudicanoro, whose lord was the knight Fellone, a man who knew the seven arts and had the strength of five knights as great as the knight with whom he was fighting, and be they many or few who fought with him he had five times their combined strength, however many they were.

As Tristano and Lancilotto came near that castle they heard a horn sound two times, as if to say there were two knights, and a little later out of the castle came an armed knight who was very short, but who had thick arms and legs. He rode a black horse, short, thick, and very sturdy. When he met Tristano, who rode in front, without a word he struck him on the helmet with the iron mace he was carrying, which weighed 300 pounds. That blow was so heavy it sent Tristano to earth, horse and all, and because of that blow he fell unconscious, and one could feel neither pulse nor vein.

Lancilotto then truly believed that Tristano was dead, and with great sorrow he lowered his lance and rode to strike the knight Fellone with all his strength. But he could not bend him over the saddlebow, for he found him stronger than a well-built tower.

The knight struck Lancilotto on his shield with the heavy mace, and sent him sprawling to the ground. Then he picked him up by the back of his helmet, flung him across the neck of the black horse, and carried him to the castle. He put him into his prison, where 160 knights were already locked up. Lancilotto, greatly mourning, told them how his companion Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia had been left dead on the ground. Then Lancilotto and the other knights who had recognized him made the greatest lament in the world, saying, "O Tristano, full of prowess and courtesy, now is brought low all the honor and worth of the Tavola Ritonda and of all chivalry! O woe to us! How will we ever be set free, now that the source of all chivalry is dead?"

Thus they wept and made their complaint.

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FELLONE

CXIV.

Regaining consciousness, Tristano looked around him and, when he did not see Lancilotto, began the loudest complaint in the world, saying, "How unlucky I am! How have I lost my loyal companion? O courteous Lancilotto, give me help and counsel!"

Then, lamenting greatly, he got back on his horse, saying that one of two things would happen: "Either I will find Lancilotto again, if he is alive, or I will die."

As he rode toward the fortress he met a damsel on horseback who said to him, "Knight, know that you are on your way to fight a warrior so great that you cannot possibly endure against him. Through the power of enchantment he has the strength of five. And I declare to you that I am the daughter of Lancilotto. I live in the forest of Corbanio doing penance, and I have come here only to save you. If you will do as I tell you, you will be the victor, and Lancilotto, who is imprisoned, will be set free. If you will not, then you will be killed, and Lancilotto will be a prisoner forever."

"Know, then, that before the gate of this castle is a ruined chapel; inside the chapel is a small crucifix. Go in and promise God that you will sin no more with Queen Isotta. Then you can go safely to the encounter, and for each blow the knight delivers cry out at once 'Iesu Cristo, help me!' Each

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time you say it, your enemy will lose the strength of one."

Then Tristano turned away from her and went into the chapel before the crucifix, and faithfully made his difficult promise to God. Afterwards, he went on to the castle where the knight Fellone rode against him. They began to fight, but because of the great promise Tristano had made, he came out the victor. Among many great blows Tristano struck one on Fellone's helmet with his sword that sent the enchanter to earth, horse and all, and through the words Tristano cried each time the other attempted to hit him—that is, "Iesu Cristo, help me!"—the knight's strength waned so that soon Tristano had a lot more than he.

The result was that when Tristano had knocked him off his horse, then had dismounted to cut off his head, Fellone said to him, "Knight, do not kill me. I have in my prison many knights who can only be set free by my own hands."

Then Tristano tore off the knight's helmet and took him by the hair, dragging him to the castle. It was already the dark of night; inside the hall the knight showed neither pulse nor vein, but seemed like a dead body. When Tristano saw this, he sat down on his back, saying that he would finish with him in the morning. After he had been there for quite a while, Tristano saw hands and arms preparing a table of fine food and afterwards bearing bright torches. Tristano approached that part of the hall, dragging Fellone behind him. He laid him down and made a stool of him and began to eat, for he had great need of food.

When Tristano had eaten, he saw that one of the hands took a torch and carried it into a chamber. He followed it and, so that Fellone could not trick him, he pulled him behind and kept his sword bared in his hand. Inside that chamber he found two rich silken beds; he lay down on one all armed and put the knight at its head.

After he had rested a while, he saw a damsel who looked like Brandina walk through the room, and much he marvelled at it. As he stood up in wonderment, he heard a voice say, "Know, Queen Isotta, that your Tristano is in this palace." Afterwards, he heard another voice say, "I have gone looking for him, for if I do not see him soon I will die of sorrow." Then it said, "Tristano, Tristano, now I am happy, for since you left me I have not had one good day. Now come lie by me in this other bed."

Tristano, hearing those words and that voice, which seemed to him to be Queen Isotta's, believed truly that she was beside him. Without delay he disarmed himself completely except for his sword and ran to the other bed. He was about to get into it, believing Queen Isotta was there, when he heard a loud knocking and the sounds of a storm so great that truly it seemed that the palace would fall into the deep. When he looked, he saw that the bed was on fire, and he heard a voice say, "Tristano, you have been deceived."

Then Fellone, who had been feigning death, got to his feet and came to capture Tristano. When Tristano saw all this he was so afraid that he became very penitent and threw himself on the mercy of Cristo crucified. He gripped his sword in his hand and when Fellone reached out his own right hand to seize him he struck it such a blow that he cut it off, and was about to kill him. Seeing himself so badly wounded, the knight begged Tristano to spare him, swearing that he would be baptized, and free the prisoners, and maintain his fortress as King Artù's liegeman.

Tristano pardoned him; then they brought all of the knights out of prison, 162 of them, among whom were fourteen who had been on the High Quest, Lancilotto, when he saw Tristano, was the happiest knight in the world, and they went on their way together.

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Lancilotto

CXV.

The true story tells that when Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto rode up out of the Valle Scura, where they had freed the land so that men could come and go, on foot or on horseback, armed or disarmed as they pleased, they came to the castle of Cologia. Here they found that a multitude of knights had gathered for a tournament, and they were all Saracens.

As the two knights rode into the castle they heard a proclamation cried on behalf of Count Sebio that if any single knight with no aid but a squire would take the field in the morning against the count and a hundred of his retainers and win, the count would give him his daughter in marriage, with lordship over castle and country. But if this knight were the loser, if he could not prevail over Count Sebio and his hundred knights, the count would have his head and his squire's head, too. All the knights, hearing of such odds, were scarcely eager to choose them, even though the count's daughter was very beautiful. They thought the bargain should be better if the count was truly eager to marry off his daughter.

At that point, Tristano and Lancilotto were riding through the castle even though no one had invited them to lodge; the people there were too ignorant and discourteous. Tristano and Lancilotto were very unhappy about this, not so much for themselves as for their horses. Then one poor, aged knight, seeing the two strangers riding thus, invited them to his dwelling, saying to them, "My lords, if it may please you at all to come to my poorly served house, I invite you there with a good will."

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Tristano and Lancilotto gladly accepted the invitation, because they needed it. When they had dismounted and disarmed, the old knight had them arrayed in what robes he had, and invited them to sit by the fire. He so exerted himself to buy and to beg that he acquired an abundance of provisions, and had them served by one of his sons, and by his daughter, a lovely maiden. When the two knights had eaten, he led them to rest in his own chamber, and laid himself down in another part of the house.²⁹

All that night Tristano thought of nothing but of how he might repay this man for the great honor he had done them. He decided to ride against the count and his hundred knights and win the count's daughter for the poor man's son. When morning came, Tristano told Lancilotto his plan, and Lancilotto agreed to it. They armed themselves and mounted, thanked their host warmly, and took their leave. Lancilotto rode in front, like a lord, and Tristano rode behind him with a sword slung over his shoulder, disguised as a squire.

When they came to the piazza, Lancilotto sent word to the count that he wanted to fight him and win his daughter. The count said he was glad of it, and reminded him that the agreement was this: if he, Count Sebio, lost, he would surrender his daughter and all of his power, but if he won for he had cut off more than seventy heads.

Having seen Lancilotto and his squire he armed himself quickly, and Lancilotto had Tristano, his servant, armed like himself. Then they rode to the meadow where the encounter was to be. Tristano, seeing that the count was ready, went to Lancilotto and said, "Bear yourself bravely against the count, for we must do this: first, because we will reward our host for the great service he has done us, and second, because these are all Saracens, and God will reward us if we destroy them all."

Then Lancilotto rode toward the count and challenged him, and they came together with great vigor, exchanging two such great blows that their lances shattered. Then they drew their swords and began a cruel battle. While Lancilotto fought the count, the bold Sir Tristano, who was not permitted to use a lance, drew his sword and rode among the hundred knights like a lion among beasts. He did then such deeds of arms it was impossible to see them all, but still he had much to do, for they all struck back at him together, some with lances, some with maces, and some with swords, and he was wounded in many places. But in the end, because he delivered such heavy blows, he routed them all, killing more than thirty-six before the others fled, renouncing the count's service and their pay, for they held themselves paid well enough to be overcome by the prowess of a single squire.

Then Tristano, not needing to fight any longer, dismounted, hobbled his horse, and went to watch the battle between Lancilotto and the count. Lancilotto struck vigorously; each one's armor was bent and broken, and they

were wounded in many places. But as they fought Lancilotto struck the count such a blow on his helmet that he sent him to earth badly hurt, and the count soon died of that wound.

When Lancilotto looked around he saw Tristano sitting there and said, "Now what is this, knight?" And Tristano said he had finished his chores, and since there was no one to give him any more trouble, he was resting. At this Lancilotto laughed out loud, saying, "It is a good thing to have a squire so worthy of honor."

Then Tristano and Lancilotto had all the people baptized, and gave the count's daughter in marriage to the son of their host, and gave the host's daughter as wife to the count's son. To the count's son they gave the name of Sir Dona Avventura, and they named the host's son Sir Richevi Ventura; Lancilotto knighted the count's son and Tristano knighted the son of their host. Then they left, and rode many days without other adventure.

Coming to two boundary posts, Tristano and Lancilotto took leave of each other, because Tristano was leaving the quest for the Sangradale to go back to the beautiful Queen Isotta the Blonde. And if he departed without leave—for he was not dismissed—it was because he was not worthy, that is, chosen to receive grace, that he might leave behind all thought of sin. He was more desirous of seeing Queen Isotta than of sitting at the Holy Table where the twelve knights would be who had no thought of carnal sin, or hate, or pride—for there was no sin of avarice in those days.

Know that his desire to see Queen Isotta robbed Tristano of the grace not to see or feel such thoughts, and if this had not been so he would have been of the first to see and to taste from the holy vessel because of his courtesy and loyalty.

When Lancilotto parted with Tristano, he rode straight to the castle at Corbeniche, to the place where the knights of the Tavola were supposed to be, but because his heart was occupied with other things, its true semblance was at first hidden from him. Still, finally he came to the spiritual castle, where he was struck unconscious and lay in a trance for twenty-four days, as he had been in the sin of intemperate lust for twenty-four years. In a vision he saw a deer carried by four angels, and the deer became a human child, then changed back to a deer again. At the end of twenty-four days, Lancilotto came to himself.

Now the story stops telling of Lancilotto, and we will speak again of Tristano.

The masters of the story tell that when Sir Tristano left Sir Lancilotto behind he rode into the kingdom of Lestenois, and went for three days without meeting adventure. One day, as he was rounding the foot of a great slope and riding onto a lovely plain, he met a grand and venerable baron, the lord of that country, who was called Sir Altamondo, with a company of 140 knights. Riding in front was a young knight, the boldest in that country, named Sir Lucanoro, son of the brutal castellan of the fortress of Giedrano.

When Sir Lucanoro saw Tristano, he challenged him to joust, and they rode apart to begin the fight, then exchanged two great blows. Lucanoro struck Tristano with his lance, piercing shield and hauberk clear to the flesh, but still he could not bend him over the saddlebow; Tristano struck with such skill that Lucanoro's shield and hauberk were not worth a button, putting his lance through the middle of the young knight's heart and sending him dead to the ground.

At this, Sir Altamondo and the others raised a loud lament, and Tristano rode toward them, saying, "My lords, I am very sorry for what has happened, but for all that, I deserve no blame. He is the one who summoned me to battle."

Sir Altamondo replied, "We lament our great loss, but we have no hatred for you. We ask only for courtesy's sake that you tell us your name, and then you may go on your way."

Tristano told them, then departed and rode until evening, when he came to an abbey of monks where all of his needs were attended to. In the morning he took leave and went on his way. He rode for two days without seeing the face of a knight, making his way through woods and forests. He rode until he reached a fine, strong fortress; he entered and was gently received by the castellan.

When the tables were made ready, Tristano and his host sat down and were courteously served. The castellan looked at Tristano and saw that he was such a fine, young knight, and he began to weep aloud. Tristano asked him what it was that had changed his aspect so, and why he wept thus bitterly.

The castellan said to Tristano, "Sir knight, I weep and lament for good reason, for it has not been eight days since my son was killed, a young man about your age called Sir Lucanoro. He was killed by a knight who called himself Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia. If God would grant me the grace to get my hands on him, how gladly I would cut off his head!"

Tristano replied, "Ah, my lord castellan, these things that happen in adventures at arms ought not to be held a shame or a dishonor."

At that, the knight rose from the table, and it seemed to Tristano a thousand and years until morning might come and he could get out of the fortress. Then a squire came in who had been present when Tristano had killed the castellan's son. When he saw Tristano, he recognized him; he called the castellan aside, saying, "Sire, you have here in your house the knight who killed your son."

The castellan said to the squire, "Valet, say nothing more. Leave this to me." After a while, Tristano was led to rest in a chamber where a luxurious bed had been prepared. The castellan meanwhile had fifty knights armed, and had Tristano's sword secretly removed. Then the knights went to his room and the castellan had them seize him and lock him securely in prison, saying that his head would be cut off in the morning.

When morning came he armed himself and 140 knights, and took Tristano out of the castle toward the place where justice was to be done. On their way they encountered the knight errant called Palamidesso the Pagan. Palamidesso, seeing that Tristano was being taken to the place of execution, rode toward him saying, "Sir knight, now your pride must wane, and soon you will be paid back for your great haughtiness. I for one will be right glad of it."

But Tristano answered him, "Palamidesso, if I die, it will not be through your prowess, and of this you may be sure: I am unjustly condemned. Only one thing comforts me, that you will never again be honored among knights errant when they find out that you let me die in this way."

Then Palamidesso thought a little, saying to himself, "Alas, Lord God, what am I doing to let Tristano die like this? Never again will I be held worthy among knights, and King Artù and the knights errant will seek vengeance on me. They would be right to do it, too, if I let the nobility and prowess of all chivalry die."

So he decided to do all in his power to help, then rode up to the brutal castellan, saying, "Sir, I ask that for courtesy's sake you pardon Tristano your ill will, and for the sake of grace render him to me."

But the castellan replied, "Knight, before I pardon Tristano I would let myself be cut in pieces, and if you argue with me any more, I will have your head as well as his."

Then Palamidesso said to himself, "So. There is nothing for me to do but fight as hard as I can."

They rode apart, then Palamidesso lowered his lance and struck the castellan on the shield, cutting through shield and hauberk, piercing him clear to the heart with the iron point and sending him dead from his horse. He commanded his squire to disarm the dead man and give the arms to Tristano. Then Palamidesso defeated a second knight and a third, and before his lance was broken he sent seven knights to the ground. Then he drew his sword and began a vigorous attack.

