

NOTES.

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

Line 1. "Leodogran, the King of Cameliard." These names are variously spelled Leodograunce, Leodegan, Lodegrean, and Camelerd, Camelyarde, and Camelyard. Like all Tennyson's geographical places Cameliard is a mystical locality, although in some old romances is mentioned a district called Carmelide, the capital of which was Carohaise.

Line 4. "Guinevere." See introduction to "Lancelot and Elaine."

Line 5. "For many a petty king." Geoffrey of Monmouth in his "Chronicle" gives a list of these kings, among them Brutus, Lochrine (mentioned in Milton's "Comus"), Cassibellaunus (see Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*), Leir (Shakespeare's *Lear*), Lucius, Octavius, Constantine, Vortigern, and Constantine's sons, Aurelius, Ambrosius, and Uther.

Line 8. "The heathen host," the Saxons.

Line 13. "Aurelius" (called Aurelius Emrys in "Gareth and Lynette"), "a descendant of the last Roman general who claimed the purple as an Emperor of Britain." (Green.) Geoffrey describes him as defeating Vortigern, conquering the Saxons, and beheading Hengist. He is finally poisoned by a Saxon, and buried at Stonehenge.

Line 14. "And after him King Uther," the reputed father of Arthur. Geoffrey says that he caused two golden dragons to be made in imitation of that which he had seen in Uther's comet's tail; one of these he solemnly offered up in the church at Winchester, and the other he adopted as the royal standard; whence he was afterwards called Pen-Dragon or Dragon's head. He conquered various rebellious people, and after many battles was poisoned by the Saxons and buried at Stonehenge.

Line 17. Malory says, "But within few yeares after King Arthur wonne all the North, Scotland and all that were under their obeysance, also a part of Wales held against King Arthur, but hee overcame them

all, as hee did the remnant, and all through the noble prowess of himselfe and his knights of the Round Table."

"The Table Round," the order of knighthood established by King Arthur. It took its name from a large round table at which the king and his knights sat for meals. Various accounts are given of this table; some say that there were 150 seats, and that the table was originally constructed to imitate the shape of the world, which was supposed to be flat and circular in form; others say that the table was originally constructed by Merlin, the wizard, for Uther Pendragon, who presented it to Leodogran, who in turn sent it and 100 knights with Guinevere to Arthur as a wedding gift. One of the seats was called the *Siege Perilous*, because it swallowed up any unchaste person who sat in it. Galahad, the pure, was the only knight who could occupy it with safety. Other accounts say that the Round Table was constructed in imitation of the table used by Christ and His disciples at the Last Supper; that it contained 13 seats, and that the seat originally occupied by Christ was always empty except when occupied by the Holy Grail.

Lines 28-33. Dr. Rolfe says that there are authentic records of human children suckled by wolves. Such children always prove to be idiots, and never arrive at maturity.

Line 36. "Urien," also called Ryence, King of North Wales. Malory makes him the husband of Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fay.

Line 56. Malory says, "And there had King Arthur the first sight of Guenever, daughter unto King Leodegraunce, and ever after he loved her."

Line 72. "The son of Gorlois." Malory calls him "the duke of Tintagel" in "Cornewayle." Tintagel is a small town in Cornwall on the coast of the British Channel, about four miles from Camelford. The ruins of the castle, so celebrated in mediæval romance, may still be seen on a cliff overlooking the sea.

Line 73. "Anton," the Sir Ector of Malory. In the "Romance of Merlin" he is called Sir Antour.

Line 80. Note the allegorical significance; the Soul hopes to lift the Senses to a level with itself.

Lines 84-93. Arthur is to be more than the ideal king—the ruler of men; he is to be the ideal man, and so he must love. No work without love; equal love of woman and work. Woman is the complement of man; man's ideal state can be found only in wedded happiness, and only in such a union can the purpose of his life be fulfilled aright. This is the moral theme of the whole "Princess,"

Line 94. "As he speaks," etc. The poet refers to himself.

Lines 95 *et seq.* "A field of battle bright." Contrast the bright picture of this great battle at the beginning of Arthur's rule with the "last dim, weird battle of the west" in "The Passing of Arthur." Note, too, the stirring description of the conflict.

Line 103. "The long-lanced battle let their horses run." Malory says, "Then either battaile let their horses run as fast as they might."

"Battle," the main body of an army.

Line 111. "Carádos, Urien," etc. All this list of names is to be found in Malory.

Line 120. "Ho! they yield!" *Ho* is the formal exclamation of a commander in battle to order a cessation of hostilities.

