



BOOK·I

If inconstancy is the heart's neighbor, the soul will 1
not fail to find it bitter. Blame and praise alike befall when
a dauntless man's spirit is black-and-white-mixed like the
magpie's plumage. Yet he may see blessedness after all, for
both colors have a share in him, the color of heaven and the
color of hell. Inconstancy's companion is all black and takes
on the hue of darkness, while he of steadfast thoughts clings
to white.

This flying metaphor will be much too swift for dullards.
They will not be able to think it through because it will
run from them like a startled rabbit. Mirrors coated on the
back with tin, and blind men's dreams, these catch only the
surface of the face, and that dim light cannot steadfastly
endure even though it may make fleeting joy real. Anyone
who grabs the hair in the palm of my hand, where there
isn't any, has indeed learned how to grab close. And if I
cry Ouch!, it will only show what kind of a mind *I* have.
Shall I look for loyalty precisely where it vanishes, 2
as fire in running water, dew in the sun?¹

¹ This obscure paragraph, like the following one, may consist of cryptic remarks in reply to hostile critics of previously "published" sections of the poem. There is reason to believe that the Introduction was added after several books (most probably III-VI) of the total work were already familiar to the public.

Never have I met a man so wise but that he would have liked to find out what authority this story claims and what good lessons it provides. On that score it never wants for courage, now to flee, now to charge, dodge and return, condemn and praise. Whoever can make sense out of all these turns of chance has been well treated by Wisdom, or whoever does not *sit* too tight, or *walk* astray, but in general *understands*. The thoughts of a false man lead to hell-fire, but they beat upon high dignity like hail; his loyalty has a tail so short that it couldn't slap back at the third bite if it were flicking flies in a forest.²

These various definitions are by no means directed at men solely: for women I will set up these same goals. Any woman willing to mark my advice shall know where to bestow her praise and honors, and, accordingly, on whom to bestow her love and respect, so that she will not rue the giving of her purity and devotion. I pray to God that good women may follow the proper mean. Modesty is a capstone over all virtues; I need not wish them anything better than that. She who is false shall win false praise. How durable is thin ice that gets the hot August sun? Just so quickly will her renown decay. Many a woman's beauty is praised afar, but if the heart within is counterfeit, I would praise her as I would praise a jewel of blue paste set in gold. I count it no trifling thing if someone mounts a noble ruby, with all its magic virtue, in paltry brass. To such a jewel I liken a faithful woman's way. Any one true to her womanhood I will not examine as to her complexion or the heart's external roof, for if she is well protected *within* her heart, her praise will not be paid amiss.

If I were to tell of men and women aright, as I understand them, it would be a long tale. But now listen to the manner of this story. It will bring you word of both joy and sorrow, and delight and distress accompany it as well. Assuming there were three men instead of me 4

² A twelfth-century English satirist (Nigel Wireker, in his *Brunellus*) tells of a cow whose tail froze and broke off in the ice in winter, and hence could not flick flies in the summer.

alone, each possessed of ability equal to mine, it would still be fantastic skill if they set forth to you what I, single-handed, mean to set forth. They would find it a task indeed. I mean to tell you once again a story³ that speaks of great faithfulness, of the ways of womenly women and of a man's manhood so forthright that never against hardness was it broken. Never did his heart betray him, he all steel, when he came to combat, for there his victorious hand took many a prize of praise. *A brave man slowly wise*—thus I hail my hero—sweetness to women's eyes and yet to women's hearts a sorrow, from wrongdoing a man in flight! The one whom I have thus chosen is, story-wise, as yet unborn, he of whom this adventure tells and to whom many marvels there befall.



It is still the custom as it used to be the custom wherever Latin law prevails and formerly prevailed, and, as you have heard without me, it is the custom still in a corner of our German land as well, that whoever was the ruler of a country over there would command, without any feeling of wrongdoing—this is the truth and no mistake! —that the eldest brother should have his father's entire inheritance. This was the misfortune of the younger ones, since death deprived them of the rights which were theirs while their fathers were still alive. Before, it was held in common, whereas this way the eldest alone possessed it. A wise man ordained that age should have property, for youth has many a thing of value, while age has sighs and sorrows. Never was anything so wretched as old age and poverty. That kings, counts, dukes—and I am telling you no lie—should be dispossessed of their lands to an eldest child, that is a strange custom.

In this fashion Gahmuret, the warrior gallant and brave, lost the castles and land where his father had borne scepter and crown in splendor and with great royal power until he

³ The verb *niuwen* may mean "tell once again" or "introduce you to a story hitherto unknown to you."

lay dead in knightly combat. Thereupon he was deeply mourned. He had maintained all loyalty and honor until his very death. 6

His eldest son then summoned before him the princes of the land, and in knightly fashion they came, for by rights they should receive great fiefdoms from him. When they had come to court and their claims had been heard and they had all received their fiefdoms, now hear what they said. They made, as their loyalty bade them do, rich and poor alike, the whole crowd of them, earnest but futile request that the king should increase his brotherly fidelity to Gahmuret and do honor to himself by not driving him away but by assigning him an estate within the country, so that it might be clear on what the lord based his claim to free status and a name.

The king was not at all displeased, and he said, "You know how to make fitting requests. I will grant this and more besides. Why not call my brother Gahmuret the Angevin? Anjou is my country: let us both take our names therefrom." And the noble king went on to say: "My brother may look to me for further steadfast help 7 than I can quickly mention here. He shall be one of my household, and I shall clearly show you all that one mother bore us both. He has little and I have plenty, and this my hand shall so share with him that my salvation shall not be forfeit before Him Who giveth and Who taketh away, as both those things beseeem Him."

When the mighty princes all heard their lord profess such good faith, it was a glad day for them. Each one bowed before him. Nor did Gahmuret remain silent at their assent, but spoke as his heart prompted. Graciously he said to the king: "My Lord and brother, if I were to be of your or any man's household, I would have everything arranged for my comfort. But now, as you are honorable and wise, test my worth, counsel me as to what is proper, and then assist me therein. I have nothing but my armor. If I had accomplished more in it, it would bring me far more renown and I should somewhere be remembered." And Gahmuret went on to say: "I have sixteen squires, six of them equipped 8

with armor. Give me in addition four pages of good breeding and high lineage. For them nothing shall be stinted that my hand may ever win. I want to see the world. I have already traveled a bit. If luck sticks by me, I shall gain a good woman's greeting. If I then serve her, and if I am worthy to do so, my best thought will direct me to act with true loyalty. May God show me the ways of blessedness. We have ridden together, you and I, while our father Gandin still had your kingdom, and many a grievous pain have we both suffered for Love's sake. You were both knight and thief; you could serve a lady and yet dissemble. If only I too could steal love! O, if I only had your skill and the true favor of women!"

The king sighed and said, "Alas that I ever saw you, since with jesting unconcern you have hacked to pieces my heart that was whole before by proposing that we part. My father left us both riches aplenty, and in 9 respect to these I shall stake out equal limits with you, for you are dear to my heart. Bright jewels, red gold, attendants, weapons, horses, garments, accept as many of these from my hand as you wish, to travel as you will and to maintain your knightly generosity. Your manhood is of a rare sort, and if you were born in Gylstram⁴ or if you came from Ranculat,⁵ I would still like to keep you here with me because I am so fond of you. You are my brother."

"Sir, you praise me perforce because your knightly breeding so commands. Let your help be shown accordingly. If you and my mother share your riches with me I shall rise and not go down. My heart, however, yearns upward to the heights. I do not know why it is so full of life that the left side of my breast swells to bursting. O where is my desire driving me? That I shall find out if I can! But now my day of parting has come."

The king granted him everything, more than he had asked: five choice and tested horses, the best in all 10 his land, brave, strong, and not slow, and many a precious

⁴ Gylstram, unidentified; the extreme west is meant.

⁵ Ranculat, believed to be Hromgla on the Euphrates, hence the extreme east. See XI, 563.

golden vessel and many a bar of gold. Nor did the king begrudge in the least filling four traveling chests for him, into which went many a jewel until they were full to the brim. And the pages in charge of all these things were handsomely dressed and mounted.

Then there was no lack of grieving when he went to see his mother, and she clasped him tightly to her. "*Fils du roi Gandin*, will you not stay any longer with me?" said that womanly woman. "Alas, I gave you birth, and you are also Gandin's child. Is God in His help blind, or is He deaf, that He does not heed me? Must I now have fresh grief? I have buried my heart's strength, the sweetness of my eyes. If He robs me still further, when He is supposed to be a judge, then the story lies that speaks about His help, for He has abandoned me."

Then the young Angevin said, "God comfort 11
you, Lady, for my father. We shall both mourn for him. But no one can bring you mournful tidings about me. For my valor's sake I go to seek knightly deeds in foreign lands. That, Lady, is how matters stand."

Then the queen said, "Since you are turning your mind and your service to lofty love, dear son, do not disdain to take of my wealth upon your journey. Bid your attendants receive from me four heavy traveling chests which contain bolts of pfellel-silk, whole ones that have not been cut, and many a bolt of precious samite. Sweet boy, let me know the time when you will come back again, for you are the source of my joy."

"Lady, I have no notion in what country I shall be. Only, wherever I go, you have bestowed your nobleness upon me as was befitting for a knight. Moreover, the king has released me in such a fashion that my service shall show my gratitude. I assure you that you will hold him in greater respect because of it, however things may go with 12
me."

As the story tells us, this dauntless hero had, through love and a woman's friendship, received gifts worth a thousand marks. Even today they could be pawned to a Jew for that amount and he would not disdain them. These

were sent by one who was his beloved. By his service he had gained women's love and greetings, but seldom had he been granted consolation for the pangs of love.

The warrior took his leave. Never again did his eye behold mother, brother, or country. That was a great loss to many. To anyone who had shown him a favor of any kind, before his departure he paid great thanks. He deemed their favor more than enough, and in his courtesy it never occurred to him that they had done only what duty required. His nature was plainer than plain. Anyone who tells his own value will meet disbelief; his fellow men should tell it, and those who beheld his actions away from home: 13
then the story would be credited.

modest Gahmuret's ways were those that moderation dictated, and no other. Boast he rarely did, great honor he meekly bore, haughtiness had no part in him. Yet this noble man felt there was no one who wore a crown, neither king nor emperor nor empress, of whose household he wished to be, except one who had supreme power on earth over all lands. Such was his heart's will. He was told that in Baghdad there was a man so powerful that two-thirds of the earth, or more, was subject to him. To heathens his name was so great that he was called "The Baruch,"⁶ and such was his power that many kings were vassals to him and subject were their crowns. The office of Baruch exists today, and just as Christian law looks to Rome, as our faith enjoins, there the heathen order is seen and from Baghdad they take their papal rule—deeming this entirely proper—and the Baruch gives them absolution for their sins. 14

From two brothers of Babylon,⁷ Pompey and Ipomidon, the Baruch had taken Niniveh, which had belonged to all

⁶ "Baruch" = Hebrew: "the blessed one." From stanza 40 of *Titarel* we learn that his name is Ahkarin. The Caliph of Baghdad (Wolfram's "Baldac") is presumably meant. The Caliph had his seat in Baghdad until 1245.

⁷ I.e., Cairo.—The Egyptian Babylon was founded in 525 B.C. by colonists from Babylon in Mesopotamia, according to Strabo, just after the Persian conquest of the Nile Valley. The Romans made the town a legionary headquarters, and through them Babylon in Egypt was well known. Modern Cairo lies a few miles north of the ruins of Babylon.

their ancestors, and they had waged a stout defense. Now came the young Angevin, to whom the Baruch showed great favor, and for his services Gahmuret the worthy knight accepted pay.