Tristano and the Round Table

When Palamidesso looked to see where Tristano was, he saw that his captors had abandoned him, and that the squire had unbound him and given him the castellan's armor and horse. Already he was armed and fighting boldly. Then Palamidesso, seeing how Tristano did, drew near him and the two of them fought nobly, so that in a short time all the people were killed or routed.

Afterwards, they entered the fortress, where all the people were at their mercy. Tristano found his own good horse, his armor, and his good sword; he put on his own arms and left those of the castellan.

When they had rested a little Palamidesso said, "By my faith, Tristano, you were not very bright when you thought that I would come lay down my life at Merlin's stone with you. For look you, if I had come the results

would have been very bad. I am sure you would have finished me off, and if you had, then the castellan would have killed you, for I would not have been here to rescue you as I have done.

"And I tell you there is no need for enmity between us, for I swear by my faith that from the day you in courtesy offered me peace before Gioiosa Guardia, I have never looked toward Queen Isotta, nor made one improper gesture. I give thanks to God that I love her with a loyal love, as a brother loves his sister."

Tristano said, "Palamidesso, you are the knight who has rescued me from death. Therefore be sure that I am your knight; I swear that never again will there be war between you and me."

Then they finished their talk, and Palamidesso said that he would like to keep the fortress for himself, to live there and rest himself for about three months. Tristano said he was pleased with that, for Palamidesso had certainly earned it. Then he took leave of Palamidesso and rode toward the kingdom of Longres and the castle of Gioiosa Guardia.

Now the tale stops speaking of Sir Tristano, and tells about Sir Prezzivale, who was a companion of the sacred table of the Sangradale.

CXVII.

The true story tells that as Sir Prezzivale rode off all alone seeking the adventure of the Sangradale, he came to a small hermitage where he found one of his sisters doing penance, and she was called the Queen of the Wasteland. When she saw Prezzivale she did him great honor and told him how she had come to this place to do penance on the day their mother had died, saying, "She died of sorrow after you left her."

Prezzivale prayed that God would have mercy on his mother's soul, then he asked, "Lady, might Sir Galasso and Sir Bordo the Chaste have arrived here today?"

She replied that everyone here dwelt apart, but said, "Soon the high God will gather you together for the great adventure, and it will be through your perfect virginity that you will eat together at the holy table of the Sangradale."

For it should be known that there were three principal tables. The first was that of Cristo for his apostles; the second, patterned after the first, was ordained by Cristo and kept by Giuseppe di Bramanzia with more than 6,000 people. Among these were three brothers, nephews of Giuseppe, and one want Giuseppe for my master. I am as noble as he!"

Then out of pride he seated himself in a grand triumphal chair and fell into the abyss. The chair opened and the earth would not sustain him, so that he was swallowed up. From then on, no knight had been bold enough to sit in that chair. This table of the Sangradale existed forty-four years after the passion of Cristo.

It was in memory of the Sangradale that the Tavola Ritonda was ordained in Gerusalemme by the knight who was the son of Merlino the Prophet, and was filled with the best knights who could be found in the world. Then Merlino placed at the table that chair from which the nephew of Giuseppe had disappeared, and named it the Seggio Periglioso. He prophesied that whoever sat in it would disappear except for one virgin knight, the most gracious knight in the world. "This will be Galasso," Merlino had said to Prezzivale. "He will sit at the table of the Sangradale, and you and Bordo will keep him company."

Then Prezzivale asked his sister about her son Bencin, and she said he was in the service of King Peles. Prezzivale slept that night on the bare

ground, for neither he nor any knight deemed worthy of the high quest could sleep in any other bed. When morning came he took leave and went on his way.

As he was riding he met twenty knights transporting a bier on which a dead knight lay. When these knights saw Prezzivale they attacked and began to strike at him. He defended himself boldly, but finally they killed his good horse and were about to put an end to him, when fortune sent Sir Galasso that way. Galasso saved him from death and went on his way.

Then Prezzivale was left on foot all alone, and he could not walk because of the great heat and the weight of his armor. All at once there came an old lady with a great horse, and when she saw Prezzivale, she gave it to him. As soon as he had mounted it the horse began to run toward a broad river, and Prezzivale, who could not hold it back, made the sign of the cross and threw himself off. The horse leaped into the river and drowned. Here Prezzivale stayed that night, saying, "Alas, Lord God, who suffered and died for sinners, and who has led me into your service, guard and defend me from carnal sin."

When he looked up he saw a great serpent who was carrying off a little lion cub. There was a great lion in pursuit, barking and roaring. Then Prezzivale drew his sword, struck the serpent and killed it, and at that, the lion showed great joy.

As Prezzivale rested there in the moonlight it came to him in a vision and seemed true that he saw a lady riding on a lion who said to him, "Prezzivale, know that you are guarded from all temptation." It was our Lady, the holy Maria, and the lion was the evangelist—it was they who comforted him.

When day came Prezzivale looked at the great river and saw a ship all covered with black samite. In it there was a most beautiful damsel who received him with great honor. She came down from the ship and had a noble pavilion raised on the shore, and had a rich silken bed made inside. She invited Prezzivale to eat and drink, serving him very honorably. So beautiful she seemed and so well she pleased him that Prezzivale asked her for her love. She said, "If my love delights you, I will be well pleased."

Then she lay down on the bed, and Prezzivale was just going to her when his sword fell. As he bent down to pick it up he noticed the vermillion cross traced on its pommel. Looking at it, he remembered how he was sinning. He made the sign of the holy cross and asked God to protect him; when he did that the lady and the pavilion vanished.

As Prezzivale stood there, very thoughtful, a ship covered with white samite approached the river bank. In it was an old man with white hair who called out courteously to the young knight and had him enter the ship. The old man disappeared as soon as Prezzivale had boarded, but the knight heard a voice saying, "Prezzivale, have courage and fear nothing, for soon you will have the understanding which you have desired so long."

Prezzivale stayed on the ship which was provisioned with bread and fresh water, but because he was alone, he felt somewhat anxious. Now the story stops telling about Sir Prezzivale and we will tell of Sir Boro the Chaste, and how he fared in the high adventure of the Sangradale.

Tristan and

CXVIII.

The story is that Sir Bordo was riding all alone in search of the adventure of the Sangradale when he came upon a hermitage. Here he found a holy hermit who heard his confession, and Bordo vowed that as long as the quest should last he would eat nothing but bread and water.

Then the hermit offered him the body of Cristo, saying, "Do you see what I have in my hand?" And Bordo replied, "I see that you are holding my savior in the semblance of bread, and I am certain it is the true God." Then with great reverence he received it.

After that, he left the hermit and rode on through the great forest. Then he saw a beautiful bird with varicolored feathers flying around a dead tree. Alighting on the tree the bird found many little birds lying dead: they were his children. At once with his beak he tore open the front of his chest, spilling blood all over the small birds, and they, by virtue of that blood, came back to life. That bird is called a pelican.

The blessed master Santo Agostino speaks of this, saying that in the power of his blood the pelican is like our lord Iesu Cristo who, seeing that we were dead to the grace and virtue of the Holy Spirit, and that the devils had won such great power over us miserable sinners that they were seizing us body and soul and carrying us into limbo, came to earth to endure passion and death for us. He spilled his precious blood all over us, and left here the teachings that quickened us who had been dead, so that we recognized the power and virtue of our lord.

Through these things the demons who hunt through heaven and earth lost the power they had over us, and through the virtue of that precious blood we were redeemed from death. Then we could see the right way to go and could return to the one through whom we had come into this world. Thus we pray to him to give us grace and knowledge of how to live our lives, so that after our death we may return to him in holiest glory, from whom comes nothing less. *In perpetua secula seculorum, amen.*

The Round Table

Bordo, having seen the example of the pelican which killed itself to bring its children to life, came that same evening to a tall tower. Here a widowed lady lived who received Bordo gladly and did him great honor. She told him how King Amar had left her lady of all that country, saying, "But now I am very poor and poorly furnished, as you may see. After King Amar died, a tyrannous giant from another country took all my wealth, and to harm me he has seized the lady my sister." Bordo felt great pity for her.

In the morning he left and went on his way, riding all that day through a great valley. At night he rested at the foot of a tall tree and saw a great contest between two birds, one white and the other black. The white bird perched on a leafy branch of the tree beside two flowers, but the black one roosted on a withered and rotten branch.

When daylight came Bordo continued on his way, and at the hour of tierce he encountered his brother Lionello all naked, riding a wornout nag. Two knights were whipping him harshly and he was covered with blood. Just as Bordo was going to help his brother he looked and saw coming from another way an armed knight who led a beautiful woman, meaning to force her will and do her shame. She was crying and calling out, "O blessed virgin Maria, help your faithful servant! Don't let me lose my virginity!"

Then Bordo was very unhappy, saying, "If I don't help my brother he will die, and if I don't help the maiden, she will lose her virginity."

But he let his brother go and went to help the maiden, killing the knight who was leading her and letting her go on her way. When he returned to the place he had left his brother, he could not find him, but soon he met a friar on horseback who said, "Bordo, Bordo, if you ride on ahead you will find your brother."

Riding by a ruined chapel Bordo found a dead body, all bloody, and truly it seemed to be Lionello his brother. Then Bordo began the greatest lament in the world. He dug a grave with his sword and buried the body with much mourning.

Then he rode on and came that evening to a tower where a lovely lady dwelt with twelve beautiful damsels. The lady received Bordo with great honor, then said to him, "Bordo, I must tell you that I am so much in love with you that I can find neither rest nor repose. I promise you, if you will take delight with me I will make you the happiest knight in the world, but if you will not, I and these my maidens will throw ourselves to the ground from these tower windows."

Bordo replied, "Lady, know that I can in no way do your will in this." Then she and all of her damsels together threw themselves out of the high tower, but when he looked Bordo saw neither the tower nor the women. Then he thought it had all been the work of the devil, who wanted to deceive him.

CXIX.

Bordo rode on through the deep forest until he came to an ancient hermitage where lived an aged holy hermit, a man who had lived there over eighty years eating nothing but wild apples and spring water and wearing nothing but his own long hair which completely covered his skin. Bordo rested there that night and told him what had happened along the way. The hermit, whose nature was holy and wise, said³⁰,

"Bordo, since you received the blessed body of Cristo, and made confession and did penance for your sins, then Cristo the joyful savior appeared to you in the guise of a bird, alighting on the tree and tearing open his breast so that his children might live. He did this to perfect your faith, just as he descended to the tree of the cross and with his holy blood redeemed all mankind."

"And then you came to the house of the widowed lady left by King Amar as his heir, she whom the tyrannous giant had robbed. Know, Bordo, that this widowed and impoverished lady signified the holy mother church which upholds the Christian faith and is at war with the ancient laws, the false scribes, and the Pharisees; that is, with evil clerics and bad priests. She is poor because often faithful Christians rob her; that is, they offend her through their mortal sins."

"The giant, that great tyrant who forced himself on her sister, is one who at present does not exist but who will be. By force he will conquer seat and crown, rising finally to the great college, according with and marrying the widow's sister. Here he will be confirmed in his true being. He will pursue and constrain those things through which all faithful Christians will be glorified and increased in grace; he will cross the great river and come to an eternal chamber."

"I do not know how this will be, because slowly the enterprise will occur which will be called cured. The widowed lady, not seeing, will not be attacked except that her claim might be, but he will be among those who will guide her when their avarice and suspicion might shorten for them the way of the journey."

"But if it were thus, then afterwards the contest will be great and the fat beast will suffer, the one who interrupted the thin beast. This is the meaning of the two birds you saw contending with each other: the bird which

roosted in the rotting tree signifies those talking scribes who take away what will be ordained to those who will follow, and the bird which sat on the tree with two flowers stands for those who will follow and be true to the lady, that is to holy mother church. In such are two flowers; first, the hope of salvation, and second, the desire to dedicate themselves to the high quest. "The ladies whom you found mean that, at the time I have described, the unlawful sin of lust was not a thing held in despite, rather it was in the lean as in the fat. And those of you who consent not, God will call you holy knights; thus he will do with everyone who resists that vice."

"And know that only through such sin, practiced in an unlawful way, also through a mortal vice which shall be but is not now, which others, as a sign of love and in a desire to multiply, will do, will this be, not for love but out of greed.

"And these will be enemies of God who will bring about a great persecution of mankind. They will act contrary to the way that you, Bordo, behaved when you left your brother Lionello in order to aid the maiden. You did this because you loved the soul more than the body. And those who are greedy and jealous of another's earnings love money more than soul or body. The soul will be lost, then the body will be worthless. Such people as these will be lost in this world and in the other; they will be unloved by friends or enemies. They will not abandon the world, but wealth will abandon them."

"Here it can be said that whoever has more will lose more, and with greater sorrow will pass away, leaving what he cannot take, taking what he cannot leave. Know, Bordo, that your brother Lionello is alive and not dead. The man you saw was the enemy, who wanted to deceive you."

After Bordo had rested there that night, in the morning he went on. He rode to the shore, where he saw approaching him a ship covered with white samite, carrying Prezzivale. Prezzivale called to Bordo who rode out to him and boarded the ship; then the wind, according to God's will, sent them onto the high seas.

Now the story stops speaking of Sir Bordo and Sir Prezzivale, and we will tell of the noble and gracious Sir Galasso who, out of all twelve companions, was the one to achieve the high quest, and who was the first to begin.

Istragies Ragies

The Round Table

which had belonged to King Davidde, and also the sword, which King Salinoro drew out as far as you see; but because he was not worthy to touch it wounded him on the right thigh. The sword is called Istragies Ragies, because Salamone's wife put here straps of tow.

And it had been ordained that on this bed should rest three virgins and one who was perfectly chaste. Of the three cloths over the bed, the white one stands for the tree which was in the middle of bright paradise, from which Eva and Adamo took the apple; then the tree which had been white became green to show how they had lost their innocence and come to the consciousness of sensuality which led them to sin, so that Caino killed Abello his brother. At that the green tree became red to signify the sin of spilled blood.

When the three knights lifted up the crown, they found under it a letter which told all about the ship, and said that the maiden, Prezzivale's sister, should change the belt on the sword. At that the maiden opened one of her coffers and pulled out a narrow belt she had made out of her own blonde hair cut off for chastity's sake. She fastened it to the sword, then Galasso put it on and did what no one had been able to do: he pulled it out and easily sheathed it again. Then Galasso gave his own sword to Prezzivale.

For three days they remained in prayer, and afterwards a wind came and sent the ship to shore. They disembarked to find their horses, then mounted and continued on. Thus they rode on their journey until they came to the castle of Chartelos, whose lord was the Count Erveus.

This count had three evil sons, all three of whom had bedded dishonestly with one of their own sisters and had then killed her. Because their father reproved them and said they had not done well, they threw him into prison.

When Galasso and his companions neared the castle they were attacked by the count's three sons with a hundred and fifty knights. There followed a cruel battle in which both Prezzivale and Bordo were wounded, but finally the knights errant had killed or routed all the people, and entered the castle to free the count.

This count, who was a man of holy life, said to Galasso, "Knight, go to the castle of the wounded king, because through you he will regain his health. I send you with God's blessing."

Then the count passed suddenly from this life, and Galasso had him honorably buried. Afterwards, the three knights and the maiden mounted their horses and continued on their way.

CXX.

The true story tells that as Galasso was riding in search of the adventure of the Sangradale he passed through the waste land of Corbeniche and arrived at an abbey. There a saintly abbot lived who received him honorably, taking him by the hand and leading him into the garden, to a tomb where a dead body lay, all on fire. Then that body spoke, saying, "Sir Galasso, welcome, for it is only through you who now gaze on me that I will be delivered from so much pain. God will permit it because of your pure virginity."

