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." Littledale 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 "Guerrehes." 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.

Line 24. "Working out his will." Compare "The Coming of Arthur," lines 92–93; —

> "Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
> And power on this dead world to make it live."

See "The Coming of Arthur," line 243.

Line 25. "Gawain." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 243, and "Lancelot and Elaine," line 551.

Line 26. "Modred." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 243.

Line 40. "The goose and golden eggs." See Tennyson's poem, "The Goose."

Line 46. "Thy Book of Hours," a book containing the prayers prescribed by the Church for the various hours of the day, and ornamented by colored initial letters and pictures, illustrative of the text.

Line 51. "A leash of kings." Used loosely for a number of kings. "Leash" properly means a thong by which three dogs are held, thence it came to be used of three or more persons taken together.

Line 66. "The brand Excalibur." "Brand" means properly a burning stick, but is used poetically for sword, from its flashing blade. "Excalibur." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 294–304, and "The Passing of Arthur," lines 220–225.

Line 67. "And lightnings play'd about it in the storm." See "The Passing of Arthur," lines 301–307.

Lines 73–80. This account of Lot is at variance with that of Malory, who says that Lot was slain in battle by Pellinore.

Line 76. "The barons' war." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 63–133.

Line 91. "Mightier day by day," but mightier in mere brute strength, in striking contrast to that of which Arthur's knighthood sang at his coronation. See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 496–497. Note that at every step Bellicent is destroying the effect of her own pleading by what she proposes.

Line 100. Gareth's parable of "Fame and Shame" seems rather forced. Compare the allegory of "Guilt and Shame," in "The Vicar of Wakefield."

Line 105. "Good lack," equivalent to "Good Lord."

Line 116. "Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King." Note the contrast. Arthur is distinctively the Christian king; and in the following lines Gareth expresses the ideal of Arthur's knighthood.

Line 120. "Proven King." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 176–236, 315–423.

Line 133. "Who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome," etc. See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 510–513.

Line 135. "The idolaters," the Saxons. Arthur had overcome them in "twelve great battles." See "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 285–316.

Line 147. Note the two uses of "quick." Not particularly good taste in dignified poetry.

"To prove to the quick" is to prove by a wound deep and sensitive.

Line 151. "Kitchen-knaves." "Knave" is used in the old sense of "boy," or "servant." (See Glossary.)

Line 152. "Across the bar," the buttery bar, over which food and drink were delivered for the dining room.

Line 154. "A twelvemonth and a day." A common expression for a full year.

Line 166. Note the compactness of this line.

Line 169. "Gareth awhile linger'd." Note the hesitating effect of the trochee followed by a period.

Lines 179–183. Note the picturesqueness of the lines, particularly 182.

Line 185. "Camelot." Arthur's capital, and the place where he chiefly holds his court. See "Lancelot and Elaine," note, line 23.

Lines 184–193. Note again in these lines Tennyson's accurate observation of natural phenomena.

Line 187. Camelot was built on a mountain, the "royal mount," or "sacred mount," of Camelot. In one of Tennyson's manuscripts he describes it as the most beautiful in the world, sometimes green and fresh in the beam of the morning, sometimes all one splendor, folded in the golden mists of the West.

Line 200. "Changeling." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 362, note.

Line 202. "Merlin," the famous magician in Arthurian lore —

> "the most famous man of all those times,
> Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,
> Had built the King his havens, ships and halls,
> Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens;
> The people called him Wizard."

"Merlin and Vivien," lines 164–168. See also "The Coming of Arthur," lines 279–281.

Lines 203–204. These lines perhaps intimate the allegorical nature of Arthur's city.

Line 207. May allude to the old Eastern legends, which speak of plunging magicians and spirits into certain seas, particularly the Red Sea, to destroy their sorceries.

Line 212. "The Lady of the Lake" probably symbolizes religion, combining as she does the sacred emblems of early Christianity, the Cross, the Sword of Divine Justice, the incense, the fish symbol of Christ, and the living waters. For a description of her see "Lancelot and Elaine," line 1393, note. Compare also "The Coming of Arthur," lines 282–293.

Line 219. "The sacred fish." The fish was adopted by the early Church as the symbol of Christianity, because the Greek word for fish contains the initials of the name and titles of Christ.