Allow him now to have a coat of arms other than the one Gandin his father had previously given him. As one with high aspirations, the knight chose an anchor, ermine-white, to be sewn on his horse's caparison, and others, necessarily identical, on his shield and on his garment. Greener than emerald was his saddle gear, while of the hue of *achmardi*⁸—that is a silk material and superior to samite—he had his surcoat and gambeson made, with anchors of ermine sewn thereon and golden ropes looped through them. His anchors had not tasted cape nor continent nor been cast anywhere. This knight was to bear that weight of her-
15
aldry to many a foreign land, noble stranger that he was, and despite the sign of the anchor he was never to find any place to dwell or tarry.

Through how many lands did he ride? Around how many did he sail in ships? If I were to swear to that, my word as a knight, given in lieu of an oath, would tell you just what the story says—I have no other evidence—and it says that his manly strength won fame throughout heathendom from Morocco to Persia. Elsewhere too his hand prevailed, before Damascus, and before Aleppo, and wherever knightly deeds were done; before Arabi, and throughout all Araby, till he was free from challenge from any man whatsoever: such was the reputation he acquired. His heart's desire thirsted for fame. All their deeds melted away before him and became almost as nothing. That is what every man was taught who jousted with him, and in Baghdad people said of him that his courage never faltered.
16

From there he traveled to the kingdom of *Zazamanc*, where they were all mourning for Isenhardt, who had lost his life in the service of a lady. Thereto he had been driven by Belacane, that sweet lady without guile, and because she

⁸ Actually a color: Arabic *azzamrādī* (from Greek *smáragdos*) = "emerald-green."

never granted him her love, he lay dead of love for her. His kinsmen were now avenging him openly and secretly by besieging the lady with an army. She was in the midst of a brave defense when Gahmuret came to her country, which Fridebrant the Scotsman with ship-borne army had laid waste before he departed.

Now hear how things went with our knight. The sea with such a storm cast him there that he barely escaped with his life, but into the harbor he came sailing toward the queen's great hall, down from which he was observed by many. He looked around across the field where many a tent was pitched on all sides of the city except toward the sea, and there two powerful armies were encamped. He bade his men inquire whose castle this was, for neither he nor any of his shipmen knew. His messengers
17
were informed that it was *Patelamunt*, and graciously was the answer made to him. They implored him by their gods to help them: their need was urgent, they were fighting with death itself.

When the young Angevin heard of their grievous distress he offered his services for hire, as many a knight still does, and asked them to tell him what would be the prize for incurring the enemy's hatred. With one voice the sick and the well declared all their gold and all their jewels should be his; he should be master of it all and have a fine life among them. But he required little pay, for of the gold of Araby he had brought along many an ingot. Black as night were all the people of Zazamanc, and he felt ill at ease; yet he gave orders for lodgings to be taken. It pleased them to give him the best.

The ladies were still leaning out of the windows to see him, and they had a good look at his pages and his
18
armor with its adornments. On his ermine shield the generous hero displayed I don't know how many sable pelts, which the queen's marshal discerned as an anchor, and the sight did not displease him. Then his eyes told him that he had seen either this knight or his double before, and that must have been at Alexandria when the Baruch was besieging that city. No one equaled his achievement then.

Thus he who was rich in courage rode cheerfully into the city. Ten pack horses he ordered loaded, and through the streets they went, twenty squires riding behind them. His household staff were seen up ahead, for pages, cooks, and the latter's helper-lads had gone on up front. Stately was his retinue: twelve highborn youths rode next after the squires, all well bred and with sweet manners, several of them Saracens. Next came eight horses, caparisoned in sendal-silk one and all. The ninth bore his saddle, 19 while a shield I have mentioned before was carried by a squire of cheerful mien walking alongside. After these rode trumpeters, who are still required today, and a drummer kept hitting his drum and swinging it high in the air. The master would not have thought much of the lot if flute players had not been riding along with the rest, and three good fiddlers. None of these was in any great hurry. He himself rode last, and with him his ship captain, a man famed and wise.

All the people in the city, men and women alike, were Moors. Now the master beheld many a shattered shield riddled with spears, many of them being hung out on display on walls and doors. Sorrow enough they had. At the windows, so placed as to get the air, was the bed of many a man so badly wounded that even if he could get a doctor he still would never recover. These had really faced the foe. So it goes with a man who is unwilling to flee. 20 Numbers of horses were led past him, pierced and hacked with weapons. To right and left he saw many a dusky lady with complexions of the raven's hue. His host received him graciously—a thing that brought him joy later on—and he was a man rich in courage who had dealt many a thrust and many a blow with his hand when he was guarding a gate. With him he found many a knight whose arms hung in slings and whose heads were in bandages. Their wounds were such that they still performed knightly service in spite of them, and had not abated their powers.

The governor of the city then graciously bade his guest not to refrain from making any claim whatsoever upon his goods and person. Next, he conducted him to his wife, who

kissed Gahmuret, little as he relished it. Then they went to breakfast, and when that was over the marshal left him directly to go to the queen and ask her for a very considerable messenger's reward.⁹ "Lady," he said, 21 "our distress has ended in joy. This man we have welcomed here is a knight of such a kind that we shall ever have to thank our gods, who brought him here, for be-
thinking themselves to do so."

"Now tell me by your loyalty who this knight may be."

"Lady, he is a doughty warrior, a soldier in the pay of the Baruch, and an Angevin of high lineage. O how little does he hold back when they set him on the enemy! How skillfully he dodges and returns this way and that way! He teaches the enemy trouble! I saw him fight once when the Babylonians were supposed to be liberating Alexandria and when they were trying to drive the Baruch away by force.¹⁰ What a lot of them were killed off in their defeat! Then that wonderful man did such feats that they had no choice but to run for it. Besides, I heard people say of him that he should be recognized as having won the highest honors over many a country by his own right hand." 22

"Now find out when and how, and arrange for him to see me here! There is a truce all day long, so the hero can ride up here to see me—or should I go down there? He is of a different color from us. O, I do hope he won't be offended by that! I should have liked to find out first whether my people advise me to offer him honors. And if he deigns to come to me, how am I supposed to receive him? Is he of high enough birth for me so that my kiss will not be misbestowed?"

"Lady, he is known to be the kin of kings, I pledge my life on that. I will tell your princes, Lady, to put on rich apparel and wait here with you until he and I ride over to see you. You may so advise your ladies. For when I ride

⁹ Bringers of news, particularly of good news, were regularly compensated for their trouble with *botenbrot*, "messengers' bread."

¹⁰ It is to be understood that Babylonians were marching from Cairo to relieve fellow Babylonians besieged inside of Alexandria by the Baruch.

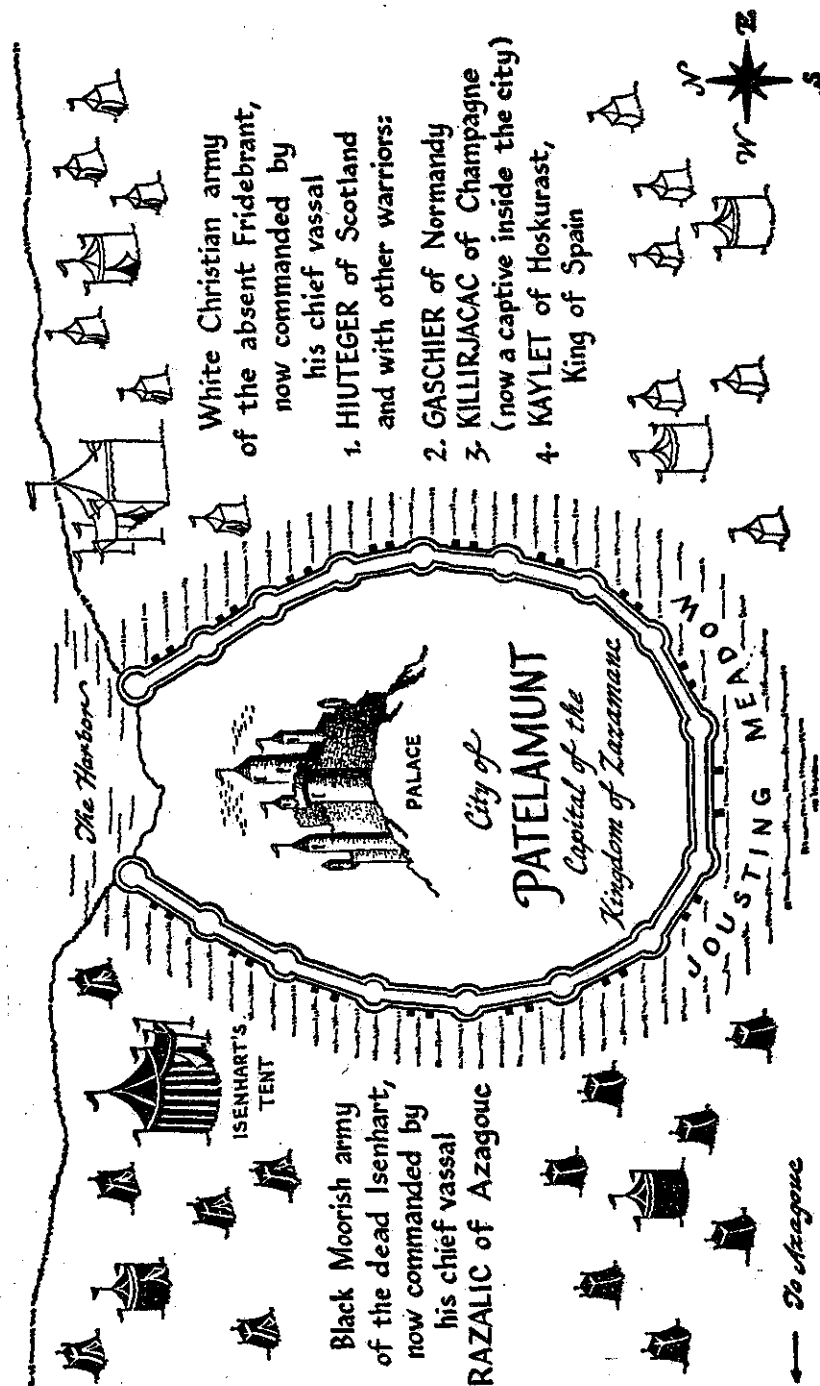
down now I will bring you up this worthy guest, who never lacked for sweet virtue."

Very little of this was left unperformed, and the marshal worked deftly to carry out his lady's behest. Rich apparel was quickly furnished Gahmuret, which he put on. I heard reported that it was elegant. Anchors heavy with Arabian gold were sewn thereon as he desired. Then that Reward of Love mounted a horse that a Babylonian had ridden in a joust against him—he had knocked him off it and the fellow didn't like that at all. And did his host ride with him? Yes, he and his knights as well, and indeed they were happy to do so. Together, then, they rode and drew rein in front of the palace, and up there were many knights all dressed, of course, in their finest. His pages entered ahead of him, two by two, hand in hand, and their master discovered a host of ladies within, resplendently attired. The great queen's eyes caused her grievous pain when they beheld the Angevin, who, being of Love's color, unlocked her heart whether she wished it or not. Her womanliness had kept it locked until then. She advanced a little way toward him and invited her guest to kiss her. She took him by the hand, and along the wall that faced the enemy they sat down on a broad window seat on an upholstered cushion of samite beneath which a soft mattress was spread.

If there is anything brighter than daylight—the queen in no way resembled it. A woman's manner she did have, and was on other counts worthy of a knight, but she was unlike a dewy rose: her complexion was black of hue. Her crown was a lucent ruby¹¹ through which her head could be seen. The hostess told her guest that his coming gave her pleasure. "Sir, I have heard much report of your knightly achievement. In your courtesy do not take offense if I make lament to you of the sorrow which I carry close to my heart."