Then the bright fire suddenly died, and Galasso left and went on his way. As he rode along, he met a damsel who said to him, "Knight, for courtesy's sake, will you accompany me out of this wasteland?"

Galasso replied that he was ready to. Then the damsel led him to the shore where the ship carrying Bordo and Prezzivale lay at anchor. When they saw that they were all together, the three knights showed the greatest joy in the world; they unsaddled their horses and, leading them by the bridles, left them to graze beside the sea.

When all four of them were in the ship, that is, Galasso, Bordo, Prezzivale, and the maiden who was Prezzivale's sister, a wind arose which carried them onto the high seas, where they encountered another ship, richer and more beautiful than their own. As they neared that ship they could read engraved letters on its gunwale that said this:

"O knights, you who please to enter here, guard yourself well, for your entrance will be very dangerous if you have not faith and hope within you, and if you have not ceased from all the vices of sin."

Galasso boarded it first, then the maiden, then Bordo and Prezzivale. On board, they saw a bedstead covered with white samite; at its head was a golden crown and at its foot was a sword that had been pulled a hand's breadth out of its sheath. Over the bed hung three lengths of linen cloth, one white, one red, and the other green.

The knights marvelled greatly at these things, and the maiden Agrestizia, who was holy and pure and worthy, was inspired by God to tell them what it meant. She told them how King Salamone had had this ship made because he had found out that the most gracious knight in the world would be descended from his line. And for that reason also he put here the crown,

CXXI.

The masters of the story tell that Galasso, Prezzivale, Bordo, and the maiden rode on until they came to the Castle Aspetta Ventura. As they were passing the castle on foot some sixty knights came to meet them, accompanying a lady who held a silver bowl in her hand. The knights asked the three men if the lady with them were a virgin, and when Galasso said yes, they said, "Then you may not leave here unless that maiden will give for toll this bowl full of her blood. There lives here a lady—we are all in her service—who through God's will is suffering from a dangerous disease called leprosy. She has heard a prophecy that she may never be cured until she drinks this bowl full of the blood of a particular damsels, the virgin sister of Sir Prezzivale. Since we do not know who that damsels is, we must require the toll of every virgin who comes here, because she who was named to us will surely be among them."

Then Prezzivale stepped forward, saying that his sister would pay no such toll, for she was too young and delicate to suffer such torture. The sixty knights said that it would be done whether they liked it or not, and so there was great quarrel: they all drew their swords and began to fight. The battle was hard, but in the end the three knights killed their sixty opponents. Still they could not escape, for the lady of the castle sent more than 400 more knights after them.

Then the maiden came forward and said to them, "My lords, you have heard how terribly this lady is afflicted; be assured that through me she can be made well. And so to stop the evil custom by which so many ladies have perished in my place, and to prevent your fighting more, I will help her, and hope in God."

Then they entered the castle, and the maiden let the blood be drawn from her right arm; but before the bowl was full, she died, for it was very large.

The lady of the castle, when she drank that blood, was completely cured, and Galasso, Prezzivale, and Bordo, with loud laments, put the maiden's body into a little boat and sent it out to sea, giving her to God. After that, they left the castle of the Lady Verdoana, who for her cure had had more than 260 virgins killed.

The three knights rode on until they came to the castle at Corbeniche, where they were received with greatest honor. They disarmed completely,

except Galasso, who did not unfasten his sword. Here Galasso mended the broken sword with which Giuseppe had been wounded in the right thigh because he would not give in to temptation.

As they stayed there the weather began to change, and a wind arose, exceedingly hot, so fiery that they were all afraid they would die. Then they heard a voice which said, "All of those chosen to sit at the board of the Holy Table: go and sit down, and you will be filled with sacred celestial food."

Then the knights sat down, twelve of them, all on the high quest. After a little, they saw coming out of the next room four damsels carrying a bed in which lay a man of noble countenance who wore on his head a golden crown. This was King Peles, the grandfather of Sir Galasso, who had come to join the company. The maidens set the bed down in the middle of the hall, then withdrew. King Peles lifted up his head, saying, "Galasso, my grandson, you are very welcome, because through you will come my cure."

As the twelve knights were waiting, they looked toward the ceiling and saw someone descending, dressed like a bishop, carrying a cross in his hand. Then four angels carried the cross to the middle of the hall, among the knights, to the table of the Sangradale where Cristo had eaten with his apostles. The bishop had letters embroidered across his breast which said: "You see here Giuseppe, the first Christian bishop, consecrated by God in the city of Sarache, at the holy palace."

Then Giuseppe spoke to the knights, saying, "Servants of God, be comforted, and be ready to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit."

Then they smelled a strong perfume, and saw four angels come out of a room. One carried four burning candles, another carried a tablet of vermillion, and another a bleeding lance so that the drops all met together in a runnel, and the fourth carried a vessel into which the drops all fell.

They laid the tablet on Giuseppe's table, that is, the table of the Sangradale which had been in that castle since the time Giuseppe died, and had been in the holy chapel. On it also they put the lights, the lance, and the holy vessel, into which had fallen the precious blood.

Then Giuseppe entered to say mass, and afterwards took from the vessel a small crumb of bread. When he laid it in the middle of the table, the bread took the shape of a little boy, and Giuseppe held the child in his hands so that all the knights could see, then put it back in the vessel.

And when the holy mass was over, Giuseppe came to Galasso and gave him the kiss of peace, commanding that he kiss all the others. He did so, then Giuseppe said, "Knights, you who are laborers in the service of God, remain seated at this table and be filled and satisfied by holy grace."

With these words, Giuseppe disappeared; then they saw to issue from the vessel our Savior in the form of a naked man, his hands, feet, and side all covered with blood. And when he appeared, he spoke thus: "O my knights,

my loyal servants, you who have turned from mortal to spiritual things and have abandoned all sin, you have found grace. You have so searched for me that I cannot hide myself from you; therefore I give you my grace and my precious blood."

Then he came to Galasso and had him taste the blood, then to Bordo, then Prezzivale, then all the other knights. They were filled with all the sweetest food in the world, and Cristo said to them, "Now you have seen and touched the Sangradale, which will keep you strong and constant in my faith. And you, Galasso, Bordo, and Prezzivale, go to the shore where you will find the ship in which the sword Istragies Ragies lay. But first attend to the healing of King Peles."

Then he told Galasso to take blood from the lance and rub it on King Peles' thighs and hands. Galasso did this, and the king was healed at once. Then holy Cristo said to them, "Blessed sons, there are twelve of you, as there were twelve apostles. Go therefore where it seems to you that grace may be dispensed."

Then he vanished, and the knights saw him no more. At that, the knights stayed as though entranced; among them were ten virgins and two chaste men. Four were knights errant, three were from Gaules of the kinsmen of King Grandes, three had come from Irlanda and two from Scozia, and all came of noble families.

Know that Lancilotto was also on the adventure, and experienced something of it, as I have told, near the palace where Astore di Mare was with many other knights, but the rest of them experienced nothing. At this quest but was one of those left behind because of carnal sin. He became very cruel because of his disappointment, and in scorn of the quest killed more than thirty knights errant. He did it from sext to nones, when his strength was double.³¹

Now when Galasso and Prezzivale and Bordo were full of sacred celestial grace, they left the castle of Corbeniche, went to the shore, and found the ship I told you about before and boarded it. Looking at Salamone's bed, they saw the body of Prezzivale's sister, and over her head was the Sangradale. They took the body and the holy vessel and brought them to the sacred city of Sarache, where they put the vessel in the holy sacristy of the cathedral, and buried the maiden at the door.

That night, the king of the city, who was called Escoras, passed from this life according to God's will, and on the next day, the people of the city made Galasso king. He wore the crown they had found in the ship for one year, and afterwards his soul, in great holiness, left his body. Prezzivale and Bordo had him honorably buried. Then Prezzivale and Bordo left the city and Prezzivale went into the wilderness of Corbeniche to do penance. He became a holy hermit to serve God, living that way for a year and four months,

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and he died. Bordo returned to the city of Camellotto, to tell what had happened on the high quest.
Now the story of the high quest for the Sangradale is ended, and we will tell how King Marco came to Gioiosa Guardia to reclaim the beautiful Isotta the Blonde.

CXXII.



he true story tells that King Marco, because he knew that his wife Isotta and Tristano his nephew were at Gioiosa Guardia, was the saddest king in the world, and would have agreed to give away his whole kingdom to recover his lady. After he had been in misery for a long time, he made a pact with the king of Sansogna, the king of Gualagne, and the king of Sobicio: all four swore to band together against King Artù, because they wanted to be free of him.

They were inspired to do it because at that moment King Artù was weakened by a lack of warriors, since the great barons and bold knights of the Tavola Ritonda were all away on the high quest. These four kings then besieged King Artù in Camellotto. While the siege was going on, King Marco found out that Tristano and Lancilotto were away in the Valle Franca and the Valle Bruna; secretly, accompanied by a hundred knights and four hundred foot soldiers, he rode toward Gioiosa Guardia. When he was near he put himself in ambush and waited three days.

One day Queen Isotta and her ladies came out of the castle to walk for amusement in the beautiful gardens, and then the king had her seized. When the people of the castle realized what had happened, they armed themselves at once and rode after the king and his men to take Isotta back. When they overtook King Marco's men they began a vigorous fight. It was a cruel battle; Sir Gulistante and Sir Lantris were killed in it, as were many foot soldiers on both sides. King Marco was wounded on his face, but in the end he led Queen Isotta away, sending her back to Cornovaglia under the guard of a hundred knights and two hundred foot soldiers. Then he returned to the siege at Camellotto.

Know that Brandina remained alone in Gioiosa Guardia when Queen Isotta was taken. When she saw that she had been abandoned, for she did not know what would happen to Isotta, and when she saw that Sir Lantris was dead, her sorrow was so great that she grew sick and died.

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CXXIII.

The true story tells that the four kings remained for a while outside the city of Camellotto, but that when the siege had lasted twenty-eight days they were finally defeated by the prowess of Sir Palamidesso, Sir Mordarette, and other brave knights who had gathered to help King Artù. Then King Marco returned to Cornovaglia with the few knights that were left him, for the others had all been killed. But finding Queen Isotta there greatly comforted him, for when he saw her rosy face he forgot all his losses.

Then many messengers went out from Gioiosa Guardia to find Tristano and Lancilotto and tell them the dolorous news. One of the messengers had ridden for more than nineteen days when he met Tristano one morning on the border of Igres riding back to see the beautiful Isotta, departing without leave from the high quest, for he had not been discharged. But he had not overcome the will to sin, in order to have sacred grace.

When the messenger saw Tristano, he told him the sorrowful news, saying, "Tristano, twenty-six days ago King Marco entered the confines of Gioiosa Guardia, killing Sir Lantris and Sir Gulistante and many others, and took Queen Isotta away with him." Then he told him how the four kings had been defeated at Camellotto.

Tristano, when he heard this cruel and deadly news, lost consciousness and fell off his horse, lying for a long time on the ground like one dead, for he was senseless. His face was pale and shadowed, like the face of a corpse. When he regained consciousness, he began the greatest complaint in the world, saying, "O embalconied rose, how have I lost you? Alas, I am so sorrowful; who has taken you from me? O noble creature, where have you gone? I believe you are sorrowing because of it, but my life is inconsolable."

Then, sorrowing greatly, he got back on his horse and rode slowly through the wilderness of Gargalco, weeping constantly, and speaking this lament:

"I despair of myself, alas! and I summon death,
Since I have lost my sweet comfort,

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The new blown rose, plucked in the delightful garden,
The one I long for always in my heart.

O leafy date tree, palm of gleaming paradise,
You for whom the angels make delightful songs,
God formed you with his hands,
And surely in you is planted the savory apple.

ANGELIC CREATURE
BECAUSE OF YOU I FIND NO REST, DAY NOR NIGHT NOR ANY HOUR . . .

As Tristano rode thus crying and lamenting, he could feel nothing except his great sorrow. Then he encountered two knights errant; one was Chieso the Seneschal, the other Dodinello the Savage. Sir Chieso challenged Tristano to joust, but because of his sorrow Tristano neither saw him nor heard. Then Chieso attacked him, and struck him on the shield so hard that he sent horse and rider to earth. Tristano was very sorry about that, saying, "By my faith, Sir Chieso, it was a great villainy for you to strike me like that."

Sir Chieso, who recognized Tristano by his voice, was the saddest knight in the world; weeping, he knelt before Sir Tristano and begged his forgiveness. Tristano, who at that point cared for nothing, pardoned him, and asked that, if he should encounter Sir Lancilotto, he would tell him what had happened, and that he "was never so happy as I am now so sorrowful and sad."

Then they parted, and Tristano rode on, wandering to a spring where he dismounted to rest. When he had been there a little while, along came a knight errant who challenged him to a joust, but Tristano replied that he had no desire to fight, for he had lost all strength and power. He said to Tristano, who bore a vermilion shield, "Sir Astore di Mare. He said to Tristano, 'What, sir! Are you not a knight errant, and daring?'"

"By my faith," answered Tristano, "I am the most unfortunate knight in the world."

"Where are you from?" asked Astore; and Tristano replied that he was from the kingdom of Cornovaglia. Then Astore, out of meanness and scorn, took Tristano's shield from the tree where it was hanging and threw it in the pool, saying that he did so to spite King Marco and his entire country.

Then Tristano said, "Knight, you have done a great villainy. But I ask only that you take the shield out of the spring and hang it back where it was: that way my shame will be amended."

But the knight paid no attention to those words; he rode away joking and laughing the loudest laugh in the world. Then Tristano went to the spring, pulled his shield out, and bound it on his arm. He mounted and rode after Sir Astore, calling, "Knight, now you can have your joust, if you like, since you wanted it so much."

Astore, still laughing, turned his horse around, and they rode at each other, exchanging two great blows. Astore broke his lance on Tristano, but Tristano struck him with such force that he sent him flying a lance's length before he fell to the ground. Then Tristano dismounted, tore Sir Astore's shield from his arm, and threw it in the pool to pay back for his own, then he went on his way.

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Tristano, because the hour was late, accepted, and then Breus also invited Sir Astore di Mare. Know that Breus was a knight errant, nephew of the king of Normelanda. He lived in this fortress because it was in a wilderness, and he did not get on well with other knights. He was the most envious and the cruellest knight in the world, and he had a wife whom, out of jealousy, he would let no one see. He was never courteous. His lady was called Galiena. At that time she was thirty years old, but she looked forty because of all the troubles he gave her. He let neither knights or young boys serve in his court, only maidservants and young girls, and he hated all women who were lovers for fear they might desire his wife. He said that all women were evil, and that his was worse than any other.

As the three knights rode on they went by a lovely tower which was all painted and decorated. At the window was a graceful, most beautiful maiden who was playing a viola and singing a song. It was a song that Tristano had made for the beautiful Isotta the Blonde when first they knew each other in love on board the ship, and it said this:

"Love, whoever serves you is nobly rewarded;
Whoever loves deserves good will,
And has no doubt in himself, nor fear,
Nor any impediment.
You are such a noble lord,
Noble above all other delights."

Then she sang another song, one which Tristano had made when Isotta was taken by King Marco from the tower of the Wise Damsel. The song said:

"My sweet love,
Gentle rose, angelic face,
You are the flower above all others
Like God is above all creatures.
Have mercy, my lady, upon your servant
Who has lost such a noble face;
Sweet queen, you are gone,
And my life is inconsolable."