Line 124. "His warrior . . . most." Sir Lancelot of the Lake. See introduction to "Lancelot and Elaine."

Line 127. "The fire of God," etc. Cf. "Lancelot and Elaine," line 314.

Line 131. It was a common custom in the days of chivalry for the two knights to bind themselves thus.

Line 132. "Man's word," etc. Littledale paraphrases it thus: "A man's promise is a divine thing, therefore it must be regarded as especially sacred."

Lines 140 *et seq.* In Leodogran's doubt as to Arthur's origin, and in the different accounts of his birth, we may note the way in which different minds confront the problem of the origin and true place of the soul.

Line 150. "Merlin, the wise man." According to Geoffrey, Merlin had been court magician since the time of Vortigern. Morley in his "English Writers" says, "The true history of Merlin seems to be that he was born between the years 470 and 480, and during the invasion of the Saxons took the name of Ambrose, which preceded the name of Merlin, from the successful leader of the Britons, Ambrosius Aurelianus, who was his first chief, and from whose service he passed into that of King Arthur."

In the Idylls Merlin represents the powers of intellect and imagination, of which the soul must make use in its warfare.

Line 152. "*Bleys*," or Bleyse, according to tradition, was a holy hermit who had protected the mother of Merlin from the fiend who was Merlin's father, and had undertaken Merlin's education from infancy.

Line 155. Malory, I. 15 says: "And so Bleyse wrote the battaile word by worde as Merlyn told him, how it began, and by whom, and in like wise howe it was ended and who had the worst. All the bat-

tayles that were done in Arthur's dayes Merlyn caused Bleyse his master to write them."

"Sat him down," *him* is in the dative case, a common construction in old English.

Line 166 alludes to the habit of the cuckoo, which lays its eggs in the nests of other birds for them to hatch. The young cuckoo in time tries to oust the young of the rightful owner, and is in turn set upon by them, so Arthur is attacked by his lords as being wrongly king.

Line 173. "Bedivere," The character of Bedivere, "first made and latest left of all the knights," is consistently painted throughout the Idylls. He is a plain, blunt, honest man, little troubled about the doubts and difficulties that beset the right of Arthur's rule. He feels that Arthur is the true king, and never swerves from his loyalty.

Line 187. "Ygerne," *Igraine* in Malory.

Line 188. "Daughters had she borne him." These are called by Malory *Margawse*, *Elaine*, and *Morgan le Fay*. *Margawse* is the *Bellicent* of Tennyson.

Line 189. "Lot's wife . . . Bellicent." In the old romances Lot is the king of Lothian and Orkney. He married the eldest daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne, known in the romances as *Margawse*. Tennyson has changed her name to *Bellicent*, a name found in the "Romance of Merlin," and also frequently occurring in other mediæval legends.

Line 204. According to Malory, Uther lived two years after Arthur's birth, and when dying bequeathed the kingdom to his infant son.

Line 208. Cf. this version of Arthur's birth with that in "Guinevere," lines 282-293.

Note that Arthur is born on "the night of the new year," and passes on the last night of the year.

Line 223. Malory calls Arthur Sir Kay's nourished brother.

Line 233. "Yet Merlin thro' his craft," etc. Tennyson constantly eliminates supernatural and miraculous incidents from the narrative, not wishing to mingle mediæval magic with Christian mysteries. Arthur is crowned through Merlin's craft, and no reference is made to pulling the miraculous sword from the rock.

Line 243. "Gawain and young Modred." Gawain was the eldest son of Lot, king of Orkney, and *Bellicent*. In the old chronicles he stands equal to Lancelot in honor. Gawain is the romance form of Galwanus, the Latinized form of Gwalchmai, a great Celtic hero, celebrated by the old bards for his wise counsel and persuasive eloquence. The Gawain of Tennyson is a very different character.

See "Lancelot and Elaine," 551, note. "Modred," also a son of Lot and *Bellicent*. He is the villain of the Idylls, standing for deceit and jealousy. In some of the old romances he is the son of Arthur and *Bellicent*, and the instrument of divine vengeance to punish Arthur for his sins. Throughout the Idylls he is the same abhorrent character, finally becoming an open traitor, and striking for the throne. He is unsuccessful, but he involves Arthur in his ruin.

Line 247. The iceberg floats from the Arctic regions to the warmer waters of the south, which, washing its base, melt the ice, and cause the berg to topple over; hence the force of the figure.

Line 252. "Hath body enow," *i.e.* has strength enough.