Line 221. "Arthur's wars." See "Lancelot and Elaine," line 796.

Line 225. "Those three queens." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 275–278. Malory gives their names. They are emblematic of Faith, Hope, and Charity. They appear in "The Passing of Arthur" to bear Arthur away to the mystic island of Avilion, line 366.

Line 255. Merlin's description of the building of the city is full of allegorical suggestion. To quote from Elsdale's "Studies of the Idylls," "The fairy king and fairy queens who come from a sacred mountain, 'cleft toward the sunrise' (*i.e.* Parnassus), to build the city, are the old mythologies whose birthplace was in the East, the land of the rising sun. From them, besides the religions of the ancient world, are derived poetry, architecture, sculpture; all those elevating and refining arts and sciences which were called into existence mainly and primarily as the expression and embodiment of religious feeling. . . . The city is built to music; for as the harmony and proportion of sound constitute music, so the harmony and proportion of all the various elements and powers which go to make up the man will constitute a fitting shrine for the ideal soul. 'Therefore never built at all'; for the process of assimilating and working up into one harmonious whole all the various external elements is continually going on and unending. 'Therefore built forever'; for since harmonious and proportionate development is the continual law, the city will always be complete and at unity with itself."

Line 257. "Sacred mountain." The poet had in mind, probably, Parnassus, sacred in Grecian lore as the home of Apollo and the Muses.

Line 258. "And built it to the music of their harps." So, according to Greek legend, the walls of Troy and Thebes rose to the sound of music. Cf. "Tithonus," 62–63:—

"Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers."

Line 260. "For there is nothing in it," etc., has an allegorical significance. Arthur is the ideal towards which Gareth is striving. The idea is that the ideal alone remains amid all the changes of material things.

Line 280. "The Riddling of the Bards." The ancient Cymric bards, or poets, wrote in rhyming stanzas of three lines, or triplets, a specimen of which we have in Merlin's own "riddling triplets" in "The Coming of Arthur," lines 402–410.

These bards were supposed to have the gift of prophecy, but their utterances were usually ambiguous, and would thus be fulfilled, whatever happened.

The two following lines appear to illustrate the mysterious character of these rhymes, by stringing together words without any real meaning.

Line 288. "Unmockingly the mocker." Note the contrast.

Line 298. "Who did their days in stone," *i.e.* recorded their deeds on stone.

Lines 306–309. A picture of the ideal life in Camelot. Note the vividness and picturesqueness of this whole description of Camelot.

Line 314. "Delivering doom." Administering justice. *Doom* originally meant a statute or ordinance, hence judgment. Cf. "doom" in line 317, which means condemn.

Lines 320–326. Compare this picture with that presented in the "Passing of Arthur," when sin has made its influence felt.

Line 327. "Uther," called Pendragon. See "The Coming of Arthur," line 14, note.

Line 359. "Sir Kay." Kay is the son of Anton, who under Merlin's direction brought up Arthur. Kay was brought up as Arthur's brother, and on the request of Anton, Arthur made him seneschal of all his lands. He became a knight of the Round Table and steward of Arthur's household. He is always represented as irritable and discourteous.

Line 367. "Aurelius Emrys." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 13, note.

Line 376. "Mark." Malory speaks of him as "a king of Cornwall," and at first a friend of Arthur. In the Idylls he is the enemy of Arthur, cowardly, mean, and treacherous.

Line 380. "Charlock," the wild mustard, which bears a yellow flower.

Line 386. "Cousin Tristram." Sir Tristram of Lyonesse was the nephew of Mark. "Cousin" is used in its old sense of "kinsman."

Line 405. "Blazon'd." The heraldic colors were painted on them in addition to the carving.

Lines 423–424. Note the well-rounded, compact description of Mark's character.

Line 431. From this point Tennyson follows the story given in the 7th book of the "Morte d'Arthur" of Malory.

Line 444. "Wan-sallow," one of the many expressive compounds coined by Tennyson. Both parts of the compound mean "pale."

The simile refers to a plant which becomes diseased by a parasitic growth.

Line 446. "This fellow hath broken," etc. Cf. Malory, "Upon pain of my life he was fostered up in some abbey, and, howsoever it was, there failed meat and drink, and so hither he has come for his sustenance."