Tristano, when he heard these words he had first spoken for the one he could not now see, swooned over his saddlebow and heaved a great sigh, saying, "Alas, Lord God, how that woman's singing renewes my heavy grief."

Breus said, "Knight, think nothing of that woman's evil words, for she is a lady of little goodness. Sir Calvano put her there to spite me."

Riding on, the knights came to Breus's fortress, where they found the gate locked tight. When he called out, two damsels opened it and lowered the

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All that day Tristano rode on, heavy-hearted and always weeping. Then he met a damsel riding in great haste; she also was weeping bitterly, and she carried in her hand a short lance with a very sharp blade. Tristano asked her why she was weeping, and what lance was that she carried, and the damsel said, "My lady the Fata Morgana has sent me to the kingdom of Cornovaglia to present this lance, on her behalf, to King Marco. He is to carry it when he hunts, for he may be sure that with it he will be able to kill the beast that frightens all other beasts, and this death will be remembered as long as the world shall last. Know, knight, that this was the weapon that killed Onesun, my master, and it is this sharp blade that will avenge his death."

Fata Morgana, through her magic powers, knew that Tristano would die by that weapon, but to be sure that he would not escape it, she had enchanted and poisoned it in such a way that whoever it wounded could never be healed. Tristano heard the damsel, but paid little attention to what she said; still he began to wonder about this friendship between King Marco and Fata Morgana, marvelling greatly that it should be.

All at once, here came Breus sanza Pietà, looking for the damsel who was speaking with Tristano, meaning to ravish her. As he approached, he shouted at Tristano, "Sir Knight, have you taken this woman under your protection?" Tristano said yes. "Then I challenge you," cried Breus. "We must joust."

Then they rode against each other, but Tristano struck Breus such a blow that he sent him unconscious to the ground. At that point, they were joined by Astore di Mare, who said, "Knight, you told me you came from Cornovaglia, but your prowess argues otherwise."

Tristano made no reply to this, but went to the damsel and said, "Lady, you are free of all this." And she thanked him warmly and went on her way.

When Breus had remounted, he rode up to Tristano, saying, "Sir Knight, I beg that you will come and rest at a fortress of mine; it is nearby."

bridge, then Breus commanded his whole household not to reveal his name, and to tell no one that he had a wife.

When Tristano and Astore had disarmed they recognized each other, and each honored the other greatly. At once there came two damsels with water and silken towels; they had the two knights wash their face and hands, for they were all covered with sweat and battle stains, and then they brought them two rich silken robes.

This was the first courteous act Breus had ever done in this world, and he did it because when Sir Tristano had beaten him and his horse had tried to run away, Tristano had captured it and brought it back to him. It is very true, as the proverb says, that the courtesy of a courteous man does much to cure a villain of his villainy, for it is said that goodness is as goodness does.

Then Breus joined the other two knights and asked their names. Astore replied, "Kind host, you may not know the name of this knight yet, but I am called Sir Astore di Mare."

When Breus heard that this was Astore, his mortal enemy, he flushed angrily, and left them with bad intentions. He told one of his nieces that the second knight was Astore di Mare, who had once held him in prison more than six months. He said, "If I didn't have that other knight to worry about, I would gladly be avenged on him."

Then the maiden took a harp and went in to join the two knights. After she had played a while, Tristano took the harp and played so elegantly it was a marvel to hear. When he had played a little, he turned to Sir Astore, saying, "The day I heard the sad news about Gioiosa Guardia, and was resting there beside the fountain where you found me, I made a sonnet about my heavy sorrow. Now I want to sing it for you." Then he began again to play, singing:

"It was yet the time when I was with my lady
In happiness, delight and sport,
Asking for no other joy, desiring no rest
From gazing at her bright face:

Then in a cruel moment I left her in such a way
That I have never felt such awful torment.
Those who have been in hell for a century
Feel less pain than I do in every way.

Alas, lord Cristo, why did I leave?
Why did you let such a thing happen?
I might have stayed with my own true love!

Then she might not have been taken and hidden from me.
Now is the time that I cry for sorrow:
Gentle queen, you have given me such a blow."

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When Tristano had finished his song the maiden said, "Knight, I have never seen you before, but hearing you sing, I say that you are Tristano of Cornovaglia, he who first made that song."

Tristano replied, "Lady, I am truly that Tristano, in whom all happiness is dead."

Then the maiden turned to Breus and told him that the younger knight was Sir Tristano of Cornovaglia: "Be careful, therefore, not to anger him."

Then Breus approached the two knights, and Tristano said, "Kind host, for courtesy's sake, tell me your name."

Breus replied, "I will not tell you now, but I will tell you before you leave here."

At that, water was brought to wash their hands; they sat to eat, and were courteously served. When they had eaten, they washed their hands again, then the tables were removed and the two knights were led into a rich chamber in which two luxurious beds had been prepared. Here they rested the night.

In the morning when they arose, they armed themselves and mounted. Then Breus armed himself and mounted, too, and seemed to be planning to go with them. When the two knights were outside, though, Breus raised the bridge and set a barrier across the gate. Then Tristano turned toward him, saying, "Kind host, won't you ride with us?"

Breus answered, "I would rather stay inside."

Tristano said, "That is all right with me, but please tell me your name."

And their host answered, "Know that I am called Breus sanza Pietà." And when he had said that, he barred the gate again.

Tristano said, "Knight, God save you, why are you doing that?"

And Breus replied, "Because I do not want you ever to enter here again. You are my mortal enemies."

Tristano asked, "How am I your enemy?"

And Breus said, "By my faith, all knights in love are my enemies. I don't trust them. I believe if you had seen my wife you would gladly have shamed me with her."

"By my faith," said Tristano, "I would do no such thing."

"Alas, by evil fortune," said Breus, "How can a man trust what you say, you who have so often taken Queen Isotta from King Marco? And Lan-cilotto, the brother of that traitor there with you, has done the same to King Artù, and it wasn't long ago that Sir Calvano stole the Gaia Donzella from Fata Morgana. You all behave thus, caring nothing for the honor of others, if only you can have your way."

Then Astore said, "Breus, the knight who is not trustworthy himself cannot trust others. Because you know you are faithless, you believe we are disloyal like you."

Breus answered, "Astore, don't thank me that you are safe; rather thank

your good companion, for by my faith, you will not find Sir Breus so courteous another time."

Tristano said, "Breus, whoever you blame, don't praise me, for I was never anywhere that I found such courtesy, or where I was so gently served as I was here."

"Don't get curdled," said Breus, "for the courtesy I've shown you will cost those I'm not afraid of dear. It would be bad luck if all my enemies were stronger than I am. And I can console myself for the honor I've done you with the love that you bear my cousin Dinadano. But it weighs heavily on me that this other traitor must escape out of my hands, for I have never loved Astore or his kin."

Then their talk ended, and the two knights left Breus's fortress and began to ride along their way.

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In this part the story tells that as Sir Tristano and Astore di Mare rode on, they went through the kingdom of Norgales. One day they came to a lovely spring, beside which a rich pavilion had been set up. Here dwelt Sir Trasino, son of the king of Norgales, and here he had a beautiful lady whom he loved very much. He had also in his company a bold knight known as Sir Ales, his first cousin.

When they saw the two knights approaching they challenged them to joust; Sir Tristano defeated Sir Ales, but Sir Trasino overcame Sir Astore and wounded him. After that, Tristano and Trasino began to joust, riding toward each other. At the lowering of the lances, each gave the other a great blow, and Sir Tristano knocked Trasino to the ground, seriously wounded.

Then Tristano and Astore rode on, even though Astore had to go in great pain, for he had lost much blood from his wound. As they rode thus, they encountered a damsel on horseback, and she came toward them weeping bitterly. Her dress was in tatters around her belt, so that it seemed all dishevelled, and her body was all uncovered from the waist down.

Tristano asked her why she wept so bitterly, and she told him she was a messenger from the Dama del Lago, and on her behalf had been bringing a shield to Sir Lancilotto: "But when I came to the wilderness I met a knight who said he was called Breus sanza Pietà, and when he saw me, he demanded the shield I was carrying. I told him I was taking it to Sir Lancilotto,

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but he took it away from me and trampled it under his horse's feet, and then to shame us more he cut my robe as you see, and made me swear that I would put on no other until I had spoken to Lancilotto, and told him all that had been done to spite him."

Then Tristano told the damsel his name, and swore that if he could find Breus, he would kill him. At that, they took leave of each other, and Tristano and Astore rode on through the wild forest around the foot of the wilderness and fortress where Lucano the Great had lived, he whom Tristano had killed. Then they came to the house of a widowed lady where Lancilotto and his kinsmen were always welcome. When the widow recognized Astore she did him great honor, and took him in to treat his wound. Since Tristano could not wait so long, he took leave and went on his way.

That same evening Sir Lancilotto arrived, and Sir Astore told him how he had just parted from Tristano, who had gone in search of Breus. He told him about the damsel they had met, and what Breus had done to her to spite him. Then Lancilotto swore not to return to Camellotto until he had found Breus and put him to death.

When morning came Lancilotto got on his horse and rode through the great wilderness looking for Breus. He encountered him in the deepest valley of the wasteland; when he saw him he recognized him by the insignia Astore had described. Breus, who did not recognize Lancilotto, challenged him to joust, but Lancilotto, for his own purpose, prepared no defense; rather he let fall his lance, like a knight who refuses the challenge.

Then Breus struck him a hard blow on his shield, and Lancilotto, to be sure that this was Breus, said, "Knight, don't hit me, and I will tell you some marvellous news."

"What news will you tell me," asked Breus.

And Lancilotto said, "By my faith, this morning I met a damsel whose robes were all torn so that her body showed bare, and it was the most shameful thing in the world to see."

And Breus said, "Knight, for courtesy's sake, the news you have told me won't keep me from killing you. And I tell you I believe you completely, because with my own hands I did the deed you describe."

Now Lancilotto, sure that this was indeed Breus, rode up beside him and grasped the noseguard of his helmet, and told him that he was Lancilotto. When Breus saw what a situation he was in, he knew he was as good as dead. Most humbly he cried for pardon, but his prayers were useless. Lancilotto struck him so hard on his helmet and shoulders with his sword that he sent him dead to the ground. Then he took his jacket and insignia and put them on, so that he could get inside Breus's fortress and see if any knights and ladies were imprisoned there.

As Lancilotto rode on, wearing Breus's insignia, he came to Merlin's stone, in which words had been carved, saying, "Prophecy of truth in place of ig-

norance. When one brave and another bold arrive here in false skin they will kill each other. Then the third sorceress will be shown false in her prophecy, if by the second astrology it is not restored, the principal cause of evil coming in false clothing, through the aid and interference of good."

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The masters of the story have written that when Merlin prophesied the formation of the Tavola Ritonda, he erected in the world six principal stones. The first was in Liones, and on it was written, "Here will gather the three knights of the wild beast." The second was in Cornovaglia, where the first battle between Lancilotto and Tristano occurred. The third was in Longres, the one in which the sword and the lance were fixed, while the fourth was in the Valle Perigiosa, and it said, "Trespassing Knights." The fifth was in the Valle Scura, in the place where Tristano fought with Lancilotto, thinking that he was Palamidesso. The sixth was this one, to which Lancilotto had just come, in Norgales.

And know that as Lancilotto rested here at the sixth stone Sir Tristano arrived. When he saw Lancilotto wearing Breus's insignia, he truly believed that this was Breus, so he challenged him to joust. Lancilotto did not refuse, so they rode against each other and began to strike vigorously, exchanging two blows on their shields so great that they brought the horses to their knees and shattered both lances to bits. And the knights did not pause; they grasped their swords and began a dangerous battle, dealing such great blows that in a short time their arms were bent and damaged and their mail shirts were all broken, and both of them were wounded in many places. Their blood could be seen covering the ground.

The two knights were reluctant to ask for respite, since each of them thought he was better than the other, and their battle lasted so long that the horses were exhausted. Then they dismounted, intending to finish the fight on foot.

The battle was so fierce that they both would have died if they had fought any longer, but as they fought thus, here came the damsel that Breus had treated so villainously. She recognized Tristano by the insignia he had worn when he swore to avenge her, so she believed that he was fighting with Breus and she was very glad of it. And because it appeared that Tristano was getting the best of the battle, she came forward, saying, "Ah, Sir Tristano, may God comfort you, and may you vindicate my shame against this traitor!"

Hearing this, Lancilotto marvelled greatly, then he remembered he was

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wearing Breus's insignia, so he said to his opponent, "Knight, are you Tristano?"

"Yes, I am," said Tristano, "And I am he by whose hand you must die because of the great villainy you have done this lady."

Then Lancilotto threw off Breus's garment and revealed his own, and took off his helmet, saying to Tristano, "Here is your Lancilotto." Then he told them how he had put Breus to death.

Then they honored each other greatly, and the damsel Onia was very happy about it. They rode back toward the widow's dwelling, where they were treated for their wounds. But Tristano was still always melancholy, and Lancilotto had to comfort him over and over, saying, "Do you know, Tristano, why loyal lovers are always sad and melancholy?"

"Yes, I know," said Tristano. "Don't think I don't."

And Lancilotto said, "I believe it is because the lover does not have the thing he loves, and he is melancholy because he does not believe he will ever have it. But if he does have it, he lives in fear of losing it, and thus he is still melancholy."

Tristano said, "Lancilotto, you speak the truth. But the third reason that the lover is so preoccupied is that his heart is so full of high thoughts that all of his other virtues draw back into themselves, and all his other parts are left sorrowful because they have lost their lord, that is, the heart. At least this is understood by those who love with a loyal love, but not by those who just go around talking about it."

Tristano stayed on for ten days, then took leave of Lancilotto and Astore and began to ride toward the kingdom of Cornovaglia. As he rode, on the third day he came to a palace all painted and decorated. When he went inside he found no one there, only a table all laden with food, so he sat down and ate his fill. As he was eating, out of the next room came a serpent, the biggest in the world and the most terrible to see. As it came toward Tristano, he pulled out his sword and fought with it, putting it to death; thus he delivered out of prison the damsel Rima, whom the serpent had kept for its delight.

Then Tristano rode to the sea shore, and as he came to a port he met a knight errant called Sir Sagramore of the Desert. Tristano showed him great affection, and honored him greatly, begging that he come with him. They took a boat and entered the high seas, and soon came to the kingdom of Cornovaglia.

Then Tristano and Sagramore mounted and rode to the castle of Dinasso the seneschal, where they were received with great honor. The two knights stayed at this castle while Tristano made known his return to the queen; because of it she became the happiest lady in the world. She had been in great torment, lamenting him day and night, because she did not think she would ever see him again.

Then she managed it so that Tristano could come to her disguised as a maiden, and when they were together, they were the happiest lovers in the world, forgetting all their past sorrows. Secretly they stayed together four days in great delight, making up for the time they had lost. When the fifth night came, Tristano dreamed that a naked maiden with a garland of flowers on her head took him by the hand and led him before the Lady Logista. The lady was inside a great church, and she said to Tristano, "Rest here."

But it seemed to Tristano that Isotta would not let him rest until he had embraced her, and then the two of them seemed content. On that same night Isotta dreamed that King Marco dug her heart out of her body, and Tristano comforted her. When the two lovers got up, each told what he had dreamed, but so great was their delight in each other that they paid little heed.