"My help, Lady, will not fail you. Let my hand be

¹¹ The crown consists of a single huge ruby, just as Gahmuret's helmet (II, 53) consists of a single huge diamond, and just as the drinking cups (II, 85) are individual gems hollowed out.



marked for your service wherever it can avert what it is or was that troubles you. I am only one man, but, though it may impress the enemy but little, I offer you my shield against anyone who is doing or has done you harm."

Courteously one prince spoke up: "If we had a leader we wouldn't spare the enemy much, now that Fridebrant is gone—he is defending his own country out there. A king named Hernant, whom he slew for Herlinde's sake, his kinsmen are doing him damage aplenty and show no signs of letting up. He left heroes behind here—like Duke Hiuteger, whose knighthood has caused us many a grief, and his associates—and their fighting has skill and force. Then too, Gaschier of Normandy, that wise and great warrior, has many a soldier here. Kaylet of Hoskurast has even more knights here, and angry guests they are, too! All these were brought into this country by the Scotsman, King Fridebrant, and his comrades four,¹² together with many a fighting man. To the west there along the sea lies Isenhart's army, tears flowing from their eyes. Never has any man beheld them in public or in private but that he has marveled at their immense grief. Their hearts' showers have brought on floods since their lord perished in the joust."

With knightly courtesy the guest said to his hostess, "Tell me, if you will be so kind, why you are
26 being attacked with anger and violence. You have many a bold knight. It grieves me that they are so weighed down with the enemy's hatred to their harm."

"That I shall tell you, Sir, since you ask. —I was served by a knight, and a worthy man he was, a blossoming branch of virtues, a hero bold and wise, a root-taking fruit¹³ of loyalty. His courtesy outweighed the courtesy of all others, he was more modest than a woman, and daring and bravery were contained in his person. A knight more generous never grew before in any land—of what may grow in times here—after I know nothing: let other people tell of that. To all false conduct he was deaf, and in blackness of hue he was,

¹² The four are apparently Hiuteger, Gaschier, Killirjacac, and Kaylet.

¹³ Wolfram's own mixed metaphor.

like me, a Moor. His father was Tankanis, a king, and he too had high renown. My beloved's name was Isenhart. My womanhood was ill advised when I accepted his service in love, because it did not turn out to his joy, and for that I must bear sorrow forever. They imagine that I had him murdered, but I am little capable of treachery,
27 though his men accuse me of it. He was dearer to me than to them. I am not without witnesses for what I have to prove, and my gods and his gods both know the real truth. He caused me many a grief, but my over-modest womanhood delayed his reward and lengthened my own sorrow. My virgin reticence spurred the hero on to much knightly fame—I was testing him to see whether he could be my friend. That was soon demonstrated. For my sake he gave all his knightly equipment away. (What stands yonder like a palace, that is a lofty tent which the Scotsmen brought to this field.)¹⁴ Once the hero was without his armor, his body was little spared. Life seemed pointless to him, and he sought out many an adventure, unarmed. When things stood thus, a prince named Prothizilas, one of my household and free of all cowardice, rode out to adventure, where great harm did not miss him: in the forest of Azagouc he found no mock death in a charge against a brave man, who likewise met his end there. That was
28 my beloved Isenhart. They both felt a spear through their shields and through their bodies. And I, poor woman, still grieve for this; both deaths distress me still. Grief flowers in the soil of my loyalty. I have never become the wife of any man."

Gahmuret reflected how she was a heathen, and yet never did more womanly loyalty glide into a woman's heart. Her innocence was a pure baptism, as was also the rain that wet her, that flood which flowed from her eyes down upon the furs about her bosom. The practice of sorrow was her delight and the true instruction received from grief.

She went on to say: "Then from across the sea came the

¹⁴ The knightly equipment included his tent, which Belacane's eye catches as she is sitting there by the window, speaking. Isenhart gave the tent and other equipment to his vassal Fridebrant.

King of Scots against me with his army, for my friend was his maternal uncle's son, but they could do me no more hurt than had been done me by Isenhart, I must confess."

The lady fetched frequent sighs and through her tears cast many a shy glance, as strangers will, at Gahmuret. Her eyes told her heart that he was handsome, and she 29 could also judge of fair complexions, for she had seen many a fair-skinned heathen before. Between the two there sprang up a genuine desire. She looked at him, he looked at her. Then she ordered them to pour the parting wine cup. That she would have left undone if she had dared, and it vexed her that it could not be left undone, because it always drove the knights away who liked talking to a woman. Yet she was now his, and he had given her the feeling that his life was now the lady's life.

Hereupon he stood up and said, "Lady, I am inconveniencing you, I have sat longer than I should, and that was thoughtless of me. I most humbly regret that your sorrow is so great. Make disposition of me, Lady, wherever you will, and there my vengeance will be. I shall serve you in any way I may."

"Sir," she replied, "I am fully confident you will."

His host the governor now left little undone to pass the time for him. He inquired whether he would like to take a ride out "and you can see where we are fighting 30 and how our gates are defended." Gahmuret, that worthy warrior, said he would like to see where deeds of knight-hood had taken place. Several knights of doughty mien rode down with the hero, some of them seasoned, some of them fresh. They led him around by sixteen gates, explaining to him that not one of these had been shut "since Isenhart has been being avenged in anger upon us. By night and by day our fighting has been the same: we have not closed one of them since. Before eight gates Isenhart's loyal men do battle with us. They have done us much injury and they fight in anger, these princes high born, these king's vassals of Azagouc." Over brave companies before each gate flew a bright flag with a transfixing knight thereon. After Isenhart lost his life, such was the coat of arms his

men had chosen. "But against that device we have another with which we assuage their grief. Our banner may be recognized by the two fingers it shows outstretched 31 from a hand to represent the oath: that never did anything so grievous befall her as when Isenhart lay dead. That brought my lady heart's sorrow. So there stands the queen, the Lady Belacane, sharply outlined in black upon white samite, and ever since we saw *their* emblem—their loyalty brings them grief—*these* banners fly over the gateways high. —Before the other eight gates proud Fridebrant's army still attacks us, baptized men from across the sea.¹⁵ Each gate is commanded by a prince who leads the sallies out with his banner. We have captured a count of Gaschier's, who is offering us a good deal of money. He is Kaylet's sister's son,¹⁶ and whatever Kaylet does to us, *he* has to make good. Such luck seldom comes our way. Of green meadow there is mighty little, but it is perhaps thirty horse-charge lengths of sandy land from the moat out to their tents, and there many a joust takes place."

His host had this report to give him: "One 32 knight never fails to come out for jousting. If he were to do his service in vain for her who sent him out, what then would be the use of his bold challenge? This is the proud Hiuteger. About him I would like to tell you more. Ever since we have been under siege here that reckless fellow has appeared every morning before the gate opposite the great hall. What is more, many a lady's favor has been taken from that brave man by virtue of his ramming them through our shields, and these have been declared of great value when the heralds have picked them off. He has brought down many a knight of ours, he loves to be seen, and *our* womenfolk praise him too. And when women

¹⁵ Eight of Patelamunt's sixteen gates face west toward the black Moorish army of the late Isenhart, King of Azagouc, and of his avenger, the Moorish Razalic; the other eight gates face east toward the army of white Christian fighters: the currently absent Fridebrant of Scotland, Gaschier of Normandy, Kaylet of Spain, and Hiuteger the Scottish Duke.

¹⁶ This is the youthful Count Killirjacac of Champagne; see I, 46, below.

praise a man, he is known; he has the prize at hand and his heart's desire."

Now the weary sun had gathered its bright rays in, and the ride had to come to an end. The guest rode back with his host and there he found supper ready.

I must tell you about their meal. It was set out with propriety and he was served in knightly fashion. 33
Resplendent, the great queen appeared at his table. Here was heron, there was fish. She had ridden down to see to it herself that he was being properly attended, and her maidens had come with her. She knelt down—to his displeasure—and with her own hand cut up a portion of the knight's food.¹⁷ The lady was delighted with her guest. Then she served him his wine and took good care of him. He also observed her gestures and her words. At the foot of his table sat his minstrels, and opposite sat his chaplain.

Shyly he looked at the lady and with some embarrassment said, "I am not accustomed, Lady, to being served with such honor as you offer me here. If I may say so to you, I would have requested such treatment this evening as I am worthy of, and you would not have ridden down here. If I may venture to request it of you now, Lady, allow me to live in proper moderation. You have shown me too much honor."

Still she would not desist, and going over to 34
where his pages were sitting, she urged them to eat heartily. This she did by way of honor to her guest. These young gentlemen were one and all charmed with the queen. Nor did the lady then forget to go over to where the governor was sitting with his wife. The queen raised the drinking cup and said, "Let me commend our guest to you: the honor is yours. This I urge upon you both." She made her farewells, and yet she walked over once again to her guest. His heart felt the burden of love for her, and the same was true of her for him. Her heart and her eyes declared it, for they shared the burden with her. Courteously the lady said,

¹⁷ The table, which consists of a "board" placed on a folding trestle, is low; hence Belacane is obliged to kneel in order to cut the meat on Gahmuret's plate.

"Command, Sir, and whatever you desire I shall perform, for you are worthy of it. Now grant me permission to withdraw. If good repose is granted you, we shall be most happy." —Of gold were her torch holders, and four torches were borne before her. In this way she rode up to where there were torches aplenty.

Now they went on eating no longer. The lord was both joyous and sad. He was pleased to be shown great 35
honor, but on the other hand distress tormented him, and that was mighty Love, who bows lofty spirits down. The hostess retired for the night immediately. Then a bed was prepared with care for the hero, to whom the host said, "Sleep soundly and rest well tonight: you will need it." With that he bade his followers leave. The guest's pages had their beds arranged in a circle around his, with their heads all toward his, as was his custom. Tall candles stood there, brightly burning. The hero found it irksome that the night was so long, for again and again he felt his helplessness before the black Moorish queen of the land. He kept twisting like a willow withe so that his joints cracked.

War and love were what he wanted:

Now pray that these to him be granted.

Loud was the throbbing of his heart as it swelled with yearning for knightly deeds till his warrior's breast strained as the bow strains the bowstring: his desire was all 36
too intense.

Sleepless the hero lay till he saw the grey of dawn, though it was not yet bright daylight. Then one who was his chaplain was ready for Mass, which he sang for God and for him.¹⁸ They brought him his armor and he rode out to where the jousting was. Directly he mounted a horse that was capable of both headlong charges and swift leaps, responding agilely when it was checked. He was seen wearing his anchor on his tall helmet as he rode toward the gate, and there men and women declared they had never seen a

¹⁸ A humorous formula: "for the honor of God and the spiritual welfare of the knight."

knight so handsome; their gods were supposed to look like him. Stout spears were brought up. And how was he equipped? His horse wore iron covering for its protection against blows, and over this was laid a second covering that was light of weight and made of green samite. His surcoat and gambeson were also a green achmardi made in the city of Arabi. I tell you no lie when I say his shield 37 straps and the fastenings that went with them were unbleached thongs studded with precious stones; refined in fire was the red gold of his shield-boss. His service was for Love's reward, and a sharp fight weighed lightly with him. The queen was sitting in the window with her ladies about her.

Look now: there was Hiuteger at the very spot where he had often won the prize before, and when he saw this knight coming toward him at a gallop he thought, "When and how did that Frenchman get into this country? Who sent that proud man here? If I ever took him for a Moor, my best wits would have been a fool." They did not delay the onslaught. Both spurred their horses from a gallop to full career. A fine show of knightly valor they made of it, too, and did not fail to provide each other a joust. The splinters of bold Hiuteger's lance flew into the air, and his opponent's fighting knocked him backward off his horse onto the grass—something he was not accustomed to. Over to him rode Gahmuret and trampled him down, 38 but he picked himself up again with energy and showed a will to put up a defense. Gahmuret's lance, however, had pierced his arm, and he asked for guarantee of safety in surrender. He had met his master. "Who is it that has conquered me?" asked the bold man; to which the victor replied, "I am Gahmuret the Angevin." The other said, "I give you my guarantee." This was accepted and he sent him into the city. And much praised he was by the ladies who had witnessed it.