Line 454. "A fluent hair." "Fluent" means flowing, and is usually applied to language. Tennyson by a bold figure applies it to the hair.

Line 465. "Sir Fair-hands." Cf. Malory, "Since he hath no name I shall give him a name that shall be Beaumains, that is, Fair-hands."

Line 483. "How the king had saved his life," etc. Cf. "The Coming of Arthur," line 130 : —

"For each had warded either in the fight."

Line 486. Cf. "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 311–313.

Line 490. "Cær-Eryri's highest." Snowdon, a mountain in Wales. The reference is to another legend concerning Arthur's birth.

Line 492. "The Isle Avilion." See "The Passing of Arthur," line 427, note.

Line 503. "Charm'd." Note the rhythmic effect of the monosyllable with a stop after it, expressing the silence of the hearers before it was suddenly disturbed

Line 507. Malory says, "And were there any masteries done, thereat would he be, and there might none cast bar or stone to him by two yards."

Line 513. "Spring" = split or crack, its original sense.

Line 519. "Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon," *i.e.* "at full-moon."

Line 528. "From Satan's foot to Peter's knee," *i.e.* to the very gate of heaven. The meaning is from Sir Kay's tyranny to King Arthur's favor.

Line 539. Original with Tennyson. In "Morte d'Arthur" Bellicent does not do this.

Lines 541–544. These vows are described at length in "Guinevere," lines 464–474 : —

"To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their king,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no nor listen to it,
To honour his own word as if his God's,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her."

Line 549. "Mellow," metaphorically "sweet-tempered."

Line 559. "And the deed's sake," etc. This idea is always emphasized by Arthur.

Line 571. "The lions on thy shield." The heraldic device of Lancelot was azure lions rampant crowned with gold. Cf. "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 658–660.

Line 575. "May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom." May-blossom is white; cf. "The Miller's Daughter," line 130 : —

"The lanes, you know, were white with may."

The poet probably has in mind the white hawthorn.

"Apple-blossom" is white tinged with pink or red.

Lines 580–582. These lines seem to reflect the state of England in Stephen's reign, when the lord of every castle was a petty king or tyrant, administering law in royal fashion to his subjects.

Line 586. "From that best blood." The wine used in the sacrament, symbolizing the blood of Christ.

Lines 593–602. These lines have an allegorical significance according to Elsdale. See introduction to "Gareth and Lynette."

Line 595. Note the touch of self-conceit, which seems to be characteristic of Lynette.

Line 596. "Castle Perilous" is a favorite name for castles in the old romances.

Line 637. "Brought down a momentary brow," *i.e.* frowned for a moment.

Line 651. "That gave upon," a Gallicism. Cf. "The Princess," lines 226, 227: —

"into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch."

Line 657. "Counter to the hearth," *i.e.* opposite to the hearth.

Line 665. "A maiden shield," *i.e.* a shield with no arms on it such as an unproved knight would bear.

Lines 671–673. The comparison here is to an insect, perhaps the dragon fly, which spreads its "dull-coated" wings, and shows beneath bright colors.

Line 677. "Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site," *i.e.* of wood toughened by battling with the wind.

Lines 686–690. Note the compactness of these lines.

Line 693. "The King hath passed his time," *i.e.* hath lapsed into his dotage.

Line 695. Note the play on words by using "fire" in both the literal and figurative sense.

Line 696. Has the whole order of things been reversed? Note the poetic way of raising the question.

Line 703. "Peacock'd," *i.e.* made conceited. Note the significance and aptness of the expression.

Line 721. "Lackt," *i.e.* left out of account, or absent. Cf. Shakespeare, "Coriolanus," IV. 1, 15: —

"I shall be loved when I am lacked."

Line 726. Cf. "Morte d'Arthur": "So when he was armed there was none but few so goodly a man as he was."

Line 729. "A foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt," a decayed fungus in the wood. Observe the exactness of the simile in the following line.

Line 739. "Have at thee then," *i.e.* have a care of yourself, a frequent form of warning of instant attack.