But according to the true book belonging to Sir Gaddo, the visions of the two lovers were accurate, because a naked maiden, that is, love, led Tristano to his death, and the Lady Logista, or Fata Morgana, was the cause of that death, because she had found out through her magic arts that King Marco could kill Tristano with the same blade Tristano had used to kill her lover, Onesun. Then she had poisoned the blade with such a poison that no one wounded by it could ever be cured, and sent it to King Marco, to avenge his shame. And where it showed that Isotta would not let Tristano rest, that meant that Tristano had greater sorrow to leave Isotta behind him than he had for the death he saw approaching. The lance with which the king wounded Tristano thus drew the heart out of Isotta's body, so much was the suffering and sorrow it caused.

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Now that I see you my heart is delighted
More than ever it was, O beloved face,
You who turn night into day—
Only you are my life and hope and delight and peace."

And so the two lovers sang and played and were full of joy, until evil fortune would have it that Adriette, King Marco's nephew, passed by. When he heard their singing he recognized Tristano's voice, then he ran to King Marco to tell him the news. King Marco lept up like a madman, and with no other plan he reached for the short lance the sorceress had sent him and went toward Isotta's chamber. Looking through a barred window, he saw Tristano, dressed in a silken tunic, bending over the game he was playing with Isotta, who seemed so happy to be with him. Then, out of spite, the king threw the spear, wounding him in the left side; then he fled for fear that Tristano would see him.

Here one could say, "O dolorous stroke, stroke without pity, full of sadness and cruelty, to do so much harm!" When Tristano felt that he was wounded he also knew the stroke was mortal, and with great sorrow and many sighs he took leave of the sad and miserable Queen Isotta, rode back to Dinasso's castle, and went to bed. Many doctors came to him, but none of them could provide relief, so deadly was the wound.

Know that the blow King Marco dealt Tristano was mortal and dangerous and full of harm, and this is proved by five results. The first is that Tristano was such a young knight when he died, for on the day he was wounded he had lived thirty-three years, two months and thirteen days; after he was hurt he lived nineteen more days. The masters of the story say that if he had lived ten years more, by his own choice he would no longer have born arms, for if he had, all other knights would no longer go out to seek adventure, they would be so afraid of him. Further, Tristano was the flower of all the loveliness and honor of courtesy and the prize of knighthood. At his death, the Tavola Ritonda was weakened because King Artù, having suffered the great losses of the quest, hoped and believed he could rebuild and maintain the table through the prowess of Sir Tristano and Sir Lancelotto. But after Tristano's death King Artù himself lost vigor and power, and was never again so eager or so bold.

Also, because of Tristano's death the beautiful, gentle, delightful Isotta died, she who was lovelier than anyone else in the world. And the fifth reason why Tristano's death was such a great loss was that he was such a faithful lover; he practiced love loyally, and wisely he kept its laws.

Know that when King Marco found out that Tristano was so gravely wounded, he was glad of it, but when he heard for sure that Tristano was dying, his heart softened, and he was the saddest king in the world. Queen Isotta was the saddest lady ever born, and desired only that the king put

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When the night passed and daylight dawned, Tristano and Isotta were still happy. They played chess, singing in whispers a song that Isotta made up right then for her love, and the song said this:

"Since I have seen you again, O my life,
All other joys I hold as nothing;
For I could find no rest, neither by night nor by day,
Truly I never had peace,
Because I could not see you, O my soul.

her to death. She went before the king and the other barons, saying, "Let my love die whenever he will, because the day that he does I will go with him. If neither the king nor my sorrow will kill me, I will kill myself, because we two have led one life, and it is fitting that we die one death." And she refused to eat or drink, for as illness consumes the sufferer, so great sorrow consumed Queen Isotta.

When Tristano saw that he could not escape death, he sent for Dinasso and sent him to King Marco, asking that he come to talk with him. Then Dinasso took the message to court, and the king, with many tears, hung his head. For a long time he remained thus bowed, then he mounted a horse and with many barons went to speak with Tristano his nephew. When he entered the room he found Tristano weeping bitterly, like one who was dying against his will. Seeing the king, Tristano said to him, "Dear uncle, you are welcome to this sad celebration of mine, which you have so often wished for. Now you have accomplished your joy, for soon you will see your Tristano dead. Fortunately, you will not repent of it yet. Since the thing has happened, it could not be otherwise. Therefore I pardon you and pray that you will pardon me for any offense that I have given you."

And the lamenting king pardoned him, saying, "My noble nephew, are you truly so sick that death must have you?"

"Yes, I am," said Tristano. "You see how wasted my arms are, these arms that have done such deeds that wrong might not be done to others. Only one thing do I ask of you, my sweet uncle: that you grant me the boon I desire. I tell you that this will be the last boon your Tristano might ever ask of you."

And the king said, "O my dear nephew, strength of my kingdom and defender of my crown, ask boldly for anything that might please you now!"

"I ask for courtesy's sake that you have Queen Isotta brought here," Tristano replied, "So that she will be with me when I die."

The king sent a dozen barons to bring her at once, and Isotta came weeping, praying to God that he would do one of two things, either kill her or spare Tristano, for no man was ever so eager for vengeance as she was for death. Tristano, seeing Isotta so sad, suffered greater pain than the pain of death, and grieved so inside himself that the blood which had been flowing continuously from the wound was constricted in his heart, giving him new force and endurance. By this force, the book tells us, he lived three hours more, and suffered more than if death had come sooner.

Know that he could barely hear the laments of Queen Isotta, so weakened he was, and the more he consumed himself within, the less there showed outside the little steadiness that remained to him. Looking at Isotta, he said, "Welcome, my beloved hope. You have come too late to heal me. I tell you that you will soon see the death of your Tristano, who has loved you so much in this world."

And the queen cried, "O my dearest hope, are you so badly hurt that you must die?" And when she had spoken those words she fell to the ground speechless, in such distress that she could no longer speak.

CXXVIII.

But when the day finally came on which Tristano could live no longer, he began to sigh deeply, saying, "Alas, Lord God, heavenly father, have pity and mercy on my soul and do not abandon me in my great need. Deal with me not according to my transgressions, but rather according to your great mercy. My youth in this world tempted me greatly and I, like a sinner, used it shamefully. Therefore for charity's sake, it is with pity, faith, and hope that I turn to you who, in your great power, goodness, and wisdom, and through your incarnation, birth, and passion, and for the love you bore your most holy mother the Virgin Maria, will hear me. I beg you humbly that the abundance of your precious blood be price and payment for my sins, and if you will, accept me as one of your elect in Paradise."

When Tristano had made this holy prayer and confessed himself to Cristo the almighty, he summoned a holy archbishop, and other holy bishops, abbots, and hermits who came to him from many lands. Devoutly he confessed himself to them and did all that a faithful Christian ought to do.

After a time, Tristano summoned Sagramore, and asked that he display before him his own shield, helmet, and unsheathed sword, and Sagramore did so. Then Tristano gazed at them tenderly, saying, "O my dear sword, today is the day you must part from me and I from you. Here you must take leave of honor, for I do not believe you will come into the hands of any knight who will ever again hold you so dear, or through whom you will be so feared."

Then he turned to Sagramore, saying, "Alas, my dear, sweet friend Sagramore, I beg that after my death you will present all of my arms to King Artù and Sir Lancilotto, in place of my body."

Sagramore, weeping, promised that he would. After that, Tristano spoke the words of defeat, words which he had never before spoken in his life. He said, "I surrender. I am defeated. I can no longer defend myself because cruel death has no pity on me. O courteous Palamidesso, today our feud is over. O bold Lancilotto, today we are no longer companions."

When he had said this, he was silent, but know that the words he spoke

were cowardly, that is, when he said, "I surrender. I am defeated. I can no longer defend myself." Because, while he lived in this world, never did he once out of fear say, "I am conquered." And he had completed more jousts and battles between the ages of fifteen and thirty-three than any other knight did in eighty years. Thus those words sounded strange, since they were spoken by one who had never said them before, and they were shameful words, because the decision of kings, counts, and barons was that Tristano was certainly the best knight in the world. If you searched among the best, the finest, the most approved, Tristano was first.

However, there were and are four opinions, for those of you who are interested to hear them, and those four opinions are in the wellspring of all the books and romances that are read. This book belonged first to Sir Piero, Count of Savoia, and was copied from one belonging to the King of Francia. Now it belongs to Sir Gaddo de' Lanfranchi of Pisa. The book has this to say about the four opinions held: some say the knights of the Tavola Vecchia were the boldest in the world, and some say Sir Lancilotto, and some say Sir Galasso, while others affirm that it was Sir Tristano. The book does not choose among these opinions, but says this: "It is written that Tristano fought with knights of the Tavola Vecchia in the Valle Bruna and the Valle Franca, and suffered no dishonor. By force of arms he put to death Sir Brunoro the Brown who was the flower of the Tavola Vecchia, and he killed many giants who were of that same era."

The second opinion was that Sir Lancilotto was the best knight in the world and equal to Sir Tristano, but in our book we do not find a single joust in which Lancilotto has the advantage over Tristano, but rather Tristano always has it over Lancilotto. Nor, whenever they fought with swords, was it Tristano who asked for respite, no matter how long the encounter might last.

The third opinion is that Sir Galasso was the best knight in the world, and one book affirms this, saying about him, "He was the best by far in grace, virtue, and the prowess which proceeds from the Holy Spirit. I do not say in secular prowess, which comes from boldness of heart."

For know that Galasso had in himself a grace more than that of any other knight, and it was through grace that he was called the best knight in the world, and through grace that he conquered in battle. Therefore he is not counted among the knights who fought for the love of ladies and maidens.

We have an example in King Davidde the Prophet, for after he was pardoned for his sins and had God's grace, he was a victor and routed the Pharaoh who had thirty times as many people as he. Therefore the apostle spoke well when he said that no one could stand against God.

Therefore our book does set down the decision that Sir Tristano was the best worldly knight and the boldest that nature ever formed, and this is the fourth opinion. I believe if he had lived as long as other knights usually

did, he would have made all sorts of people afraid of him. I will give a little example of this: for we ought to know that here could be no great or strong battle that did not last a long time, and there was no long battle in which Tristano entered that he was not the winner. In this he showed that he was a bold and wise fighter, the most vigorous, bravest, noblest, most courteous, handsome, and loyal knight who ever belted on a sword. Because of his virtue, his death was a great blow.

CXXIX.

Now goes the tale, now tells the sad story that when the loyal Sir Tristano had relinquished his arms and acknowledged that he was beaten, he turned to the weeping queen, then began to gaze at her very tenderly. He held her by the sides of her dear, lovable face, the face he had so much loved in this world, and then he said, "O gentle queen, my sweet lady, love of my heart and my loyal comforter, the time has come when your Tristano can no longer live. How will it be with you after I am gone? Can you let me leave you this way? Will you not come with me, so that our souls might be together in the other world? For I have faith and hope in God, that he will have mercy on our sins."

The queen, hearing Tristano's sweet words, fainted from the sorrow, so that no one could find in her pulse nor vein. Her rosy face was pale and shadowed and grieved, as if nothing could comfort her. As she came to herself, she was heard to say, very softly, "Tristano, my love, my life is nothing without you. I pray that you will not leave me behind as a mourner who because of you is nearly dead. I desire death, since life has abandoned you. Death would be life to me, if I might be in your beloved company."

At that point, Tristano turned to King Marco, saying, "Sire, now I am no longer that Tristano who gave you so much trouble, for today the great feud between you and me will end because of that one blow you gave me. But what is done cannot be otherwise, and I pardon you that God may pardon me for all my sins."

Turning around, he asked pardon of all the others, saying, "My lords, may God be with you; please pray for my soul." Then he said, "O cruel sorrow, worse than all others! For the one who goes feels half the sorrow for leaving that he feels for what he leaves behind."

At that point Tristano turned to Queen Isotta and said, "My sweet lady,

may it please you to die with me and keep me company, so that neither of us will have to mourn for the other."

And Isotta replied, "Tristano, my sweet love, I will do it gladly. You must not go without me, for I am already near death, so weakened is my life within me."

Tristano, knowing how unwillingly she would stay after him said then, "O sweet queen, embrace me now that I may die in your dear arms, for as long as I am with you, I will feel no pain."

Then the beautiful Isotta, the courteous queen, that gentle lady, embraced Sir Tristano. And Tristano said, "Now I care no more for death, and sorrow is all gone, since I am with my sweet lady."

As they were together like that, embracing so, each one was content to die with the other. At that point, not because of the embrace or any other outside force, but from physical weakness and their own sorrow, and with each of them feeling only pleasure and delight, the two loyal lovers bid farewell to this life, and together their two souls left their bodies.

According to our book, it is true that the queen died a little before Tristano, just a fraction of time, and Tristano died after her. Therefore we can truthfully say that Isotta died because she saw Tristano her lover die, and Tristano died because he felt the death of his own hope, Isotta. For according to the master of stories, Tristano would have lived an hour or so longer if it had not been that his sorrow at the death of Isotta so constricted his heart and what heat and sustenance remained therein, that he lost all comfort of nature, occasion, and fortune.

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CXXX.

Thus embracing and face to face the two loyal lovers died, they who had loved each other so much in this uncertain world, and who were so loyal that while they lived never were they false to their love. Know now that most of the people in that room thought that they had fainted, but when they saw clearly that the two lovers had passed from this life, they began to make the greatest lament in the world. Each baron and knight made his own lament, and King Marco made the most painful and piteous complaint that had ever been made by any man in the world, saying, "Alas, my noble nephew, why have you thus abandoned me? O precious queen, where have you gone? O darkened kingdom, who will protect you? O knights and ladies, who will bring you respect?"

the Round Table

At that, the king sent letters and messengers throughout every country and kings, counts, marquises, barons, captains, knights, vavasors, and all other kinds of people, to make known to them the great loss that had occurred. When they heard the news, every nobleman made his own lament, and bewailed the great loss, because every nobleman who had wanted to live according to justice was supported by Sir Tristano. Other knights, who might have wanted to take someone or some city or castle by force, kept such desires to themselves and did not act on them out of fear of Sir Tristano, for he was the champion and defender of justice and truth. His equal has never been found in five things: that is, in prowess, courtesy, nobility, loyalty, and beauty.

Then King Marco had the two bodies embalmed, and kept them on view twelve days before having them buried. The great barons gathered at the castle of Dinasso, continually lamenting the death of the two loyal lovers. Afterwards, their two bodies were taken to the city of Tintoile, to the great church of St. Tommaso. When all the people had assembled in the great church, the king had a most noble monument set before the door. It was all inlaid with gold and silver and precious stones, and in that rich sepulchre the king had the two bodies laid to rest. He ordered two golden images carved, one of Sir Tristano and the other of the beautiful Queen Isotta. The images were exactly like them, and looked as if they were alive.

The image of the lovely queen held a flower in its hand, to show that this was Isotta, flower of all others in the land, and Tristano's statue held a sword to show that he, through his prowess, had set the kingdom free. At their feet letters were carved which told the story of their life, how they had died in the year 368, and how Tristano had been born in 333, and Isotta in 337.

Know that love never again lasted so nobly and so loyally between two lovers as it did between those two, for they had in themselves the seven qualities that make the perfect lover. In them was loyalty with no deceit, for after they knew each other in love neither ever knew another for delight or for love; their love was gentle, without arrogance or pride; never was there a quarrel between them; and it was a delighting love, for what pleased one always gave joy to the other. It was a courteous love, without villainy, for never did an unruly word come between them. It was a love without vanity, discretely and wisely practiced; it was an honest love, without dissimulation, for neither one would ever blame the other; and it was a constant love, without discord, and with no heed to consequences. Finally, it was an enduring love, and lasted until their deaths.