Now Gaschier of Normandy hurried up, that proud warrior, rich in valor and a stout jousting, and the undaunted Gahmuret waited in readiness for the second onrush. The iron head of his spear was broad and its shaft firm. The

two strangers met, but with unequal prowess, for Gaschier was thrown, horse and all, in a joust fall and was compelled to guarantees of surrender whether he liked it or not. Gahmuret the warrior said, "Your hand has given 39 me guarantee, after having put up a manly defense. Now ride to the Scottish army and bid them spare us their attacks, if they will be so kind, and follow me into the city." Whatever he ordered or bade was carried out exactly. The Scots were forced to cease their warfare.

Up now rode Kaylet, but from him Gahmuret turned away, for he was his mother's sister's son—how, then, could he do him an injury?—though the Spaniard called after him enough. An ostrich he wore on his helmet, and the man was dressed, as I must tell you, in pfellel-silk wide and long. The field rang in the hero's wake, for the little bells he wore set up a ringing.¹⁹ A flower of manly beauty was he! In the battle of beauty his features carried the day until the coming of two who lived hereafter: Beacurs,²⁰ son of Lot, and Parzival, who were not present here; they were as yet unborn, but later they were esteemed for their beauty.

Gaschier seized him by the bridle. "Your wildness will turn very tame, I tell you on my honor, if you at- 40 tack the Angevin, who has my oath of guarantee. Heed my advice, Sir, and my request as well. I have promised Gahmuret that I would dissuade all of you from warfare and I vowed it in his hands. For my sake give up your effort, or he will show you his strength in battle."

Then King Kaylet said, "If it is my cousin Gahmuret, *fils du roi* Gandin, I will give up my warfare with him. Let go of my bridle!"

"I will not let go of it until first my eye has seen your uncovered head: *mine* is still dazed."

Therewith he untied his helmet and took it off.

It was now around mid-morning. Gahmuret did find still more fighting, by which the people of the city were made

¹⁹ Knights sometimes had their garment seams, particularly on the sleeves, sewn with small spherical bells.

²⁰ I.e., Beau-corps. He probably is the character whom Malory calls Gareth.

glad as they witnessed that joust. They all went out on the bastions, and in their view he was a snaring-net where everything that came under it was caught. As I heard it told, the worthy man mounted a second horse that flew and hugged the ground with equal adroitness, bold 41 when a charge was on, easily checked or wheeled. And what did he do on this horse? I must say, it was bravery. He rode out where the Moors could see him from where their army lay westward along the sea.²¹

There was a prince there named Razalic, the most powerful man in Azagouc—his race was a guarantee of that, for he was of royal birth—and never did this man let a day go by without coming out toward the city for a joust. There the hero from Anjou put checkmate to his power. A black lady who had sent him out was to lament that someone overthrew him. A squire, without so much as being asked to do so, brought his master Gahmuret a spear with a bamboo shaft, and with that he rammed the Moor back off his horse onto the gravel; nor did he let him lie there very long, but his hand forced him to guarantees of surrender. Therewith the conflict subsided and a great prize was his. Gahmuret now saw eight banners streaking on toward the city, and these he ordered the brave but 42 victoryless man to send back;²² he further ordered him to follow him inside the walls. This he did: there was no help for it.

Gaschier, too, had not failed to arrive, and from him the governor had meanwhile learned that his guest had sallied forth.²³ If he did not eat iron like an ostrich and if he did

²¹ Having defeated the leaders of the white Christian army east of Patelamunt, Gahmuret now turns his attention "around mid-morning" to the black Moorish army west of the city.

²² Eight vassals of Razalic are riding to attack, apparently unaware that their lord has been defeated. They take their orders from Razalic, who from this moment on must take orders, in turn, from Gahmuret.

²³ It is a little odd that the governor in charge of the city's defenses ("*burcgrave*," "*comte du château*") should still be unaware of the fighting which the whole population has been watching. Gahmuret, after defeating the white army must have ridden around the city wall to his encounter with the black army leader, rather than through the city itself.

not chew rocks, it was because he didn't have any at hand. His anger growled and roared like a lion; he tore his hair and said, "I have put my old age to a great greenhorn's uses! The gods sent me a brave and worthy guest, and if he now has more fighting than he can manage, I will never know honor again. What good are shield and sword to me? Anybody that reminds me of this will revile me!" With that he turned away from his people and galloped off in the direction of the gate.

A squire brought him a shield which was painted inside and outside with the figure of a transfigured man, made in Isenhart's country; he also brought a helmet in his hand, and a sword which Razalic had taken bravely to 43 the fight but from which he was there parted, that brave and black-complexioned pagan. —Far and wide went his fame, and if he later died unbaptized, may He who has all miracles within His power have mercy on that warrior brave. —When the governor saw that, he was never so delighted with anything. Recognizing the coat of arms, he went out the gate at a gallop to where he saw his guest, his young guest not at all old, eagerly awaiting further knightly combat. There his host, Lahfilirost, overtook him and quickly led him back in: never did he strike down another opponent there.

"Sir," said Lahfilirost, *le comte du château*, "tell me, did hand of yours conquer Razalic? If so, our country is safe from war for good and all, for he was over all the army of the Moors, those vassals of loyal Isenhart who have done us injury. Our sufferings are at an end. An angry god gave them the command to attack us here with their army: now their champion is brought low."

He brought Gahmuret in, loath as the latter was to come. The queen rode down to meet him and with 44 her hand she grasped his bridle and untied the fastenings of his mouth guard. The governor was obliged to surrender the bridle to her. Nor did his pages forget to come running to their master. Through the city the wise queen was seen leading her guest, who had won the victory. At the moment she deemed proper she dismounted: "Oh! but your pages

are devoted! —You seem to think you are going to lose this man. He will be well attended without you. Take his horse and lead it away. Here *I* am his friend."

Up there he found numerous ladies, but his armor was removed by the black hands of the queen. In a bed beautifully adorned and with a coverlet of sable there was granted to him an intimate honor. No one was present—the maidens had gone out and shut the door after them—and the queen bestowed a sweet and noble love, as did Gahmuret, her heart's beloved. Yet their skins were not alike in color.

Offerings aplenty the inhabitants of the city brought to their gods. And what commands did brave Razalic 45 receive when he came off the battlefield? Whatever they were, he performed them faithfully, and yet his grief was renewed for his master Isenhart. The governor was informed that he had arrived, and then there was a jubilation! To Gahmuret princes came from all parts of the queen's land of Zazamanc to express their gratitude for the victory he had achieved. In formal joust he had overthrown four-and-twenty knights and brought back the horses of most of them; captured were princes three; in their retinues rode many a knight into the courtyard up at the palace.

Well rested now and breakfasted, and in fine-made garments splendidly arrayed was the country's supreme lord. She who was formerly termed a maiden was now a wife, and as she led him forth by the hand she said: "My person and my country are now subject to this knight, provided enemies will allow it so to be." 24

Then compliance was accorded to a courteous request of Gahmuret's: "Come nearer, my lord Razalic, you 46 shall kiss my wife. The like shall you do also, lord Gaschier." And Hiuteger the Scotsman proud he bade kiss her on the lips; he still bore his wounds from the joust. Now he bade them all be seated, and, remaining standing himself, he said good-naturedly, "I would be happy to see here also my cousin, if that might be with the permission of

24 Gahmuret is proclaimed King of Zazamanc; by virtue of his defeat of Razalic, Isenhart's successor, he is already King of Azagouc.

the man who took him captive. As his kinsman I have no course but to set him free." With a happy smile the queen bade them fetch him quickly. In through the crowd the lovable *beau comte* made his way. Knightly deeds had left him with wounds but he had done many a brave action in the course of them. Gaschier the Norman had brought him there; courteous he was; his father was a Frenchman, and he was the child of Kaylet's sister; his journey had been made in a woman's service; his name was Killirjacac; and he surpassed the beauty of all men.

When Gahmuret saw him—their faces attested their kinship, for they very much resembled one another—he bade the great queen kiss him and embrace him, and 47 then he said, "And now come over here to me also," and the lord kissed him too. They were delighted to see each other. But then Gahmuret said, "Alas, sweet young man, whatever brought your tender self to this country? Tell me, did a woman give you such a command?"

"They give few commands, Sir, to me. It was my uncle Gaschier who brought me here, and he well knows the reason why. I have a thousand knights here for him, and I am in his service. To Rouen in Normandy I went to answer his call to arms, and took those young heroes to him, and for his sake I made the journey from Champagne. Now Harm will turn her skill and cunning against him unless you act to your own honor. If you will so permit, allow him to profit from his kinship to me and allow me to relieve his distress."

"I will leave the matter up to you. Now go with my lord Gaschier and bring Kaylet to me here."

Directly they set about fulfilling the hero's request and brought him in as he had bidden. Then he too was graciously received and embraced by the great queen. 48 She kissed the warrior graciously, as well she might in honor do, for he was her husband's aunt's son and by lineage a noble king.

Laughingly the host²⁵ went on to say, "God knows, Lord

25 I.e., Gahmuret.

Kaylet, that if I were to take Toledo from you, and your country Spain, for the advantage of the King of Gascony who in his anger is doing you much injury, that would be disloyal of me, for you are my aunt's son. The best men, the very core of knighthood, are here with you: who forced you into this expedition?"

To which the proud young warrior replied, "My uncle, Schiltung, whose daughter Fridebrant married, ordered me to serve Fridebrant, and thus the latter, for his wife's sake, has from me alone six thousand well-known knights here, and they have hands that are brave. I brought him still more knights besides, but a good share of them have gone away. In support of the Scots there were here these brave contingents: from Greenland battle-seasoned heroes came to him, and two kings with strong forces; a flood of 49 knighthood they brought, and many a ship. That contingent pleased me mightily. Here too for his sake was Morholt, whose prowess has both strength and skill. These have now gone home, and with my men I shall do as my lady here instructs. My service shall be manifest to her, but for my service you have no cause to thank me: our kinship requires as much. These dauntless heroes are now yours. If they were baptized men as mine are, and of the same color of skin, there would never be a man crowned but that he would get his fill of fighting from them. —But I am amazed to see you here. Tell me about that, and how it happened."

"I arrived yesterday, and today I became master of this country. The queen took me captive with her own hand, and with love I defended myself, for my wits so counseled me."

"I gather that that sweet weapon of defense has overcome both armies."

"You mean because I avoided battle with *you*? You shouted loudly to me: what did you want to get from me by force? Let me bargain with you some other way!"

"I did not recognize your anchor. My aunt's husband Gandin never wore it." 50

"But I recognized your ostrich perfectly well, and the serpent-head on your shield, too;²⁶ your ostrich stood tall without a nest. I saw by the look of you that you didn't much like the oaths of surrender that two men had given me; they had put up a stiff fight."

"It could easily have gone the same with me. I would have to admit even to a devil whose ways I can never get to like, that if he had put up such a battle against stout heroes as *you* did, the women would eat him like sugar."

"Your mouth grants me too much praise."

"No, I cannot flatter. But look for other support from me."

They called for Razalic to come over and join them.

Courteously Kaylet said, "My cousin Gahmuret has taken you prisoner with his hand."

"That he has, Sir. I have recognized the hero as the man from whom the land of Azagouc will never withhold homage, now that our Lord Isenhart may not wear the crown there. He was slain in the service of her who is now your cousin's wife; for her love he gave his life. But my 51 kiss to her has abolished that account. I have lost my lord and kinsman and am now ready to do homage as a knight to your aunt's son, and, if he will compensate me for that loss, I will pledge my hand to him. Thus he will have riches and honor and everything that Tankanis bequeathed to Isenhart. Embalmed amid the army there Isenhart lies, and on his wounds I have gazed every day since this spear-head broke his heart." And he drew it forth from his bosom on a silken ribbon. Then the warrior put it back again against his bosom next to the bare skin.