Lines 259-265. These lines are considered by many to be the finest in the poem.

Line 261. "So strait vows." What these vows were may be learned by consulting "Gareth and Lynette," lines 541-544, and "Guinevere," lines 460-474.

Lines 269-270. "From eye to eye . . . of the King." "He smites his own spirit, into those who love him, so that, when his knights swear allegiance, into every face there comes —

'A momentary likeness of the King.'

Lines 271-273. "Thro' the cross . . . over Arthur," *i.e.* through the stained glass window with the picture of Christ on the Cross.

Line 274. "Vert, and azure," heraldic names for green and blue.

Line 275. "Three fair queens," Faith, Hope, and Charity. These three queens receive Arthur into the black barge when he passes away. See "The Passing of Arthur," line 454.

Line 282. "The Lady of the Lake." She symbolizes the Church, or Religion. She is mystic and wonderful. "She knows a subtler magic" than Merlin, because the spiritual is higher and deeper than the purely intellectual. She gives Arthur his sword *Excalibur*, 'whereby to drive the heathen out,' which is, of course, the sword of the Spirit, wherewith the Soul is to wage war with Sin. The deep waters, with the eternal calm, wherein the Lady of the Lake dwells, and from which the nine-year-wrought sword arises, show us the source from which the spiritual weapon is to be derived. It is fashioned by no earthly hand, but must be sought, with the aid of religion, by long communings with the Infinite and the Eternal." (Elsdale.)

Line 285. "She gave the king his huge cross-hilted sword." Malory, I, 23, describes the gift of the sword thus: "And as they rode, Arthur said, I have no sword. No force, said Merlin, hereby is

a sword that shall be yours and I may. So they rode till they came to a lake, the which was a fair water and a broad, and in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a sword in that hand. Lo, said Merlin, yonder is that sword that I spake of. With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake. What is that? said Arthur. That is the Lady of the Lake, said Merlin." She tells Arthur to row over and take the sword, which he does. In the "Romance of Merlin" Excalibur is identical with the sword that Merlin set in the stone. Malory distinguishes between the two.

"Cross-hilted." The swords of Christian knights had a cross-shaped hilt, symbolic of their religious belief. It was often used as a sacred emblem on which oaths were taken, and served to remind them of their vows.

Line 294. "Excalibur." In Malory the Lady of the Lake says, "The name of it is Excalibur, that is as much to say as Cut-steel." Others say it is a Hebrew word meaning cut-iron.

Line 298. The jewelled hilt is more fully described in "The Passing of Arthur," lines 224-226, "elfin Urim" denote magic jewels. The *Urim*, a Hebrew plural meaning "flames," were sparkling ornaments worn anciently by the Jewish High Priest when giving oracular responses. They are mentioned frequently in the Old Testament.

Lines 299-300. "So bright," etc. Malory says, "So bright in the enemies' eyes that it gave light like thirty torches."

Line 301. "Graven in the oldest tongue," etc., *i.e.* the Hebrew.

Line 312. "The swallow and the swift," etc. The "swift" is the "black swallow," hence "near akin."

Line 314. By assuming the relationship between Bellicent and Arthur, Leodogran covertly tests its truth. Bellicent evades a direct reply, but expresses a doubt as to Arthur's kinship to herself.

Lines 319-324. "The conduct of the two sons of Queen Bellicent is significant of their characters and future positions in the general drama. Gawain, the giddy and impulsive boy, will develop into the reckless and pleasure-seeking, but valiant knight; and Modred, who now listens at the door, will be the crafty traitor hereafter." (Elsdale.)

Lines 338 *et seq.* Bellicent's account of her first meeting with Arthur is one of Tennyson's many pictures of domestic tenderness. It is probably introduced to restore the humanity of the story, for the magic story of Bleys immediately follows, symbolizing the idea, ever present with Tennyson, of the coming of the soul into the world from the high heaven and out of the great deep.

Line 358. This account of Arthur's origin is the poet's own addition to the old legends; and is probably introduced for its symbolic significance as explained above.

Line 362. "Shrunk like a fairy changeling." It was an accepted belief in fairy legend that wicked fairies had the power to substitute an imp of their own species for a human child. The changeling was soon recognized, however, by its peevishness and shrivelled appearance; it often resembled a little old man with a face full of puckers and wrinkles.

Line 379. "A ninth one." Note that Arthur is borne in from the great deep on the *ninth* wave. Nine is the favorite number in English magic lore. The old Welsh bards allude frequently to this wave as being larger and stronger than the others.