CXXXI.

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The true story tells, and many people have affirmed it, that a year later to the very day that Tristano and Isotta were buried, out of their grave grew a vine which had two roots, one of which had its start in the heart of Tristano, and the other came out of Isotta's heart. The two roots formed one bole which was full of flowers and leaves, and which grew up out of the grave, making deep shade over the images of the two lovers. Grapes grew on the vine in three stages, that is, in flower, green, and ripe, to show that in the two loyal lovers were three natures, for they were the flowers of beauty, courtesy, and nobleness; they were green and bitter in that they endured many sorrows; and they were mature and sweet in that, in their delight in each other, they cared nothing for their troubles. And the plant was a grapevine to show that as vines bear fruit that bring rapture to all mankind, so the life of Tristano and Isotta was a tree of love which long afterward comforted and inspired all courtly lovers.

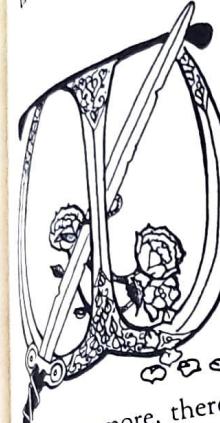
But after the two loyal lovers had been buried, and the greatest lament in the world had been made for them, King Marco said, "Alas, Tristano, my noble nephew, how many are there who have not challenged my rule only for fear of you? When the king of Irlanda finds out you are dead he will want us to pay him tribute as we did in the past, and when King Artù and King Governale of Liones and Sir Lancilotto and the other knights errant find out, they will take vengeance on me and on my kingdom.

"O my noble nephew, how my sad heart longs for you! For I know that just as you delivered my kingdom and brought it out of slavery, so by your death will it be destroyed and its people scattered. Friends and enemies alike will take vengeance on me, blaming me for such a great loss."

The mourning lasted thirty days, with all the barons seated in front of the great church from matins until the hour of tierce and from nones until the hour of vespers with their hoods pulled down over their eyes. The vavasors and the townsmen were all dishevelled, and ate always without napkins. The barons and knights wore black robes for a year, and so did the maidens and other good people, and the mourning lasted all that year. These were the first black robes there ever were in the world; King Marco also and all the ladies of high lineage dressed themselves in black for love of good Sir Tristano and the beautiful Isotta.

CXXXII.

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Sir Sagramore, there is too much bad news at King Artù's court, and all are lamenting and greatly complaining because Sir Bordo the Chaste has just returned, bringing news of the deaths of King Bando of Magus and Meliagans his son, of King Peles Peschaor, and Sir Galasso and the noble Prezzivale, of Sir Arecco, Grausin, Sagris, Gulistante, and many other bold knights of the Tavola Ritonda."

Know that many good knights had died while they were out on the high quest, because they had stayed out adventuring for so long, and had suffered from great cold and great heat. When Sir Sagramore heard this, he was very sad, saying, "Sir Chieso, this news is terrible, but I bring worse. The best knight in the world has just died, the boldest, noblest, and most beautiful and most courteous, he through whom the Tavola Ritonda was most feared and honored—that is, Sir Tristano of Liones. And the lovely queen Isotta died in his arms."

Then Sir Chieso began a loud lament, and both of them were weeping. Sir Sagramore rode on until he came before King Artù, and when the king saw him, he asked what country he had just come from. Sir Sagramore said, "I come from the kingdom of Cornovaglia."

Then the king asked, "What news do you bring me, Sir Sagramore, of my good Sir Tristano? Has he returned from this dolorous quest?"

"By my faith, my lord king," said Sir Sagramore, "the news that I bring is not what you and your knights want to hear. But gather your barons and knights, and I will tell you."

At that, King Artù had a bell sounded, one that was used only to announce great news, and all the knights and barons came to the palace where Queen Ginevara and many ladies also gathered. When all of the people were assembled, Sir Sagramore got to his feet and threw back his long cloak, revealing a black cassock. He said, "My lords, I have just come from the kingdom of Cornovaglia, and the news that I bring you is bitter and bad, the worst that could possibly be told, first for King Artù and all the knights errant,

then for all other knights and barons. The worthy and noble and courteous Sir Tristano has died by the hand of King Marco, and with him, in his arms, died the beautiful Isotta. The two of them died in one moment, and they are buried in a monument. Tristano begged me at his death that, in place of his body, I present you with all of his arms, so that you will remember him and pray to God for his soul."

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come to weep and to suffer and lament, and never again to be comforted, since all the prowess of the world has been consumed, and all the nobleness of chivalry, and the honor of all barons has been put down. Now beauty and courtesy and all the gentleness in the world has been diminished, and this is a grief that cannot be borne quietly. Now at once, without delay, we should ride to the kingdom of Cornovaglia in full company, to take high vengeance against the man who caused all this destruction."

Then Dinadano made such a loud lament that no one had ever heard a greater, and the king replied, "Dinadano, I know that you are wise, and for the good will you've shown I thank you, and so do all the others. But look, now is the time of great mourning; later will come the time of vengeance and cruelty, for it is true that we can have no mercy on one who has been guilty of such a great harm."

At that, the king had a beautiful text written, that is, a sermon or complaint called the royal lament, and that complaint he ordered to be sung in the style of a sermon in the great cathedral of the city, Santo Stefano's, every Monday morning for a year, and this lament was made to tell of the deaths of Sir Tristano and Queen Isotta.

And Queen Ginevara commissioned another, full of grief, and had it sung every Wednesday evening by boys and young maids in waiting. Sir Lancilotto himself wrote a third, and had it sung every Friday morning by boys and young men.

Then the king had Tristano's helmet, shield, and sword taken to the great church so that whoever saw them there would be reminded of him, and this was the first insignia that was ever put inside a church for the sake of chivalry. Above those things King Artù had hung a rich pennon on which Sir Tristano's arms were shown; that is, a blue field with a silver band, bordered on both sides by gold. Some say that Tristano carried a blue field with a golden lion for his sign, but it is clear that the other was what he wore on his own arms.

Know that the death of Sir Tristano caused great joy in certain countries among people who wanted to live without justice, and who were only waiting for his death to lay waste to all the countryside of Cornovaglia and Liones. And know that Tristano's protection while he lived was a great joy to all countries where the people were just, because through him they were given aid and defended against all wrong.

Some readers believe, though it is not affirmed, that Papa Dionido, the pope of Roma who ruled at that time as the forty-eighth after St. Pietro and who held the papacy twenty years and seventeen days, this Papa Dionido gave indulgences to anyone who would pray to God that Tristano would be granted a good life and a long one, so the land of Liones would not be left without a ruler, because King Meliadus had no other sons.

Similarly it is believed that Papa Agabito who came after Dionido and

CXXXIII.

The masters of the story say that when King Artù and the other barons heard the mortal news they bowed their heads and almost lost their senses for sorrow, making the greatest lament ever made in the world. Then Lancilotto rose, speaking first, and said in a loud voice, "Today the world has ended, for how might it last any longer without its fountain of prowess, and without the honor and champion of all its chivalry? Alas, Tristano, what sorrow you have brought me! Never again in my life will I be happy!"

And King Artù said, "Now is the time to let go all joy; everyone should weep and lament for the great loss we have suffered in the death of Tristano. Now I will see the Tavola Ritonda deserted and destroyed. Alas, false dream, how you have destroyed me! For I hoped to rebuild and maintain the use and honor of the Tavola Ritonda with only the prowess of Sir Tristano and Sir Lancilotto. With this hope I took my comfort when so many of the others died on the high quest. Now I am all undone, and must do without the prowess, the beauty, and the courtesy of the world, he who always defended right against wrong. O noble Tristano, full of courtesy, what a great loss your death is to us all!"

Then Queen Ginevara and the other ladies made the greatest lament in the world, saying, "Alas, cruel and treacherous death, well may you exult in your great power, you who have felled Tristano, the cynosure of the world, and who have killed Queen Isotta, whose beauty surpassed all others, as did her courtesy and nobility."

At that Sir Dinadano got to his feet groaning and lamenting, weeping like a man gone mad, saying, "Alas, my lord King Artù, and all you other knights and barons, do not marvel if I suffer and make moan, for well you know that in a short time I have lost two of my brothers who were noble knights, and I have lost my father and many other companions, and never did I shed a tear for their going. But well I can see that the time has now

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who wore the mantle one year, three months, and eighteen days, did the same. And when he heard of the deaths of Tristano and Isotta, because he knew that their sin had been caused by enchantment and not by evil will, took compassion on them and offered indulgences to all who would pray for their souls.

Thus, it is possible to hope for them, because of the great trouble which they endured in this world which was not their own fault, and because they served and believed in the holy Christian faith. Also through the great mercy and forgiveness found in Cristo crucified, who redeemed us with his holy blessed blood, they may be saved.

Thus our book has given six reasons to read about Sir Tristano; that is, his ancestry, his birth, his deeds of chivalry, his falling in love, his death, and the great lament that was made for him. Next will be told the great vengeance that was made for his death.

CXXXIV.

Now know, my lords, that in the story it says when the dolorous news of the deaths of Sir Tristano and Queen Isotta reached King Amoraldo of Irlanda in the city of Vilin, he was the saddest king in the world. At once he sent messages, commands, and summons to all his barons and knights and all his friends, for he was then at the height of his power. He was king of Irlanda and Igrie, count of Bramat and duke of Aquitanie. He was the prince of Gaules and lord of Londres, the biggest city in the world, and he ruled a large part of Inghilterra; all of this he owed to the help of Sir Tristano.

When King Amoraldo had gathered all his people, he found that the flower of them all were 4600 knights, not counting others on horseback and on foot who were innumerable. Having gathered them all, King Amoraldo had many battleships constructed, and ships and boats of many kinds. He had them provisioned with biscuits and everything needed to sustain the lives of men and horses. Then he and all of his people boarded them, flying flags and pennons; the sails were unfurled and out they went onto the high sea, so that in nineteen days they came to the port of Tintoile. Here they disembarked and made camp four leagues outside of the city of Tintoile, beginning the siege, raising their standards and swearing never to leave without first conquering the kingdom and the city.

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This also did King Governale of Liones, who came with his forces to the city of Tintoile and joined King Amoraldo's host. He had been Tristano's grandfather; now he wanted to avenge his death. Thus the two kings together bound themselves to the high vendetta.

CXXXV.

The masters of the story say that King Artù, Sir Lancilotto, and the other knights errant were very sorrowful about the death of Sir Tristano and the beautiful Isotta. They knew that King Marco had killed Tristano, and they intended to make a high vendetta. At that point, King Artù, who knew the will of his knights and no longer wished to keep his own a secret, got to his feet, speaking to his people:

"My lords, the great mourning and sorrow which reigns in our hearts could cause us to be too slothful. Therefore, let it be known that without lingering more I intend to mount my horse in the morning and ride out of the city of Camellotto, never to return without first taking revenge for the loss of Tristano. We will take King Marco dead or alive, and I will visit the grave of my sweet Tristano and touch it with my right hand. Whoever will come with me will be very welcome."

"Therefore I command you, Sir Ivano, to send messages and mandates summoning all our friends, telling them that they must assemble as quickly as they can, in the country of Cornovaglia, before the city of Tintoile."

Sir Ivano did so, and Sir Lancilotto, Astore di Mare, Sir Calvano, Dinadano, and all the other knights errant were delighted with the undertaking. The next morning King Artù had the bells rung with hammers and the trumpets and cymbals sounded; at that signal all the barons armed themselves, mounted, and rode out of the city, and their banners and insignia were all of black.

They rode day after day, passing woods and fields and mountains, and in twenty-six days they entered the kingdom of Cornovaglia. When they reached Tintoile they found the city besieged by King Amoraldo and King Governale. They had put all of the castles and towns in the countryside to fire and sword, except the castle of Dinasso. They had been waging this war against King Marco ever since Tristano had died, three months and twelve days ago.

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So then King Artù and his people made camp outside another part of the city; here they planted their standards and swore never to leave until they had the city and its people in their power. Thus they remained there for eight months, setting up siege machines, flinging fire and sulphur and other destructive things over the city walls.

King Marco, seeing himself so besieged and knowing who wanted revenge on him, was the saddest king in the world. He wept again for the death of Sir Tristano, the defender of his kingdom, and he cried for himself, for when he looked at what was being done outside he knew that he could not escape. At that point, for great remorse, he had his nephew Adriette beheaded, since he had been the first, middle, and final cause of Tristano's destruction.

The siege went on, and King Marco was running out of the food and drink necessary to life. Then he thought of a great subtlety which would be very effective if he could bring it off. He summoned all of his people, saying to them, "My lords, it will be better to fight on the field than to die of hunger within these walls."

Then he picked two knights and gave them a letter, and sent them out to the enemy host. When the two knights came before King Artù, they delivered their message and gave him the letter. The king opened it and had it read to find out what it said. It said this:

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To you, my lord King Artù, head and lord of all knights errant, greatest and most powerful of kings, King Marco, the son of King Felissi, for the sake of mercy and pity kneels at your noble feet and bows to your consummate power. Not for my own deeds or past merit, but for the praise and honor of yourself and your crown, I ask that you do one of two things: either receive me in mercy and protect me and I will maintain the city in your name, or let me go and take the city, its holdings, and the kingdom for yourself. If you will not do this, then I ask that you take a third course. Now I find myself within these walls with 2800 knights and 8400 foot soldiers. If you will lead against me the same number of people, with no knights errant among them, I will join against you in battle; then, if I win, you must agree to go away."

King Artù, when he heard this, was very happy, and wrote back to King

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Marco that in the morning he would send 1400 knights and 4200 foot soldiers from the country of Irlanda, and that no one else would take arms. He said he was sending against him only half of the men he had asked for; that King Marco had asked for a man to each man, but King Artù would send only one man for two. "And," he said, "if we lose, we will raise the siege and go on our way, never to enter this kingdom again. But if we are the winners we will do with you and with your city whatever we please."

The two knights returned to King Marco and delivered this message. When the next day came, King Marco armed his people, on horseback and on foot, chose from fifteen years old to one hundred. He assigned them two captains; one, called Sir Puerinero Turpin, he set over the people of Corognaglia, and the other, Sir Traminore Dastrie, was in command of 600 knights sent by the king of Sansogna.

Then they created four divisions and sent them out, and King Marco acted as if he were going to ride out with them. But secretly he stayed in the city, in such a way that no one saw him. At that point, King Artù, who was captain general and leader of the besieging armies, saw King Marco's troops coming out of the city. He was very glad, because he believed that King Marco was there in person. Greatly he praised Marco's chivalry, for he had not believed that the city could hold so many people. Then he formed two companies of Irish knights, and gave them a bold knight for a captain, Sir Virgù of Londres. King Amoroldo could not take part, because he was a knight errant.

CXXXVII.

Now the story tells that when both sides were ready to fight the trumpet sounded once, twice, and on the third note all the people began their battle. At that point, King Governale, who was wise, armed himself and sixty knights who knew the entrances and exits of Tintoile. Secretly they mounted, then set themselves to watch over another part of the city where they knew there was a small gate. They concealed themselves nearby, to see what would happen.