"It is still broad daylight, and if my lord Killirjacac will carry the message to the army as I request, my princes shall ride along as his escort." He sent a ring along as token.

Then those who were of hell's color came, all the princes that were on hand, up through the city to the castle hall. With conferral of flags his hand bestowed fiefs of land upon

²⁶ The word *sarapandratest* is probably French *serpent à tête*, 'serpent-head,' though *tête de serpent* would be expected.

the princes of Azagouc. Each was delighted with his portion, yet the best portion remained for Gahmuret their lord.

52

These came first, and now those of Zazamanc pressed forward with grand display, not shabby at all, to receive from him, as their lady bade, lands and usufructs, to each one as was fitting. Poverty fled from their lord.

Now Prothizilas, who was a prince of high lineage, had left a dukedom, which Gahmuret now bestowed upon a man who had gained much honor with his hand and who from battle had never shrunk back: Lahfilirost, *le comte du château*, received it that day amid conferral of flags.

Then the lordly princes of Azagouc took the Scotsman Hiuteger and Gaschier the Norman and led them before their lord, who pronounced them free upon their request. For this they thanked Gahmuret. Turning to Hiuteger the Scotsman, they urged him earnestly: "Leave the tent here for our master as a reward for his adventure. Isenhart's life was taken from us when he gave away his armor and equipment to Fridebrant; the pledge of his joy was lost, he himself lies upon his funeral bier, and unrequited serv-
ice brought him excessive grief. To Fridebrant the equipment was given, that treasure of our country, and never on earth was anything so fine: the helmet was thick and strong and made of diamond, a good companion in battle."

53

Thereat Hiuteger's hand vowed that, when he got to his master's country, he would gather all the equipment and send it back here in prime condition. This he did from no constraint.

All the princes present now begged the king for permission to withdraw, and forthwith they left the palace.

Devastated though his land might be, Gahmuret could nevertheless lavish such gifts by way of rewards as if gold grew on his trees. He distributed rich presents and his vassals and kinsmen accepted his wealth. This was the queen's wish. Many a battle had preceded the wedding festivities, but they were all set right in this way. I did not think this up by myself: I was *told* that Isenhart was buried

like a king by the men who had known him. The taxes from his lands, to the amount of a year's income, they expended on the costs, and did so of their own free will. Gahmuret bade Isenhart's people keep his great wealth for each of them to enjoy for himself.

54

Next morning the foreigners before the fortress vacated the country. All who were there departed, and many a stretcher they carried as they went. The field stood bare of shelters save for one tent, and that was a large one. The king ordered it carried on board ship, saying to the people that he was going to transport it to Azagouc—but with those words he deceived them.

Here the proud man remained until he began to grieve because he found no knightly activity, and then his joy was pawned to sorrow. Yet his black wife was dearer to him than his own life. Never was there a woman more endowed with charms, and that lady's heart never failed to include in its retinue a worthy company of womanly virtues and true modesty.

In the city of Seville was born the man whom, some time later, he asked to take him away. He had already guided him many a mile; he had brought him here; he was not like a Moor in color. And this ship captain replied, "You must quietly conceal this from those whose skins are black; my boats are so swift that they can never overtake us, and we shall get away."

55

He ordered his gold put on board ship. And now I must tell you of departure. By night the worthy man went away, and it was done secretly. And when he deserted his wife she had within her body a child twelve weeks alive. The wind bore him swiftly away. In her girdle purse that lady discovered a letter written by her husband's hand. In French, a language which she knew, the writing informed her:

"To one Love another Love sends love:

By this journey I am a thief: I steal it from you to spare you grief. I cannot conceal from you, Lady, the

fact that, were your faith of the same law as mine, I would yearn for you eternally, for I do suffer for your sake always, even so.

If the child of us two should in his features resemble a man, then he will indeed be rich in valor. He is born out of Anjou; Love will be his lady; in battle he 56 will be a storm of hail, to foes a hard neighbor. My son should know that his grandfather was named Gandin and that he died from knightly deeds.

His father before him suffered the same fate, and his name was Addanz. Rarely did his shield remain whole. He was by race a Briton, he and Utepandragun being offspring of two brothers who are named herewith: one was called Lazaliez and the other Brickus.

The father of these was named Mazadan; into Falmorgan he was taken by a fairy, and her name was Terdelaschoye, and he was a fettering chain upon her heart. From these two is my line descended, which will shine in brilliance forever; each one since has worn a crown, and each has had no lack of honor.

Lady, if you will receive baptism, you may yet win me back."

Nor did she wish it otherwise. "Alas! how swiftly this has come about! If only he will come back, I shall do just that. In whose charge has his manly courtesy left 57 the fruit of his love here behind? Alas for loving companionship! Now sorrow with its power must control my life forever. To do honor to his God," the lady said, "I would gladly agree to be baptized and live as he desired." Grief brought warfare to her heart. Her joy sought the withered bough, as the turtledove still does, for that bird was ever of the same mind:

*When she a loved one loses, she
Will perch upon a withered tree.*

In due time this lady was delivered of a son who was of two colors and in whom God had wrought a marvel, for he was both black and white. Immediately the queen kissed

him over and over again on his white spots, and on her little child the mother bestowed the name of Feirefiz Angevin. He was to become a waster of forests, for the jousts of his hand were to shatter many a spear and riddle many a shield with holes. Like a magpie was the color of his hair and of his skin.

It was more than a year now since Gahmuret had been so much praised there in Zazamanc and his hand 58 had wrested triumph. Now he was still sailing the sea and the swift winds were bringing him woe. He saw a silken sail glowing red, and the boat that bore it was also bearing the messengers sent by the Scotsman Fridebrant to the Lady Belacane. He was begging her to forgive him, although he had lost his kinsman on her account, for ever having attacked her. They had with them the diamond helmet, a sword, a coat of mail, and a pair of leg guards. You may see a great marvel in the fact that their boat encountered him, as the story vowed to me it did. They gave him the knightly equipment, and he swore that his lips would be the guarantee of their message when he came to her. Whereupon they parted.

I was told that the sea brought him to a harbor, and from there he made his way to Seville. With gold the brave man rewarded the ship captain for his labors. Whereupon they parted, to the latter's regret.



BOOK · II

In the land of Spain he knew the king: it was his cousin Kaylet, and he traveled on to Toledo to see him.¹ But he had left there on a knightly expedition where shields 59 were not to be spared. So Gahmuret also gave orders, as the story assures me, for spears to be made ready, with painted shafts and green sendal-silk pennons, each spear with a pennon attached to it and three ermine anchors thereon, so proud that people talked about their richness. Long and broad they were and hung right down to the hand when tied a span below the spear point. A hundred of them were prepared for the brave man and they were carried behind him by his cousin's men. Well might they honor him and treat him with distinction: their doing so did not displease their master.

He pressed onward, I don't know for how long, until in the land of Waleis the tents of strangers came into view. There before Kanvoleis many a pavilion had been pitched on the plain. Now I tell you this without any doubt, and if you will have it so, then it is true: he ordered his men to halt and sent his dapper chief squire on in ahead of him. The latter asked, as his lord had instructed him, 60 to take lodgings in the city. He was in a great hurry, and

¹ Kaylet is therefore King of Castile. Toledo was recovered from the Moors in 1085.

pack horses were being led behind him. Not a house did he see but that shields formed a second roof for it, and the walls were all hung with spears round about.

The Queen of Waleis had proclaimed a tournament at Kanvoleis, so planned that many a coward is still scared when he sees anything like it being arranged: his hand has no part in it. She was a maiden, not a wife, and she was offering two countries and her own person to whoever won the prize. This offer knocked many a man back off his horse onto the ground, and those who got these throws were called thrown and lost. Dauntless heroes made display of their knightly bravery, to full career of onslaught many a horse was spurred, and many were the swords that rang.

On the plain the current of a stream was traversed by a bridge guarded by a gate. This a squire readily opened as he was minded to do. Over the gate was built the 61 great hall, and inside by the windows sat the queen with many noble ladies. They looked to see what these squires were about, for the latter had decided on a plan of action and were putting up a tent—a tent which a king had lost for the sake of unrequited love when Belacane had driven him to it. With labor now that tent, which required thirty pack horses to transport, was erected, and richly did it show. The meadow was broad enough so that the tent ropes stretched way out.

At the same time Gahmuret, the worthy man, was having breakfast on the other side of the city, after which he made careful preparations for riding forth in courtly fashion. With no loss of time his squires tied up his spears, five to a bundle, while the sixth, adorned with a pennon, they carried in their hands. Thus the proud man came riding.²

In the queen's presence the news was heard that a guest whom no one knew had arrived from a distant country. 62

"His attendants are of fine manners, both heathen and French, and several of them, to judge by their speech,

² Gahmuret now covers the same route already traversed by his chief squire: through the city, over the bridge, and out onto the Leo Meadow where his tent is now ready for him.

may well be Angevins.³ Their bearing is proud, their attire splendid and well tailored. I spent some time among his squires, and they are free of misconduct. They say that anyone desiring riches has but to seek out their master and he will deliver them from want. I inquired about him, and without hesitation they told me he is the King of Zazamanc."—This report a page made to her.—"Ah voilà! What a pavilion! Your crown and your country could be pawned for only half of its value!"

"You need not praise it so to me. My mouth will tell you this: it must belong to a distinguished man who knows nothing about poverty." So said the queen. "But when will he himself arrive there?" She bade the page inquire about that.

In courtly fashion the hero now came riding through the city, waking sleepers as he came. Many a shield he saw shining. Ahead of him along his way shrill trumpet 63
pets loudly raised a din, and there was a sound of two drums alternately swung aloft and thumped with stout blows so that the noise re-echoed through the town. Along the route their melody was spelled with flutes sounding a march tune. Now we must not neglect how their master approached. Fiddlers rode alongside him, and the warrior worthy had one leg stretched out in front of him on top of his horse; he displayed two boots pulled up on his bare legs. His mouth shone in its redness like a ruby or as if it were on fire, and a full mouth it was, not thin at all. His whole body was noble; fair and curling was his hair as far as it could be seen outside his hat, and that was a rich headgear. Of green samite was his cloak, with sable trim showing black on the front of it, and set off against a shirt that was white. There was a great press around him to get a look, and many a time the question was asked: who was this beardless knight that made display of wealth like this? In no time the news was abroad, for his people answered them directly. 64

Now they were coming to the bridge, both his men and other people as well, and at sight of the bright glow that

³ Distinction is apparently made among dialects of French.

emanated from the queen he quickly brought his leg down to his side and he braced himself, that warrior worthy, like a falcon set to fall on its prey. The quarters met with his approval—such was the hero's taste—and they did not displease his hostess, Waleis's queen.

Then the King of Spain learned that out on the Leo Meadow⁴ there stood a tent which at brave Razalic's bidding had been given to Gahmuret before Patelamunt. A knight so informed him. Whereat he was a soldier of Joy and leaped up like a deer. And the knight added further: "I saw your aunt's son coming in pomp as he used to. There are a hundred pennons set up beside a shield on the green meadow in front of his high tent, and they are all green. The hero bold also has three ermine anchors brightly blazoned on every banner of green silk."

"Is he in battle array? O then people will see how 65
he turns their onrushes to confusion! The way he parries their onslaughts! Haughty King Hardiz has now this long time been directing his angry zeal against me: now Gahmuret's hand shall bring him down with his jousting. My fate is not with the lost."

With that he sent his messengers over to where Gaschier the Norman was camped with a large company, and the handsome Killirjacac, both of whom were present there at his request. To the pavilion they came with Kaylet and with their retinues, and warmly they welcomed the worthy King of Zazamanc. They said it was much too long a time not to have seen him before this, and they spoke in all sincerity.