Lines 746–756. Cf. "Morte d'Arthur": —

> "What doest thou here? Thou stinkest all of the kitchen, thy clothes be foul of the grease and tallow that thou gainedst in King Arthur's kitchen; weenest thou, said she, that I allow thee for yonder knight that thou killedst? Nay truly, for thou slewest him unhappily and cowardly, therefore turn again, foul kitchen page. I know thee well, for Sir Kay named thee Beaumains; what art thou but a lubber and a turner of spits, and a ladle worker? Damsel, said Beaumains, say to me what ye will, I will not go from you whatsoever you say, for I have undertaken to King Arthur for to achieve your adventure, and so shall I finish it to the end, or I shall die therefore."

Note how closely Tennyson follows the original.

Line 766. "Beknaved," called knave.

Line 771. "That spit of thine," thy sword. Note the contemptuous allusion to Gareth's kitchen experience.

Line 776. "Bowl-shaped." Note the suggestiveness of this epithet. The emphatic position of the word centres the imagination upon the form of the valley.

Line 779. This simile may be too uncommon to appeal to the imagination of the ordinary reader, but it illustrates Tennyson's keen insight into nature.

Line 784. Note the play on the word "bound."

Line 796. "Oilily bubbled up the mere." One of the striking cases of onomatopœia in Tennyson. Note the correspondence of sound and sense. The rhythm adds to the effect.

Line 806. Tennyson alludes here to the scientific phenomenon known as *ignis fatuus*.

Line 807. "Good now." An old exclamation. Cf. "well now."

Line 810. Gareth repeats Arthur's words in line 559, as though they were his motto.

Line 829. An allusion to an old custom of serving up a peacock with his gay plumage. When thus served "all the guests, male and female, took a solemn vow; the knights vowing bravery, and the ladies engaging to be loving and faithful," *i.e.* to their champions. Introduced here by Tennyson, perhaps as a subtle hint to Lynette, of which she seems to be in need.

Line 839. "Frontless," shameless.

Lines 854–855. Note the compactness of these lines.

Line 862. "I but speak for thine avail," *i.e.* for thy advantage.

Line 871. "Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood."

An allusion, says Littledale, to the fact that wild animals under

the influence of terror will often take refuge in the same place and not molest one another.

The stoat is a kind of weasel. It here stands for an insignificant animal, in contrast to the lion.

Line 881. An allusion to the story of Cinderella.

Line 884. "The serpent river," allegorical for the river of Time. Here we have the first allegorical encounter, signifying the temptations of youth.

Line 889. "Lent-lily." The yellow daffodil, so called because it blooms about the time of Lent.

Line 891. Note the effect of "fluttering" in the rhythm.

Line 900. Up to this point the poet has sought to try the temper of Gareth who aspires to knighthood, by bringing out the qualities of manliness, self-control, and patience, those high ideals essential to a true knight of Arthur's table. For this purpose particularly he is made to suffer the frequent taunts of Lynette.

Line 908. "The stone Avanturine." A kind of quartz containing mica.

Line 922. "Far liefer" = I had rather.

Line 923. Note that this is the first time Gareth has appeared to lose his self-control and reproach Lynette for her taunts.

Line 936. Cf. Malory. "Thou liest," said Beaumains, "I am a gentleman born, and of more high lineage than thou."

Line 970. "And then she sang." Lynette's songs are introduced to show her change of feeling towards Gareth. There is a development of sentiment. Lynette begins to feel an admiration for her champion which ripens into love. She is too proud, however, to withdraw her epithets.

Line 980. A covert reference to Gareth's menial service.

Lines 983 *et seq.* Gareth's lack of sentiment in his parable is in striking contrast to Lynette's sentimental song.

Line 996. "Worship." Here used in the sense of "honor."

Line 1002. "Flower." The dandelion. The shield is like a dandelion, enlarged "ten thousand-fold," being yellow and round.

Line 1008. He mistakes Gareth for his brother, because Gareth is bearing Sir Morning Star's shield.

Line 1013. A meaningless, expressionless face.

Line 1015. Note that the temptations of middle life, in contrast to those of youth, which were met in the center of the bridge, are met in mid-stream, where there is no room for lance or tourney-skill.

Line 1028. An allusion to the words of Lynette in line 969.

Line 1037. Lynette interrupts her song with comments on Gareth, indicating her increasing feeling for him.

Line 1048. "The boar hath rosemaries and bay." It was an old custom when serving up a boar's head to garnish it, not with flowers, but with *rosemary* and *bay*. Littledale quotes from Percy's "Reliques": —

> "Where stood a boar's head garnished
> With bays and rosemary.