Know that when the battle was at its height, King Marco, accompanied by two squires, rode out of the city leading three pack mules loaded with gold and silver, trying to escape. With great skill King Governale rode out of ambush and, as King Marco was escaping secretly, captured him, taking

him to his own pavilion where he was tightly bound and well guarded by twelve knights.

Meanwhile the knights of Cornovaglia were fighting the knights of Irlanda. The battle was hard and strong: so great was the clashing of lances and the unhorsing of knights that it was a marvel to see. After their lances broke they drew their swords and gave each other great blows until their armor hung in shreds on their backs and many people died on both sides. The Saxon knights then joined the battle, and the fighting lasted the better part of the day, but eventually King Marco's people were all killed. They could not flee back to the city, because before he left King Marco had locked the gates behind them.

When the knights of Sansogna and Cornovaglia were all dead, King Artù had the rest of his people armed to take the city. They took it easily, for there was no one left to defend it. When they entered, they found no one there except women, old men, and boys and girls, and they did not find King Marco, alive or dead.

When King Artù found out from someone in the city that King Marco had left, he was very disappointed, and so were Lancilotto and Amoroldo. They did not know where he was, and no one seemed to have done anything about it. As they were standing there all disconsolate about the disappearance of the king, here came King Governale and Sir Dinasso. They were accompanied by forty armed knights and in their midst was King Marco, bound on his palfrey. When Governale presented him to King Artù, Artù was the happiest king in the world.

At that point here came Sir Dinadano, who had taken part in the earlier battle incognito, and had killed more than 160 knights with his own hand. Well he had shown his prowess against this cowardly people for love of his loyal friend Sir Tristano; when he saw King Marco he knew who he was, because he had seen him many times, and he accosted him as he was getting down from his palfrey and struck him on the head. That blow was so heavy it would have killed the king if Artù had not parried and deflected it, so that it did not land true, but in doing it, King Artù was slightly wounded in the left arm.

When Amoroldo and Lancilotto and the other barons realized that this was King Marco, they all wanted him to be put to death, but King Artù praised that by your cleverness you have managed this, but you are greatly to blame that you brought this king before me alive. You know it is not fitting that I or any knight errant kill a man who is our prisoner, and for that I am the saddest king in the world because I cannot grant the wish also, would be to see King Marco all dismembered, his flesh burnt, and his ashes thrown to the wind, but justice and the law of the knights errant will

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not permit it. Since he is our prisoner, he may not be killed. Freely I give him to Amoroldo and Lancilotto to do with as they please, except that he must in no way die or be killed."

And he ordered that Dinadano be beheaded because he had struck King Marco, "Because I cannot pardon the injury to another, though I do pardon him for wounding me."

King Amoroldo, King Governale, and Sir Lancilotto said, "My lord, since you have pardoned Dinadano the wrong he did you, we will in no way allow him to die for the injury he has done King Marco. It was the great love he bears for Sir Tristano that made him do it."

But King Artù said, "Dinadano may in no way escape, unless King Marco himself will pardon his wrongdoing, for I will not falsify justice for any man alive."

Then Sir Lancilotto begged King Marco to forgive Dinadano, and King Marco said, "I would pardon him even if he had killed me. If I had thus pardoned the one for love of whom he struck me, I would not now be in such a terrible predicament."

So Dinadano was absolved, and King Amoroldo and Sir Lancilotto saw to it that King Marco's wound was treated. When he had recovered, they had a tower built in front of Tristano's sepulchre, the highest and the best that could be made, 880 feet high. On top of it was built an iron cage, and here it was that King Marco was imprisoned. They said that since he had not protected Tristano while his nephew was alive, he could watch over him now that he was dead. They left him to those who were put in charge, saying that as long as he lived he was to be given three kinds of meat in great abundance and good strong wine with no water, and that each month he was to have two changes of wool and linen clothing. They commanded that he not be given bread or soup or any other food, and that no one ever let him out of the cage, even if he were dead. And so it was done.

Thus King Marco lived thirty-two months, and it is said that he became so fat that no one had ever seen a fatter man; they say he died of fatness. It is the opinion of everyone who ever saw it that the tower still stands, and the king's bones are still inside the cage.

After King Marco was imprisoned, King Artù had it declared that all the people of Cornovaglia, that is the men from fifteen to eighty, were either dead or wounded, and that those who had escaped were banished from the realm on pain of death. Then he divided the city into four parts, and in each part he had a fortress built. One he gave to King Amoroldo, another to King Governale, the third to Lancilotto, and the fourth to Mordarette, his son; to those four he gave the whole kingdom of Cornovaglia.

The four of them made an agreement that Dinasso should be the city's lord. Then they buried all those who had been killed in battle, 476 of their own, and on King Marco's side, 2730.

Then King Artù, King Amorolfo, King Gouvernale, and Sir Lancilotto went to visit Tristano's grave, and here they stayed from matins to vespers, continually making the greatest complaint and lament in the world. Still, theirs could not be so great that King Marco in his cage did not make a louder one.

Before King Artù departed, he sealed a kinship between King Amorolfo and Sir Calvano his nephew; that is, King Amorolfo took as his wife a sister of Sir Calvano because Queen Vermiglia, his first wife, had died. Afterwards, each king, count, and baron returned to his own country; and now the story stops telling about the high vendetta made for Sir Tristano, and begins to tell of the destruction of the Tavola Ritonda.

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CXXXVIII.

The true story tells that when King Artù and Sir Lancilotto had gone back to the city of Camellotto, having taken high vengeance for the death of Sir Tristano, all the barons were at peace and there was a noble concord among them. But none of them wanted to go out adventuring any more, and they exhausted themselves just by living luxuriously within the city. They did this for three reasons: first, because the king commanded it, since he thought they seemed tired out; then, because many were dismayed by the death of Sir Tristano and the loss of so many on the high quest; and third, because they were no longer feared since their reputations were lessened.

So the knights did not set out on adventures, but enjoyed themselves and were at leisure. They had good times, and thought of nothing else but their own pleasures. From an excess of leisure, their prowess diminished, and other shameful things occurred. Some of them began to want things belonging to others. For let it be known that too much ease and softness results principally in three things, that is, luxury, avarice, and anger, or rather, pride: one who thinks only of pleasure wants always to know where it is coming from, and fears that it will become less; because of this he becomes irritable, arrogant, envious, and proud. One who does no work becomes luxurious and lives basely.

That is what happened to the knights of the Tavola Ritonda. Some lived in their own castles, and had beautiful gardens made; some stayed in the city and built beautiful palaces and then wanted to build others. Some gathered money and wanted still more; some made love to their own ladies

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and desired others. While all these loved their money, their palaces or castles, Sir Lancilotto thought of nothing else but how to take his pleasure with Queen Ginevara, and have with her good times and great delight. There were rumors about this throughout the city.

After a while, the King of Norgales made war against the King of Irlanda, sending for all of his friends to besiege the castle of Lerlinte on the great plain of Bucifalaso. This is something he never would have done if Tristano were alive. When the King of Norgales went to war, Lancilotto and his kinsmen came to his support, and as they were gathered outside the castle King Amorolfo of Irlanda came against them with all his people, pitching camp nearby. Then Sir Calvano, Sir Gariette, and all the kinsmen of King Lotto came to the aid of King Amorolfo.

The two sides confronted each other, and the King of Norgales demanded that King Amorolfo join battle with him, and Amorolfo consented gladly. On the third day each king gathered his troops, and the trumpets sounded on both sides. All the men began to fight a great and dangerous battle.

And here began the destruction of all chivalry, because King Amorolfo killed the King of Norgales, and Lancilotto killed Amorolfo and cut off his head. Here died the King of a Hundred Knights who was fighting for King Amorolfo, and here died 1600 worthy knights. The field was won by Sir Lancilotto, and the king of Scozia and his people, but they had not taken the castle. It remained as it was before, and a bad day it was when that castle was built, for it was always involved in some war. Then Sir Lancilotto and his people returned to Camellotto, and so did Sir Calvano and his men.

CXXXIX.

The true story tells that as King Artù and the barons dwelt at Camellotto, Sir Lancilotto's love for Queen Ginevara never diminished, but grew ever more ardent than before. Sir Calvano, who hated Sir Lancilotto because he had killed King Amorolfo, constantly defamed Sir Lancilotto and the queen, so that because of these rumors King Artù came to hate Sir Lancilotto and would not speak to him. Because he was shunned like this, Sir Lancilotto did not come to court.

In his absence, Lancilotto was even more inflamed with desire for Queen Ginevara, and she, when she could no longer see or speak to him, was the saddest lady in the world. Neither one of them thought of anything else

but of how they might be together. After a while Sir Lancilotto arranged with Sir Astore di Mare, Sir Bordo and other knights of his family to go and live at Gioiosa Guardia, since King Artù and the kinsmen of King Lot to would not leave them alone. According to this plan, they armed themselves and mounted and rode all together until they reached Gioiosa Guardia. Here they lived in great happiness, giving pleasure and courteous welcome to all who came by.

But Sir Lancilotto grew very melancholy because he had not seen Queen Ginevara for such a long time, and day and night he thought of nothing but of how he could see her again. Still, he could not think of her so much that she did not think of him even more; it had come to such a pass that she could not eat by day or sleep by night. She went neither to feasts nor to confession, saying this: "Since I cannot see the one I love most, I do not want others to see me."

And so King Artù could have neither joy nor solace. Thus matters stood for a while, until the queen wrote a letter with her own hand and sent it to Lancilotto by one she truly trusted. This young man rode to Gioiosa Guardia and met Lancilotto, giving him the letter on behalf of Queen Ginevara. Lancilotto opened it to find out what it said. It said this:

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To the angelic face, my dear love, my sweet comfort and dearest hope, object and comfort of my desiring heart, noble and pleasing rose, your Ginevara greets you in the desire and pleasure of love. I know that you are wise enough to understand the way and know the condition I can—or should—be in without you.

"For you ought to know that since you left me I have not had one good day, but have been always lamenting and sorrowful because I am not near you. Thus will I be until I can see you again. Therefore, Lancilotto, I send for you, my dear delight, praying that nothing can keep you from coming to speak with me at the palace of Sir Agravale, outside the lustral gate."

When Lancilotto had read that letter, he armed himself without delay, mounting together with four of his knights. They left Gioiosa Guardia with swords at their sides, but without lances, disguised as merchants; they rode so that in a day and a night they reached the palace. That same evening he sent to Queen Ginevara to let her know that he had arrived, and the

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The queen could not sleep all that night, she wanted so badly for the next day to come.

When day finally came, she dressed herself in fine silken robes and said to King Artù that she wanted to amuse herself by walking outside a little. Then, accompanied by a number of ladies, she went out of the city. When they reached the palace, she sent most of her ladies away, telling them that she wanted to stay a little to rest. She kept no one with her except four ladies in whom she had the most trust.

Inside the palace hall, she met Lancilotto and was very happy. At once they embraced each other and went to rest in a rich bed, where they took great solace.

As the other ladies were returning to the city they met Sir Calvano, who was out hunting with some other knights. He asked them where they had been that morning, and one of the ladies answered him, saying that they had accompanied Queen Ginevara to that palace, where she had stayed, commanding that they come back for her at vespers.

Then Sir Calvano became very suspicious, saying to himself, "Lancilotto must be there with her." He rode in that direction, and when he was near the palace, to find out for sure whether Lancilotto was there he let go a falcon which he had held on his fist, and sent it to light on the palace balcony. Then he commanded his squire to go after it, and see if Lancilotto was inside.

The squire went that way and, finding the door locked, called and knocked until it was opened for him. Then he went to the balcony and took the falcon. Returning to Sir Calvano, he said there was no one in the palace except four knights that he had never seen before. Then Calvano thought that Ginevara must be with Lancilotto in one of the rooms of the palace.

They rode back to the city at once, where Calvano found King Artù and secretly told him all that had happened, and how he strongly believed that Lancilotto was with Queen Ginevara in Agravale's palace. The king was very sad because he firmly believed that what Calvano said was true, for Ginevara would not have gone out so early, so lavishly dressed, without good cause, as it was not her custom to dress up so early in the day. The king wanted to arm himself and all of his people at once and ride out to the palace.

But Sir Calvano said, "King Artù, take my advice. Don't let your people know about this, because so many of them love Lancilotto they might prevent our undertaking. My brothers and I will arm ourselves and ride there secretly; I swear to you that we will bring you Lancilotto, alive or dead." Then the king answered that he was pleased with that. Sir Calvano armed himself, and had Gariette, Gariens, and Agravano arm themselves along with some sixty bold knights all of his own household. Secretly they mounted and rode out of the city toward the palace, three miles outside the wall. Finding the door locked, they knocked and called out for it to be opened.

Hearing this, Lancilotto was deeply grieved. At once, with his four knights, he armed and mounted, saying, "If we stay here any longer, our plight will be worse."

Then they rode out of the main door of the palace, swords in hand, and began to fight.

The first man Lancilotto encountered was Sir Agravano; he hit him with his sword sending him dead to the ground. Then he killed Gariens, and eight other noble knights. Though the battle did not last long, it was very furious. At the end of it, Sir Calvano fled, and Lancilotto put Queen Ginevara on a horse and left in great haste for Gioiosa Guardia, accompanied only by one knight, for the other three had been killed in the battle. Lancilotto himself was badly wounded. They rode day and night until they came to Gioiosa Guardia, and here they rested and took their pleasure. And Lancilotto had the castle furnished with provisions, and reinforced it, and had it well guarded.

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Giving up the castle, but Sir Ivano argued so justly and persuaded him so well that Lancilotto finally agreed to this much: He would surrender the castle and the queen to King Artù on the conditions that the king would agree to pardon him his wrongdoing and agree to hold the queen as dear as ever before.

Then Lancilotto and his kinsmen came out of the castle and went to Gaules, where Lancilotto reclaimed Benoich, his own city. He had it proclaimed throughout all the countries that whoever wanted to come there to live would be freed from taxes and levies for ten years. Because of this, many people came to live there, and Sir Lancilotto received them kindly and had many castles built round about. Here Sir Lancilotto remained, and led a good life.

CXLI.

The true story tells that when King Artù found out that Lancilotto had taken Ginevara and had killed his two nephews he was the saddest king in the world. He sent out to summon all of his allies, gathering at Camellot-tents, wagons, and pavilions, and all the food they would need, and they all rode out of the city.

They rode day after day until they reached Gioiosa Guardia; here they positioned the army and prepared the siege, swearing that they would never leave until they had the fortress and the queen at their mercy.

The siege lasted four months. Lancilotto and his kinsmen, inside with 460 noble knights, cared little for King Artù and his forces, for they had enough provisions to hold out for more than two years. The raids and the attacks were very thick, and many people died on both sides, but King Artù's people were harmed more by ten to one than those from inside, because Lancilotto and his men attacked often, by day and by night.

When the siege had lasted six months, Sir Ivano went many times to speak with Sir Lancilotto, trying to convince him to free himself from sin and make amends for the wrong he had done, to give the castle and the queen back to King Artù. At first Lancilotto would not agree to it, especially not to

CXLII.

Now in this part the story says that King Artù, remaining in command of Gioiosa Guardia, entered the castle and met Queen Ginevara with mercy and loved her as before. But Sir Calvano then approached him, saying, "My lord King Artù, you ought never to be happy since Lancilotto killed your two nephews, two such good and noble knights. If you will take my advice you will take such vengeance against Sir Lancilotto and his kin that you will never need to fear them again. If you don't, he will take the queen away from you once more, and bring you even more shame and dishonor."