He asked them what knights were here.

His aunt's son replied: "From distant lands there are knights here whom Love has sent, many heroes bold and dauntless. King Utepandragun has many a Briton here, for it pains him like a thorn that he has lost his wife, 66
she who was Arthur's mother. She went off with a cleric who spoke magic spells, and Arthur has ridden in pursuit of him. It is now the third year since he has been without

⁴ *Leoplan* ("Leo Meadow") may be the poet's misunderstanding of the Old French common noun *lee plaine*—"broad meadow."

son and wife. Here too is his daughter's husband, expert in knightly doings, Lot of Norway; slow in treachery and swift to fame is that warrior bold and wise. Here too is Gawan, his son, but too young to be capable of any knightly action. He was with me, the little fellow, and he says that, if he could break a lance and if his strength would allow it, he would gladly do a knightly act. How early his eagerness for it has begun! And here the King of Patrigalt has a whole forest of spears. But his airs count for nothing because the men of Portugal are here—we call them the dashing ones because they thrust right through shields. The Provençals have bright-colored shields here too. And the men of Waleis are here. By dint of the numbers of their 67 fellow countrymen they manage to keep on riding as they will, right through their opponents' onrush. Many a knight whom I cannot identify is here for a woman's sake, but all those of us whom I have named are quartered here with our large retinues in the city—no mistake about that—as the queen requested us to do. I will now tell you who are quartered out in the field⁵—and they have slight regard for our fighting. There is the worthy King of Ascalun,⁶ and the proud King of Aragon, Cidegast of Logrois, and the King of Punturtois, whose name is Brandelidelin; and there is the bold Lehelin; and there is Morholt of Ireland, who wrests precious hostages from us. Out on the plain are encamped the proud Alemans;⁷ the Duke of Brabant has come to this country on account of King Hardiz, because that King of Gascony had given him his sister Alize, and thus his service has received its reward in advance. They both have it in for me here. Now I shall rely on you. Remember our kinship and in your affection look 68 out for me.”

Then the King of Zazamanc said, “You owe me no

⁵ These will constitute the “outer army”; the foregoing belong to the “inner army.”

⁶ This is Kingrisin, of whose death Gawan will be accused in Book VIII.

⁷ *Alemans* (= *les Allemands*) is the French word for Germans in general. In this German poem, “the proud Alemans” are on the “enemy” side.

thanks for what my service may accomplish here to your honor. We shall be of one will. Does your ostrich still stand without a nest? You shall bear your serpent-head against his half griffon. My anchor shall be firmly cast and will land squarely in the clash of his onset so that he will have to look for a ford on the gravel behind his horse. If they let us at one another, either I will bring him down or else he will bring me down. That much I guarantee you for sure.”

Overjoyed, his worries gone, Kaylet rode to the tents. Up went a war cry over two heroes proud, Schiolarz of Poitou and Gurnemanz de Graharz, who were jousting on the meadow, and then and there began the vesper games.⁸ From one side rode out six, from the other side three, and quickly a detachment came out in support of them. Then they started in on knightly deeds for fair and nothing could stop them.

It was still only the middle of the day and the King of Zazamanc was resting in his tent when he dis- 69 covered that the charges on horseback were taking place from one end of the field to the other, all in accordance with knightly rules. He set out in that direction with many a banner of bright color. He was in no hurry to get into swift action; rather, he wanted to watch leisurely how things were being done by both sides, and so his carpet was laid out on the meadow where the charges were crisscrossing and horses were whinnying at the jabs of the spurs. A ring of squires formed around him, and on past them there was a clang and a clatter of swords. How they fought for victory, those men whose swords thus rang! And a mighty cracking of spears there was. He had no need to inquire of anyone: Where? Onsets of horsemen formed his tent walls and hands of knights wove the designs. So near was the knightly action that the ladies could easily gaze down on the heroes' labors, but the queen was sorry that the King of Zazamanc did not mingle with the others. She said, “Alas, why has he come, this man of whom I have heard such marvels reported?”

⁸ Unofficial warm-up games on the eve (“vesper”) of the official tournament.

Now the King of France was dead, whose wife had often enough brought Gahmuret into great peril by her love. The worthy queen had sent to inquire for 70 him and to find out whether he had yet returned from heathendom to his own country at last. The power of great love forced her to that step.⁹

A mighty good showing was made there by many a brave fellow, who, however, did not aim so high as the winning of the queen's person and lands: their objective was lesser winnings.¹⁰

Now Gahmuret too was in armor—armor by which his wife was informed of a reconciliation: Fridebrant of Scotland had sent it to her as a gift of restitution for her losses, for he had overburdened her with warfare.¹¹ Nothing on earth was so fine. He looked at the diamond headgear, and what a helmet it was! Upon it was attached an anchor in which precious stones were set, large ones, by no means small. But it was a heavy weight of a thing. Arrayed was this visitor now. How was his shield adorned? A precious boss of gold of Arabi was fixed thereon, massive as he carried it, and such was the brilliance of the red gold that one could see himself in it as in a 71 mirror. Underneath that there was an anchor of sable.—I would like to be able to afford what he wore on his person, for it was worth many a mark.

His surcoat was very full. I fancy no one since has worn so fine a one in battle. Its length reached to the carpet. Let me see if I can describe it. It shone like living fire in the night. A faded color was what it did not have. No glance could miss its radiance, it slashed weak eyes with pain. Picture-embroidered it was with gold which at Montagne à Caucasus was torn from the crags by griffons' claws, for griffons guarded it then and still guard it there today.

⁹ We leave these oddly intrusive lines, with their anticipation of later developments, in their manuscript position. Removing them to 71 (Lachmann) or to 64 (Stapel) offers little advantage.

¹⁰ The author commends knights who (like himself) are brave but poor.

¹¹ A curious statement, since, as far as we know, Belacane never received it. See 58, at the conclusion of Book I.

From Arabi people go there and get it by cunning—there is nothing so precious anywhere—and bring it back to Arabi, the place where they also weave the green achmardi and the precious pfellel-silk. It was, in short, like no other garment.

Now he raised his shield to his neck. A horse in splendid array stood close at hand, stoutly armored to its very hooves. Here, you pages! Call out now, call out! 72 Up he leaped onto its back as it stood there. Many were the stout spears that the hero's hand scattered in the fray, and he scattered the horsemen too that rushed him: right through their midst every time and out the other side. And after the anchor followed the ostrich.

Gahmuret unhorsed Poytwin de Prienlascors and many another worthy man besides, exacting from all of them oaths of surrender, and any cross-bearing knights that rode that day got the benefit of the hero's efforts. The horses he won he gave to them, so that in him they found their great gain.¹²

Out against him came four identical flags—brave troops rode beneath them and their master knew how to fight—and each one bore the device of a griffon's tail. That hinder part proved a hailstorm of knightly valor. The fore part of the griffon was carried by the King of Gascony on his shield.¹³ This fine-bred knight was arrayed as well as women could do. When he caught sight of the ostrich he advanced to fight in front of the others, but the anchor got to him first, and back off his horse he was thrown by the 73 worthy King of Zazamanc, who took him prisoner. Then

¹² Scholars are divided as to whether there "cross-bearing knights" (*gekriuzte ritter*) are Crusaders (*Kreuzritter*) or, in a rather elaborate pun, knights bearing the "cross" of poverty. Thus Gahmuret may be piously giving to religion, or he may be spontaneously helping out the poor fellows referred to in 70 above.

¹³ The front half of the heraldic griffon is displayed by King Hardiz of Gascony; the rear half of the same heraldic beast is displayed apparently by his vassal and brother-in-law, Duke Lambekin of Brabant. Their personal foe is Kaylet, whose device is the ostrich, but when they attack him, Gahmuret, wearing the anchor, intervenes. Gahmuret defeats King Hardiz, and in 74 below Kaylet defeats Duke Lambekin.

there was a grand free-for-all, deep furrows were stamped smooth, and the hair of many was combed down with swords. There forest timber was squandered and many a knight unhorsed. These made their way rearward—so I heard it told—to where the cowards tarried. The fighting was so near that the ladies one and all saw clearly who deserved the prize.

From the spear of love-seeking Riwalin¹⁴ there snowed a fresh path of splinters; he was the King of Lohneis, and his horse-charges hit with a resounding crash.

From Gahmuret Morholt stole a horseman by lifting him out of his saddle and setting him in front of him on his own horse—a grossly improper action—and this was Killirjacac.¹⁵ From him King Lac¹⁶ had previously been dealt such payment as he might pick up off the ground where he fell: he had done some good fighting there. The powerful Morholt was eager to conquer him with a sword, and thus he captured that worthy warrior.

Kaylet's hand unhorsed the Duke of Brabant, a prince named Lambekin. And what did his men do then? 74 They shielded him with swords: those heroes were craving for battle.

Then the King of Aragon unhorsed the aged Utepandragun, bringing that King of Britain down on the meadow. Many were the flowers that stood there in bloom around him. —O how accommodating I am in allotting that worthy Briton so handsome a bed there before Kanvoleis: there, where peasant's foot never trod nor—if I am to tell you the truth—is ever likely to tread, he was not allowed to retain

¹⁴ Riwalin, King of Lohneis (Lyonesse) is the father of Tristan. Knights at the Kanvoleis tournament belong to the generation preceding the famous heroes: Utepandragun is the father of Arthur, Riwalin father of Tristan, Lot father of Gawan, and Gahmuret father of Parzival.

¹⁵ Morholt (who will one day be slain by Tristan) is of giant size, Killirjacac is a youth.

¹⁶ Lac, King of Karnant, is the father of Hartmann von Aue's hero Erec and also of the Lady Jeschute, who will enter the story in Book III. This cross referencing to characters in well-known romances by other authors no doubt delighted Wolfram's audiences.

his seat on the horse whereon he had sat till now. His men did not forget him for very long but protected him as they fought above him, and then there was no lack of mighty clashes of arms.

Now along came the King of Punturtois, who here before Kanvoleis was thrown down onto his horse's tracks so that he lay there behind the animal. This the proud Gahmuret did. Trample him down, my lord! Trample him down!—Trampled down in the fighting they found his aunt's son, Kaylet: men of Punturtois had taken him captive. Then the faring became very rough. Since King Brandelidelin had been snatched away from *his* 75 men, *they* took a different king prisoner. Then many a worthy man in iron clothing went running hither and thither, and their hands were tanned by horses' hooves and by cudgels till they were black and blue. Those gracious heroes got bruises there.

Not for embellishment do I say this—repose was there disdained—it was love that drove those worthy men on, many a painted shield, and many a helmet bedecked, for which the dust was now a cover. Part of the field had flowers growing, and short green grass grew everywhere: thereon fell those worthy men, to whom honor was accorded.—*My* mind can go along with such desires as theirs, provided *I* am left astride my foal.

Now the King of Zazamanc rode to a place where no one pursued, and sought a horse that was fresh and rested. They removed his diamond helmet, but only for the sake of the cool breeze, not because of any dare-devil bravery. They removed his coif of mail. His mouth shone red and proud.

A lady whom I have mentioned before, along 76 came one who was her chaplain, and three young pages; stout squires rode with them, leading by hand two pack horses. These messengers had been sent by the Queen Ampflise. Shrewd was her chaplain and he immediately recognized this man. In French he greeted him: "*Soyez le bien venu, beau sire*, to my lady and to me. *La reine de France* is she who is struck by the lance of your love."

Into his hand he delivered a letter wherein the lord found a greeting and a little ring as an accompanying token, for its lady had received it once from the man of Anjou. As he perceived the handwriting he made a bow.

Would you care to hear what she said?