Line 1060. "Of treble bow," *i.e.* of three arches or spans.

Line 1063. "Deep-dimpled." Note the suggestiveness of this epithet.

Lines 1067–1068. Note the allegorical term of the narrative. "Wrapt in hardened skins," etc. The hardened skins are the evil habits of a lifetime, which become engrafted upon us and a part of us in later life, so hardened and toughened as to blunt our finer senses.

Lines 1085 *et seq.* Note how symbolic of age everything is.

Lines 1090–1120. Note the severity of this contest, and the allegorical significance. Compare this contest with that of Prince Arthur and Maleger in Spenser's "Faery Queene," 2. 11. In that contest Arthur repeatedly overthrows Maleger, who instantly springs up again, but is finally conquered by being cast into a lake after having his life crushed out. Maleger is allegorical for the diseases of lust, while Gareth's opponent represents the evil habits of an ill-spent life.

Lines 1107 *et seq.* Note the change in Lynette's feelings which has been foreshadowed in her previous songs.

Line 1117. "Loud Southwesterns," *i.e.* the violent southwest winds.

Line 1118. "The buoy," the object of "can bring under" understood.

Lines 1135 *et seq.* Lynette now fully recognizes the knightly qualities of Gareth. Cf. "Morte d'Arthur," VII, 11. "Marvel have I, said the damsel, what manner of man ye be, for it may be otherwise but that ye be come of a noble blood, for so foul and shamefully did never woman rule a knight as I have done you, and ever courteously ye have suffered me, and that came never but of a gentle blood."

Line 1155. "Hern" = heron. Note again in this and the two lines following Tennyson's habit of close observation.

Line 1168. This line sums up the meaning of the allegory contained in this idyll.

Line 1172. "The vexillary," a term applied to Roman soldiers

detached from their legion and serving under a separate standard. The allusion here is to an inscription upon a cliff above the river Gelt in Cumberland, carved by a Roman soldier, presumably about 207 A.D. It illustrates Tennyson's characteristic of drawing his similes from personal experience and observation.

Line 1174. "Phosphorus," etc. These words mean *Morning Star*, *Midday*, *Evening Star*, *Night*, and *Death*.

Line 1184. "Error," in apposition with "what" in the preceding line. "Error" is used in its literal sense of *wandering*. For an explanation of this line, see lines 764–767.

Line 1186. "His blue shield-lions." See line 571, and note.

Line 1189. Lancelot mistakes Gareth for Sir Morning Star, whose shield Gareth bears.

Lines 1203–1204. Gareth here quotes with a touch of sarcasm, the words Lynette used in lines 748, 972, 1033, to account for his victories.

Line 1230. "Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last." We conquer by being conquered, *i.e.* we learn from experience.

Lines 1236–1239. Lancelot's conception of what makes a man worthy to be a knight of Arthur.

Line 1261. "Yon black felon," refers to Night, or Death, the next and last antagonist whom Gareth is to meet.

Line 1281. "Arthur's Harp." By some thought to be the Great Bear. In the "Last Tournament" we find: —

> "Dost thou know the star
> We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?"

From this it would seem that Tennyson meant by *Arthur's Harp*, a single bright star, perhaps Arcturus.

Lines 1291–1294. Lynette's feelings towards Gareth have completely changed. In these short broken sentences she shows her intense anxiety for her champion.

Line 1318. "Fineness" = "finesse," clever management.
"Instant," urgent.

Line 1330. Standing out in sharp relief against the horizon.

Line 1336. "Came lights and lights," *i.e.* lights appeared here and there.

Line 1348. "Crown'd with fleshless laughter," *i.e.* with a grinning skull.

Line 1342–1350. Note the periodic sentence.

Line 1386. Cf. "Lancelot and Elaine," line 411.

Lines 1389–1390. Note the force of the allegory in these lines.

The horrors that surround death are only the outward horrors with which he surrounds himself. Death is but a passing to a new and brighter life.

Line 1391. "And Gareth won the quest." This clause marks the climax. Note that throughout the narrative there have been two opposing forces, the ambition and enthusiasm of youth on one side, and the various obstacles that beset it on the other. Gareth, the embodiment of youthful courage, triumphs over all, even death.

Line 1392. Malory.

Line 1394. Tennyson.