And King Artù, who feared that Lancilotto would return to court openly or in secret, told Sir Calvano that he was prepared to follow his advice and take whatever steps he might counsel. Calvano said, "Have Gioiosa Guardia torn down, castle and fortress, so Lancilotto and his men will no longer have a place to retreat to. Then, with all your people, a great and noble number, you should ride to Gaules and to the city of Benoich, which is not very strong, and lay siege to it. It is certain that you will take it soon, for it cannot hold out against your great power, and soon Lancilotto will be in your hands. Then you will have the right to take vengeance on him for the great shame and great harm he has done you."

The king agreed to all this, and had Gioiosa Guardia torn down so that no one could live there at all, and then returned with all his people to the city of Camellotto. When they had rested for two months he sent out a proclamation to say that all the people should follow him. He sent for all his allies and left his son Mordarette as viceroy and king in Camellotto,

to rule there until his return, charging him with the care of Ginevara, his stepmother.

Then with all his people he left the city and rode one day after another until they reached the city of Benoich. Here they set tents, wagons, and pavilions, and here they raised their flag. Almost all of those around the castle were ready to surrender at once out of fear; the fighting was heavy, and many people were killed. When the siege had lasted three months, Lancilotto, inside, still had a great many men. But wisely he sent to King Artù to ask that he have the goodness, to prevent any more people's being killed on either side, to let the war be decided this way: that he send to the field one knight for his champion to fight with Lancilotto himself. If he lost, he would give up the city and surrender himself as prisoner, but if he were the winner the king would raise the siege and go on his way, swearing never to return under any conditions.

When King Artù received this message, Sir Calvano leaped to his feet, saying to the king, "I want to be the knight who enters the field against Sir Lancilotto. I will do this to vindicate my shame and your great dishonor. And I want the battle to be in the morning, so that by midday one of us will be the victor, and the other will lie dead on the field."

Be it known that Sir Calvano did not say this without good reason; the height of his power came in the hours between tierce and sext, when he had three times his natural strength. The king agreed, and when the messenger returned Lancilotto was very happy with the news because he had thought how to manage it so that Calvano's virtue and power would not be worth very much.

Now the story stops speaking of Sir Lancilotto and King Artù, and tells about King Mordarette.

CXLIII.

The story tells that Sir Mordarette stayed behind in Camellotto with many barons and knights. He often talked with Queen Ginevara; they ate and drank together and kept a court; then from so much intimacy and conversation Mordarette fell in love with Queen Ginevara, his stepmother, and many times begged her for her love.

She did not want to consent for anything in the world, but Mordarette prodded her so and gave her so much trouble until it was apparent that,

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by force or by courtship, he would have her. When she saw that she could not escape without shame, not wanting in any way to consent, she said to him cunningly, "Mordarette, since nothing will please you but to have my love, I am willing to be yours if we may take our delight at the castle of Urbano. There you may have me, and do all your will."

Mordarette answered that this suited him well. When this agreement was made, Queen Ginevara with forty good knights in whom she had perfect trust rode to the castle, four leagues outside the city. When they were inside, at once she had the bridges raised and the gates locked tight, telling the people of the castle, who were faithful to her, about the deed that Mordarette had planned against her and against King Artù, his father.

The people of the castle arranged it so that when Mordarette arrived they would have great tiles and stones to throw down on him, and by this good bombardment keep him away from the castle. When the next day came, King Mordarette with a few of his confidantes rode out to join Queen Ginevara; when he reached the castle he found the gates locked and the bridges lifted. He was told that if he valued his life, he was not to approach the gates.

Then King Mordarette, with fierce pride, rode back to the city to arm himself and all his people. He returned to the castle at once and pitched camp outside, swearing never to leave without first having the queen and the castle in his power. His people swore to stay by him for life or death and never to abandon him, and they did this because of King Mordarette's great joyfulness and courtesy.

For know that the man who would rule others must have four qualities if he wants to be feared and obeyed. The first is that he defend righteousness and justice, and not be a tyrant; the second is that he be even-tempered, loyal and courteous; the third is that he be pleasant to everyone and never insulting, and the fourth is that he be bold and eager and sure to defend himself and others, that is, that he be an arbiter between good and evil. If he practices these four things, he should reign justly and be victorious, for a bold lord keeps his people secure, the courteous lord keeps them loyal, and the kind lord keeps them faithful.

The queen, besieged by King Mordarette, wrote a letter and sent it by messenger to King Artù, who was camped outside the city of Benoich. Here the battle arranged between Sir Calvano and Sir Lancilotto was about to take place. Each of them had armed himself to great advantage, and had come to the place where the battle was to be. When the two knights met, they challenged each other, then attacked vigorously with their lances, giving two such heavy blows that both lances shattered. Then the knights took their swords and began a cruel battle, exchanging many strong blows. Lancilotto skillfully tried to get Calvano into a great argument, only until the hour of sext should pass and Calvano would lose the great power and strength

he had until then. Lancilotto said, "Alas, Sir Calvano, for courtesy, what has moved King Artù to want to destroy me entirely? For I know well that he would not come against me without a reason. It ought to be enough that he has taken Gioisa Guardia from me and had it torn down—I will never be consoled for that. You, Calvano: this is your fault. You are a knight errant, and ought not fight unjustly; you know that when I surrendered Gioiosa Guardia to the king he pardoned me all his ill will."

Sir Calvano answered, "Lancilotto, it doesn't seem to me unjust to fight you when you have killed my two brothers. But, by my faith, before mid-day I expect to have taken high vengeance for that deed!"

But Lancilotto continued to excuse himself and prolong the battle, saying, "Calvano, if I killed your brothers, I was forced to, for I killed them to defend myself. I am sorry for it, and sad and miserable, for if I had not gotten caught up in such madness I am sure that I would be King Artù's friend, and I would not have lost Gioiosa Guardia, the greatest treasure I had in this world."

Then Sir Calvano, seeing that the hour of noon had come, challenged Lancilotto, saying, "Knight, your excuses will do you no good now, for we are at war."

Then they gave each other such heavy blows that their shields broke off their arms, and their hauberks were all shredded and their flesh showed through, stained with blood and sweat. Sir Lancilotto was always asking for respite, but Sir Calvano would not agree to it, for he wanted to bring the fight to an end at that moment. Lancilotto was working hard, and it seemed to him that he would lose if he did not delay some more. Now that Sir Bordo, Lionello, Astore di Mare, Sir Briobris, and the other knights of his company were afraid that Lancilotto would lose the encounter, for they saw that Sir Calvano was leading him all around the field, to the left, to the right, anywhere he liked, hitting him so hard that it did not seem possible that Lancilotto could stand any more. But there was nothing else to do except defend himself until the hour of noon had passed; after that he was pretty sure he could avenge the great fierceness Sir Calvano had shown toward him. Here one could say that cleverness was worth more than strength, for the battle lasted thus until they were both in great need of rest, so they pulled back and rested a while.

Then Sir Calvano summoned Lancilotto back to the battle, and Lancilotto said, "Alas, Sir Calvano, I ask you for courtesy to let our fight be ended. I will keep the castle of Benoich and the country under King Artù, with whatever tribute he sees fit to impose. What is done cannot be undone; in the future, I will serve you and honor you in every way I know how."

But Calvano answered him, "Lancilotto, be assured that between you and me there can be neither peace nor concord, except what we make for ourselves

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with our sharp swords. Defend yourself, for you will soon be in your grave.

Expect no other peace from me."

The knights had stood thus talking for some time when Lancilotto, looking at the sky, saw that the sun had passed its zenith and the hour of noon was gone. Then he took comfort, and attacked Sir Calvano, saying, "If the sharp sword is to make peace between you and me, now we are at the proof of it."

Then they began again to exchange great blows, and each one struck the other with such great vigor that in a short time they were both covered with wounds, and the earth where they fought was stained with their blood. But Sir Calvano's strokes became weaker and weaker because the hour of noon had passed, and Lancilotto struck fiercely, not acting as humble as he had before. When Sir Calvano realized that his hour had passed and that he was tiring fast, he feared for his life and said to Sir Lancilotto, "Since you said that you would hold the castle under King Artù, I am well pleased, and I will receive you in love and courtesy. All I ask is that you come before King Artù and swear that you are his to command."

"Don't do me such courtesy," said Lancilotto, "for I am going to treat you just like I did your brothers."

At that, the battle became exceedingly furious, and Calvano said to Lancilotto, "Of two things, do one: let us quit this battle and King Artù can find another champion to take my place against you, or let us postpone our fight until morning."

But Lancilotto said, "Look, Calvano, of your two choices I pick neither. But I offer you a third choice—either surrender yourself my prisoner, or defend yourself."

Then the two noble knights did such deeds of arms that it was impossible to see, for each one grew stronger out of fear of his great need. Then Sir Lancilotto gathered all the strength he had left and struck Calvano such a blow on his helmet that he cut through to the brain, and sent him to earth, terribly wounded. Afterwards, as you will hear, Sir Calvano died of that wound.

CXLIV.

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The story masters tell that on the same day as the battle between Lancilotto and Calvano, a messenger approached King Artù and told him how Mordarete his son had besieged Ginevara in the castle of Urbano because he wanted her in his power. King Artù became very sad at this news, and immediately had all his tents and pavilions taken down, ceasing the attack on Lancilotto and his kinsmen, and turning back with all his people toward the city of Camellotto.

Riding along the way they encountered a great baron, a friend of Lancilotto, who was called Sir Turinoro. He was the count of Cartagina, and brother of Sir Perifiles, the Papa at Roma. He had in his company 600 bold knights, and was on his way to help Sir Lancilotto against King Artù, because it was Lancilotto who had knighted him in the city of Metteva.

When Sir Turinoro and his people realized that these were King Artù's men, they attacked at once. Each side fought the other furiously, and Sir Calvano handled himself very well here, in what was a harsh and heavy battle. Sir Turinoro rode through the fray, doing great harm to the king's people until he met Sir Calvano. Then the two of them attacked each other, swords in hand. But Sir Turinoro struck Calvano a great blow on his helmet, his good sword falling in just the same place as Lancilotto's had in the fight before. And so it was that Sir Turinoro's blow was heavy enough to send Calvano dead to the earth.

When he saw his nephew dead, King Artù bathed his face with tears and then, to avenge him, attacked Sir Turinoro. They fought together furiously; then because of the good support King Artù had from his people Sir Turinoro was killed with all his men, but more than 100 men were killed on King Artù's side. Afterwards, the king had Sir Calvano's body brought to Camellotto, and had him buried with great honor.

After that, the king delayed no more, but rode at once to the castle of Urbano with all his people, sending a message to Mordarete and the people with him that they must leave the castle immediately. But Mordarete would not; he readied his troops and rode against King Artù, his father. The battle was furious, and almost all of the people on both sides were killed: almost all of the knights errant died here.

But King Mordarete was the victor. King Artù was put to flight, badly wounded, accompanied only by Sir Ivano and a squire. They fled until they came to the edge of the sea. There Sir Ivano, who was wounded in three places, fell down dead, and at this King Artù made the greatest lament in the world. Then the king pulled out his sword and put it in his squire's hand, commanding that he throw it into the sea. The squire argued with him,

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because the sword was very beautiful, and the king had to command him three times. Finally the squire threw it, and he saw an arm reach out of the water and catch the sword, brandishing it three times before taking it under the sea, never to be seen again.

After a little, over the water there came a small ship covered in white samite. When the king saw it, he said to his squire, "Now my end has come." The ship approached the king, and some arms reached out of it, taking the king and visibly putting him into the ship, which carried him away over the sea. The squire, astonished, stood there as long as he could see the ship, then left and went to tell about the marvel. As it happened, people believed that Fata Morgana came by magic in that ship and took the king to an island in the sea. There he died of his wounds, and there the fairy buried him, so they say.

CXLV.

Now the story tells that King Mordarete went on besieging the castle, after he had killed or routed King Artù and his men. His sin had so blinded him that he never ceased his evil will, or stopped wanting to have the queen in his power. The besieged queen, seeing herself in such a predicament, continually made a great lament, weeping for King Artù, for she did not know whether he was alive or dead. And she wept because she saw that all of her knights were being killed, and wept for herself, because she was in danger and had no one to defend her.

Then she summoned a page in whom she had great faith and sent him to Lancilotto, praying that he bring her help. Finding Lancilotto, the boy delivered her message; without delay Lancilotto mounted and with all the knights he had left rode until he reached the castle at Urbano.

As he neared, he sent to tell King Mordarete that he could do one of two things: either he could raise the siege, or he could prepare to fight. When Mordarete got this message he readied his troops at once, and when the trumpets sounded on both sides all the knights attacked. When their lances shattered they reached for their swords, and so great was the noise of the blows and the combat of knights that it was impossible to believe.

Then Lancilotto encountered Mordarete and gave him a heavy blow on the helmet, sending him dead to the ground. The battle lasted most of the day, and nearly all of the people on both sides were killed, but Lancilotto

held the field. After he had had all the dead buried, he entered the castle and found the queen, who was greatly grieving. Lancilotto himself was the most wretched knight in the world, for he had seen all of chivalry destroyed.

As they stayed there, that evening the squire came who had been with King Artù on the sea shore. He told the queen and Sir Lancilotto how the mortally wounded king had gone over the sea, and that he believed he was dead. When the queen heard these words, she realized that she had been the cause of so much evil and was overcome with remorse. So sharp was her sorrow that it cut her heart in two, and suddenly she fell down dead.

When he saw this, Lancilotto was the saddest knight in the world. He had the queen buried with great honors in a beautiful sepulchre, and on a column there he had inscribed all that had happened between King Artù, King Mordrette, and Queen Ginevara. He also had inscribed the date, that is, that King Artù and the knights of the Tavola were destroyed in the 399th year.

Afterwards, alone and unarmed, he entered the wilderness of Andernantes and came to an abbey, where he found Bordo, Astore di Mare, and Briobris, who were there to do penance. Lancilotto stayed with them to do penance for his own sins. He lived a year and three months, becoming a priest and singing mass, then he died and passed out of this life.

Thus ended the power of the Tavola Ritonda and the knights errant. No one was found after them who wanted to maintain or hold the same customs; none was found who would undertake adventures to set himself or others free. On the contrary the few people who were left after the death of King Artù abandoned the city of Camelotto and the country around it; all of them left and went back to their own land.

So ends our book and with it all the stories, the chivalry, the adventures, the battles, and the tournaments made by the knights errant. And it has been shown here how to King Uter Pandragon, who carried arms of gold and blue squares, or, it is sometimes said, a blue field with golden stars, there was born King Artù; to King Bando of Benoich, who bore a silver field with two red bands, was born Sir Lancilotto and his kinsmen; to King Meliadus of Liones, who claimed a blue field with a silver band bordered with gold on both sides, and who is said also to have carried a golden lion, there was born Sir Tristano. To King Scalabrino, whose insignia were all black, was born Palamidesso, and from King Lotto, who bore white and red quarters, came Calvano, Agravano, Gariette, and Gariens. To King Pellinoro, who carried a black mountain on a white field, were born Sir Prezzivale, Amorotto, Landriano, and Agravale, while to the king of Orbellanda was left Brunoro the Black, Dinadano, and Daniello, who carried a golden field with a green serpent. And of all the other knights of the Tavola Vecchia and the Tavola Nuova, each one carried his own arms.

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And now our book comes to an end, by the grace of God, per omnia secula
seculorum, amen.

HERE ENDS

the BOOK OF THE TAVOLA VECCHIA
and the TAVOLA NUOVA.

amen.