"Love and greeting I send you—I who have never been free of grieving since first I knew your love. Your love is the lock and the bolt of my heart and of my heart's rejoicing. Love of you will be the death of me. If your love must be far away, then love cannot fail to do me harm. Come back, and from my hand 77 accept a crown, a scepter, and a country: these have descended to me by inheritance, these have been won by your love. Receive also as a reward the costly presents contained in the four packing cases. Moreover, you shall be my knight in the land of Waleis and before the capital city of Kanvoleis. I do not care whether the queen sees it; it can do me no serious harm. I am richer and more beautiful and I can more lovingly give love and receive love. If you are willing to live in accordance with worthy love, take my crown as reward in accordance with my love."

He found nothing further in the letter.—A squire's hand pulled his coif of mail back over his head, and grief fled from Gahmuret. They fastened his diamond helmet on: thick and hard it was. He craved exertion. The messengers he bade be conducted beneath his pavilion to rest.

Wherever there was a press of fighting, there he opened up a space. One man lost, another won, and there a man could find a second chance if he had missed his knightly action. In one place there was opportunity aplenty 78 for jousting one against one, in another place for thrusting away in formations.¹⁷ They gave up those little taps that people call friendly pokes, and intimate brotherhoods were now torn to pieces in real anger. The crooked was rarely

¹⁷ See Additional Notes, number 6, pp. 435-436, for the five types of knightly combat.

made straight and there was little mention of chivalric rights: whoever won anything kept it and did not care if he earned the hatred of the other. Of many lands they were, these men whose hands plied the knightly trade and feared no injury at all. There Gahmuret performed Ampflise's bidding to be her knight: her letter had conveyed her word to him. O how he now set on! Did love and valor impel him? Great love and strong loyalty made his strength like new. Now he saw King Lot lifting his shield against on-comers; he was almost being forced to flight. But Gahmuret's hand prevented that. He broke the onset with a clash and with his spear shaft thrust the King of Aragon backward off his horse. Schafillor was the king's 79 name. The spear with which he downed that warrior proud had no pennon attached to it; he had brought it with him out of heathendom. The worthy king's followers defended him valiantly, but he took him prisoner all the same. Now the inner army made the outer army do some fast galloping across the meadow. These vesper games had brought both sides a goodly income of fighting. They could well be considered a tournament, for many a broken spear was left behind.

Then Lehelin in fury said, "Are we to be dishonored this way? This comes from that fellow wearing the anchor. Before the day is over, one of us is going to bring the other down where he will lie pretty uncomfortably. They have all but gained the victory over us."¹⁸

Their clash opened up plenty of space around them, and then the matter went beyond a childish game. Under the whittling of their hands the wood began to disappear, yet neither had any wish other than: "Spears, Sir! Spears! More spears!" All the same, Lehelin had to endure disgrace and pain, for the King of Zazamanc thrust him off his horse to the length of a spear point plus the length of the shaft in which it was fixed. Then Gahmuret picked up his oath of surrender.—I would be more comfortable pick- 80 ing up sweet pears, no matter how easily those knights fell

¹⁸ Lehelin, who was mentioned casually in 67 above, is a sinister character who will repeatedly appear on the periphery of the narrative.

before him.—And many a man of those that stood his onset set up the cry: "Here comes the anchor! Worse luck! Worse luck!"

Right toward him came charging a prince of Anjou—Grief was his lady-mistress—with inverted shield.¹⁹ That brought Sorrow's news to Gahmuret, for he recognized the coat of arms.—Why did he turn away from him? I'll tell you about that, if you wish.—That coat of arms had been assigned in times past by Galoes, *filz du roi* Gandin, his ever-faithful brother, before love had brought about his death in a joust. Then he unfastened his helmet. No more did his fighting take its path across the grass or the dust: Sorrow so commanded. He cursed himself for not so much as asking Kaylet, his aunt's son, what his brother was doing that he was not taking part in this tournament. Sad to say, he was unaware that he had died in combat before Munthori. One sorrow was already his companion, for noble love of a great queen²⁰ tormented him. *She* was later to sicken 81 from yearning for him and die from the faithfulness of her grieving.

Weighed down with grief though Gahmuret was, he had nevertheless in that one half day broken in two so many spears that, if the tournament had taken place, the forest would have been wiped out. A hundred painted ones had been allotted to him, and these that proud man had used up. His bright pennons were given to the heralds, as was their due.²¹ Then he rode to his tent.

The page of the Queen of Waleis followed him, and to him was given that precious surcoat, now tattered and torn, which he carried to his lady. It was still valuable for the gold in it, and it gleamed like a glowing coal. Its richness was easily seen, and then the queen said, "Some noble woman sent you with this knight to my country.—But my dignity prompts me that the other knights must not be offended,

¹⁹ The carrying of the shield upside down, i.e., with the pointed end up and the rounded or straight end down, indicated the death of the knight's lord.

²⁰ Belacane presumably.

²¹ Compare 32 in Book I above.

whom adventure has brought here. Let all of them perceive my good will, for by Adam's rib they are all my kinsmen. I feel, however, that Gahmuret's fighting has 82 won the highest prize."

The others continued the chivalric contests with such furious persistence that they went on battling away almost till nightfall. The inner army had forced the outer army back to their tents. Had it not been for the King of Ascalun and Morholt of Ireland, they would have ridden down their tent ropes. Winnings and losses there were, and plenty of them had sustained injuries; the rest had praise and honor.

Now it is time to send them their separate ways. No one can see a thing here. Without a stakes-holding innkeeper to furnish light, who would want to shoot craps in the dark? It is more than these tired men can manage.

Darkness was quite forgotten, however, where Gahmuret was sitting. There it was like daylight—not real daylight—but there was a tremendous number of lights there and many a cluster of small candles. Upon olive branches many a sumptuous cushion was placed, and carefully spread in front of these was many a broad carpet.²² Up as far as the tent ropes rode the queen, with numerous noble ladies; she desired to see the noble King of Zazamanc. Many 83 tired knights pressed after her. The tablecloths had been removed before they arrived in the pavilion. The host sprang to his feet with alacrity, and four captive kings with him, each of them accompanied by several princes. After the manner of courtesy he received her, and she was well pleased with him as soon as she set eyes on him.

With joy the woman from Waleis said, "Here where I find you, you are the host; yet I am the mistress-ruler of this country. If you desire that *I* should bestow the kiss of welcome upon *you*, I am quite willing to do so."

To which he replied, "Your kiss shall be mine, provided these lords are also to be kissed; but if king or princes

²² With Leitzmann's punctuation of the *MHG* text, it would be the candles which were placed on olive branches. In any case, however, the scene is inside the great tent, not in an illuminated olive orchard.

are to be deprived of it, I shall not venture to ask you for it either."

"So shall it be, indeed. I had not noticed any of them before." And she kissed those present who merited it, as Gahmuret desired her to do.

He bade the queen be seated. My lord Brandelidelin courteously sat down by the lady. Green rushes wet with dew were lightly strewn upon the carpets whereon sat he who was the delight of the noble woman from Wales; 84 love for him constrained her. He sat down so close in front of her that she took hold of him and drew him back so he was right next to her on the other side. She was a maiden and not a wife, she who allowed him to sit so near her.—Would you like now to hear what her name was? She was Queen Herzeloyde; and her cousin Rischoyde was the wife of Kaylet, whose aunt's son was Gahmuret. From the lady Herzeloyde was shed such radiance that, if all the candles had been extinguished, there would from her alone have been sufficient light. Had it not been that great sorrow toppled the peak of his joy afar, he would readily have offered her his love.

They had exchanged greetings as propriety required, and some time later cup bearers came forth with precious objects from Azagouc, the great richness of which escaped no one. Noble youths carried them. Costly goblets they were, broad, not small in the least, and made of precious stones entirely without gold. They were the tribute from that country which Isenhardt had more than once offered to the lady Belacane as the price of relief from love's pain. Drink was proffered now in many a jewel of bright color, 85 emerald and carnelian, and some consisted of a single ruby.

To the pavilion came riding now two knights who were at liberty on their pledged word. They had been taken captive by the outer army and were coming in to the inner army. One of them was Kaylet, and when he saw King Gahmuret sitting there with the mien of sadness, he said, "Why do you look this way? The prize is acknowledged yours, you have won the lady Herzeloyde and her country.

All tongues here agree on that, Briton and Irishman alike, and whoever speaks a Romance tongue, and men of France and Brabant—they all agree and grant that no one can match you in such skillful sport. I read the true attestation of the fact right here, for your brave strength was not asleep when these lords met their downfall; never did their hands offer oath of surrender before: my lords Brandelidelin and bold Lehelin, Hardiz and Schafillor. Ah! and then there was also Razalic the Moor, to whom you taught surrender before Patelamunt! On his account your 86 fame in battle finds both height and breadth!"

Gahmuret said, "My lady here will think you are out of your mind, overpraising me this way. You can't sell me, you know, because *somebody* is sure to see the flaws in me. Your lips have been heard in too much praise.—Tell me, how did you get back here?"

"The good people of Punturtois have allowed me, and this fellow from Champagne here, to go completely free. My nephew shall have his liberty from Morholt, who stole him, provided my lord Brandelidelin is set at liberty by you. Otherwise we are still both hostages, I and my sister's son. Have mercy upon us. Vesper games have been held here of such a kind that the tournament before Kanvoleis will now be called off. I know the fact of the matter, because here sits the outer army's best strength. Tell me, with whom or how could they make a stand before us? You are master of much fame."

From her heart the queen spoke a sweet request to Gahmuret: "Whatever claim I may have upon 87 you, allow me to assert it; I crave it as a favor. If it impairs your fame to grant me both claim and favor, permit me to withdraw."

Up leaped the chaplain of Ampflise, the queen gracious and wise, and cried, "No! He should by rights belong to my lady, who sent me to this country in the interests of her love! She lives amid consuming love of him, her love has a claim vested in him, and she shall retain possession of him, for she is fonder of him than all other women are. Here are her messengers, princes three, noble youths of all mis-

conduct free. One is named Lanzidant, of noble lineage from Greenland; he has come to Kärlingen²³ and has made the language here his own. The second is named Liadarz, *filz du comte Schiolarz*."

Now listen and you shall hear the story of who the third one was: his mother's name was Beafurs, his father's Pansamurs, and they were of fairy race; their son was called Liahturteltart.

All three ran up to Gahmuret and said, "Lord, 88
la reine de France will deal you winning dice-throws of worthy love if you are wise, and you can play without stakes; joy will be yours at once, without any worries."

When that message was heard, Kaylet, who had come up meanwhile, went over and sat down beside the queen and beneath a corner of her robe.²⁴

To him she said, "Tell me, has any further injury befallen you? I noticed wounds upon you." Then that lovely lady touched his bruises with her gentle hands so white—God's artistry was manifest in them—and found his cheeks crushed and bruised, and his chin, and part of his nose. The queen who did him the honor of drawing him close to her, was his wife's niece. Courteously she turned to Gahmuret and said, "The noble Frenchwoman is making you a firm offer of her love. Honor now all womankind in me and let me have recourse to law. Stay here until I have obtained a decision. Otherwise you will abandon me to shame."

The worthy man vowed to her that such would be done. 89

Then she took her farewell and rode away. Kaylet, the warrior worthy, lifted her, without use of footstool, onto her horse, and then walked back inside, where he saw his friends.

To Hardiz he said, "Your sister Alize once offered me her love, which I accepted. But she is married to another, and

²³ I.e., France. Only here (and once in *Willehalm*) does Wolfram use this old word which designates the land of the Carolingians.

²⁴ I.e., in the position of a suppliant, as in paintings of the Madonna. Kaylet's liberation is jeopardized if Gahmuret goes to Amplise and leaves the winner of the tournament yet to be determined.

more advantageously than to me. I beg you by your courtesy not to be angry. Prince Lambekin has her to wife. Although she does not wear a crown, she has nevertheless acquired high dignity: Hainaut and Brabant are subject to her, and many a goodly knight. Turn your good will toward me, allow me to be in your favor, and take me back into your service."