Line 401. "In riddling triplets." Cf. "Gareth and Lynette," lines 280-282. The old Welsh bards wrote in stanzas of three rhyming lines, from which sprung the Welsh Triads.

Lines 402-410. Merlin's "riddling triplets" give Queen Bellicent little satisfaction, but perhaps no more definite answer could be expected to the question, whence comes the soul, than that it comes "from the great deep," and "to the great deep goes." Some of Merlin's expressions, however, may have a definite reference to Bellicent's tale; thus, "a young man will be wiser," etc., may mean that Arthur will know more by experience than to hope for impossibilities; "an old man's wit" may refer to Bleys's mind growing weak and wandering, etc.

Lines 420-421. It was a common belief that Arthur would come again. Little Dale says it is still prevalent in Brittany. Such a belief in a second coming is found in many of the legends of ancient heroes, like Charlemagne, Barbarossa, Tell, and Harold.

Lines 426 *et seq.* Leodogran, still in doubt, has a prophetic vision, foreshadowing Arthur's fortunes. Arthur himself is a phantom king, driving his foes before him, and standing out at last in the heavens transfigured and crowned. This vision convinces Leodogran, and he gives Guinevere in marriage to Arthur.

Line 447. Sir Lancelot does not appear in Malory until the sixth book, but Tennyson brings him in from the first to intensify the ties between him and Arthur, and to emphasize the enormity of Lancelot's breach of faith.

Line 449. Note the appropriateness of the season.

Line 452. "Dubric," Archbishop of Caerleon-on-Usk, primate of Britain, and legate of the pope.

Line 455. Note the beautiful literature of the marriage scene and the coronation song. "It embodies the thought of the poem, and grips the whole meaning of it together." Thus the Spirit is joined to the Flesh, surrounded and cheered on by all the powers and influences that can ever help it.

Line 468. "With drooping eyes." What is the significance of this phrase? Was it due to the consciousness that her heart was not the king's?

Line 476. "Great Lords from Rome," ambassadors who had come to demand the ancient tribute. Geoffrey says, "Twelve men of an advanced age and venerable aspect, and bearing olive branches in their right hands, for a token that they were come upon an embassy."

Lines 481-501. This battle-chant of Arthur's knights is composed in stiff and abrupt rhythm that gives the lines a sort of warlike clang, in unison with the sounding trumpets. "Its sound is the sound of martial triumph, of victorious weapons in battle, and of knights in arms. . . . It is a splendid effort of art. King Olaf might have sung it." (Brooke.)

Line 513. "And Arthur strove with Rome." Littleton remarks: "In the curt answer to the Roman envoys, and the words 'Arthur strove with Rome,' the poet in a few lines disposes of an amount of pseudo-history that occupies nearly half of Geoffrey's entire narrative. But even Tennyson's brief allusion to Arthur's Roman war has no foundation in history."

Line 517. "Twelve great battles." See "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 286 *et seq.*

NOTES.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

Line 1. Note the abruptness with which the poem begins. It is characteristic of Tennyson to begin his Idylls rather abruptly, often at some central point. Cf. the beginnings of "Geraint and Enid" and "Lancelot and Elaine."

"Lot." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 189.

"Bellicent." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 189.

Line 2. "Gareth." The name given by Mallory, but in the old French romances it is commonly given as "Guerrehés." Tennyson makes him the younger brother of Gawain and Modred, differing somewhat from Malory. "Truly, then, said he, my name is Gareth of Orkney, and King Lot was my father, and my mother is King Arthur's sister; her name is dame Morgause, and Sir Gawaine is my brother, and Sir Agravaine, and Sir Gaheris, and I am the youngest of them all." "Morte d'Arthur," VII, 13.

"In a showerful spring." Note how appropriately the idyll opens with spring. The whole poem represents the spring time of Arthur's glory.

Line 3. "Spate," a Gaelic word which gives a touch of local color.

Lines 3-10. Study the vivid figure of speech. Note how closely Tennyson observed Nature, and how suggestive the rhythm is of the sense. Compare lines 8 and 13 for difference in rhythmic effect.

Line 18. "Heaven yield her for it." Note the use of "yield" in the sense of "reward." (See Glossary.) Compare Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra," IV, 2, 33, "And the gods yield you for't." It is a common Elizabethan use of the term.

Lines 20-24. Note again the vividness of the metaphor, heightened by the use of such rare terms as "ever-highering." Gareth's whole thought is centred on becoming a knight of Arthur.