To which the King of Gascony replied, as his manly courage prompted, "Your words were always sweet; but anyone treating you kindly after you have done him much harm would be overlooking the injury out of fear. —However, your aunt's son did take me prisoner."

"He will not harm anyone. You will be set free by Gahmuret. That will be my first request. Once you are free of constraint, I will again know a time when you will 90
accept me as your friend. You will have had time to get over your disgrace. But whatever *you* may do to me, your sister wouldn't murder me."

Their talk raised general laughter. But then sorrow invaded their merriment, and their host's fidelity prodded him to feel grief anew, for grief is a sharp goad. Everyone noticed that he was wrestling with sorrow and that his joy furnished weak support.

Whereat his aunt's son said with irritation, "You are being very impolite!"

"No, I cannot help but feel remorse. I yearn for the queen. I left in Patelamunt a sweet woman of purest kind, and my heart is sore because of it. Her noble dignity compels me to sorrow for her love. She gave me her people and her country. Lady Belacane robs me of manly gladness; yet it is perfectly manly to be ashamed of love that wavers. The lady's protectiveness held a tight bit on me, so that I could not get to knightly action, and then I fancied that knightly action would rid me of the bonds of discontent. 91
Here I have done my share of knightly deeds. Now many a misinformed man imagines that her black complexion drove me from her, and yet I looked upon her as the sun. Her womanly excellence now causes me grief, for she is the boss upon the shield of excellence. For that reason I

cannot help but grieve—and for this reason besides: I have seen my brother's shield borne with point inverted."

Ah! those words! The report was so sad that the worthy Spaniard's eyes were filled with tears: "Alas, foolish queen, for love of you Galoes lost his life, over whom all women should weep sincerely from their hearts if they wished their lives to win praise whenever people thought of them. Queen of Navarre, however little it distresses you, it was because of you that I have lost my kinsman, who met his knightly death from a joust, a fatal joust wherein he wore your favor. Princes who were his comrades give evidence of their heartfelt grief and have turned the broad edges of their shields toward the ground in keeping with Sorrow's 92 custom; deep mourning so instructs them, and in this fashion they go about their knightly deeds. They are overwhelmed by the force of grief since Galoes, my aunt's son, shall no longer perform feats in the service of love."

When Gahmuret learned of his brother's death, that was his second sorrow, and in his grief he cried out, "How my anchor's tooth has with remorse fixed itself in harbor!" Forthwith he divested himself of that coat of arms. Grief taught him heart's anguish. From the depths of his feeling the hero exclaimed, "Galoes of Anjou! Henceforth let no one ask for more manly chivalry, for such was never born! Out of your heart sprang the fruit of true generosity. I mourn your excellence."

To Kaylet he said, "How fares Schoette, my mother poor in joys?"

"So that God might well be moved to pity. When Gandin died, and Galoes your brother as well, and when she did not have you with her either, death broke her heart also."

Then said King Hardiz, "Bring now your man- 93 hood to bear. If you have manhood in you, you will mourn with due restraint."

Unfortunately his grief was too great, and a flood of tears poured from his eyes. He dismissed the knights to their rest and himself went to his chamber, in a small tent of samite. That night he passed a time of grieving.

When the new day came they all agreed, both the inner and the outer armies, that no one there present in warrior's gear, be he young or old, timid or bold, was to engage in jousting. It was bright mid-morning, but they were so worn out from combat and the horses had been so excessively put to the spurs, that the brave knightly company was still bowed down with weariness. Then the queen herself rode out to the worthy men in the field and brought them back with her into the city. The best knights in her city she bade ride out to the Leo Meadow, nor was her behest disregarded. They arrived just as Mass was being sung for the sorrowful King of Zazamanc, and as Benediction was being pronounced the Lady Herzeloyde herself arrived. 94 She stated her claim upon Gahmuret, demanding what had been agreed upon as her right.

To which he replied, "Lady, I have a wife, dearer to me than I am to myself, and even if I did not have her, I would still know a story that would cause you to give me up, if anyone were to concede me my right."

(R) She answered, "You should renounce the Moorish woman for my love's sake. The sacrament of baptism has superior power.²⁵ Therefore give up your heathenry and love me by our religion's law, because I yearn for your love. Or am I to be done injustice because of the French queen? Her messengers spoke sweet words and they played out their story to the last move on the board."

"Yes, she is my real lady. I took to Anjou the training in chivalry fostered by her counsel. Her assistance is with me still by virtue of the fact that my education in chivalry came from my lady, from whom Womanly Wrongdoing fled afar. We were children then together, yet always delighted to see each other. The Queen Amplise dwells close by Womanly Excellence. Gracious lady that she was, she gave me the best revenues in her country—I was poorer 95 then than now—and I accepted them willingly. Count me among the poor even now: my noble brother is dead. Have

²⁵ Wolfram's audience would readily accede to the notion that marriage between a Christian and a heathen had no validity.

mercy on me, Lady. In your courtesy do not press me. Turn your love where there is joy, for with me there is nothing but sorrow."

"Do not leave me to waste away any longer. Tell me, what defense do you have left?"

"I shall tell you as your question desires. A tournament was proclaimed here, but it did not take place. There is no lack of witnesses to grant me that."

"Vesper games drained its strength. The brave men here are so worn out that the tournament has been ruined as a result."

"I fought in defense of your city, with men who put up a brave fight. Therefore you should spare me any arguments in self-defense. Many a knight performed there better than I. Therefore your claim on me has no force. Only the greeting you give to everyone, *that* I would welcome, if I might have it from you."

The way the adventure tells it, the knight and the maiden then had recourse to a judge in the matter of the lady's complaint. It was getting on toward noon when a verdict was handed down: 96

"Any knight having once fastened on his helmet here and come here for the purpose of chivalric combat, if he won the prize therein, then the queen shall have him."

This verdict was then ratified.

Whereupon she said, "Sir, you now belong to me. I shall serve you so as to win your favor, and I shall provide you such a share of delights that after all your sorrow you shall come to joy."

Despite all this he still knew the pain of sorrow.

April had now passed, and thereafter had come the short, small, green grass—the field was green from end to end—that makes faint hearts bold and gives them high spirits. Many a tree stood in blossom from the sweet air of the May-time. Now the fairy strain in him made him love and yearn for love, and this his beloved most willingly granted

him. He looked at the Lady Herzeloyde and courteously his sweet mouth said, "Lady, if I am to be happy with you, you must leave me free of your watchful care. If misery's power ever releases me, I would like to practice the knightly art. If you do not allow me to go jousting, I still know the old trick that I used when I left my wife 97 —whom I also won through feats of knighthood. When she applied the checkrein to keep me from battle, I forsook a people and a country."

She said, "Sir, you shall set the terms. I bow to your will."

"I want to break many a spear yet. One tournament a month, Lady, you must be resigned to allow me to attend."

To this she agreed, I was told. And thus he came into possession of both the country and the maiden too.

Among those present when the verdict was given and ratified stood those three pages of the Queen Ampflise and her chaplain, so that he heard and saw it all. Privately he said to Gahmuret, "It was reported to my lady how you won the highest prize before Patelamunt and how you ruled over two kingdoms there. She too has a country and is willing to give you her person and her property."

"Since she bestowed knighthood upon me, I am obligated to obey the force of its laws unfalteringly, as the trade of the knight requires. Had I not acquired my shield through her, all the rest of this would not have happened. Whether it makes me glad or sad, I am in this case bound 98 by chivalric verdict. Go back and tell her that I serve her, that I am still her knight, and that, even if all the crowns in the world were mine, my supreme desire would still be for her."

He offered them his immense wealth, but they refused to accept his gifts. The messengers journeyed home, having brought no dishonor upon their lady. As often happens even today in anger, they did not ask permission to leave. And as for the lady's princely pages, those lads wept themselves well nigh blind.

As for those who had carried their shields with point in-

verted, their friend in the field²⁶ informed them: "Lady Herzelayde has won the Angevin."

"Who was here from Anjou? Our master is elsewhere, unfortunately, off to the Saracens in search of knightly fame, and that is our most grievous sorrow."

"The man who won the prize here, the one that brought down so many knights, the one that thrust and struck so well, the one that was wearing the precious anchor on his helmet with the bright jewels, that is the man you mean. King Kaylet tells me that the Angevin is Gahmuret. And he has certainly met with success here!" 99

Then they ran to their horses, and with their garments wet with tears came to where their master was sitting. They welcomed him and he welcomed them, and joy and sorrow were there commingled. He kissed those loyal men and said, "You must not grieve to excess for my brother. I well may take his place. Turn your shields upwards after their proper fashion and bear yourselves after the manner of joy. I shall wear my father's coat of arms, because my anchor has found its anchorage. The anchor suits a wanderer knight: let anyone who wants it take it and wear it. But I must now live an ordered life. I am the lord of a land, and if I am to be the ruler over a people, my grief would be harmful to them. Lady Herzelayde, help me to beg, you and I together, these kings and princes present here to remain here as vassals of mine until you grant me the enjoyment that love desires from love." This request was made by both of them, and immediately the noble knights voiced agreement. All retired to their quarters.

To her beloved the queen said, "Yield now to my tending!" and she guided him by private ways. His 100 guests were well looked after, let their host be where he might. The two corps of servants were now merged into one, and yet he proceeded alone, except for two pages. Certain maidens and the queen guided him to a place where he found delight and where all his grieving disappeared. Vanquished was his sorrow, and his high spirits became as

²⁶ This informant is not identified.

new: this could only have been because of love. Lady Herzelayde the Queen there surrendered her maidenhood. Lips were not spared as now they began to consume them with kisses and to fend off sorrow from delights.²⁷

Thereafter he did an admirable thing: those whom he had taken captive he set free. Hardiz and Kaylet, they were made friends by Gahmuret. And then followed such a festival that anyone who has equaled it since has had great means at his disposal. Gahmuret was determined his wealth was not to be stinted. To poor knights one and all Arabian gold was distributed; upon kings Gahmuret's hands bestowed jewels, as also upon all princes who were 101 there. Traveling minstrels were made happy, for they received a share of rich gifts. Let them ride away who had been his guests: the Angevin permitted them to leave.

Upon his shield was now attached in sable the panther²⁸ which his father had worn. And over his shirt of chain mail he wore a fine, white, silken garment of the queen's, which had lain next to the naked body of her who had now become his wife. Eighteen were pierced through and ridled by sword thrusts before he departed from that lady, and these she in turn laid against her naked skin each time her beloved returned from those knightly expeditions where he hacked many a shield to slivers. And both their loves held true.

Achievements enough he had had already when his manly courage took him over seas to face battle. I mourn his voyage. True report reached him that his lord the Baruch was overridden by the forces of the Babylonians, one named Ipomidon, the other named Pompeius. The story calls the latter by this name, and a proud and worthy man he was. (He was not the one who fled Rome before 102

²⁷ In medieval times consummation of marriage preceded the wedding ceremony.

²⁸ The emblem of historical Anjou was the leopard. Bartholomew Glanville (Bartholomew Anglicos) in the thirteenth century wrote that the leopard and the panther are one and the same animal. The fourth century "Physiologus" claimed that, among all beasts, the panther considered only the dragon as its enemy.

Julius.²⁹) His mother's brother was Nebuchadnezzar, who in deceitful books read that he was supposed to be a god. Nowadays people would laugh at such a thing. These two brothers, who spared neither themselves nor their wealth, were of high lineage, descended from Ninus, who ruled before Baghdad was founded. He was also the founder of Niniveh. Shame and disgrace now afflicted them, for the Baruch had declared them his vassals. On this account much was won and much was lost on both sides, and heroes were seen in combat. And so Gahmuret sailed over seas and found the Baruch under arms. With joy he was received, though I mourn his voyage.

What was happening in one place, how things were going in another place, which way matters stood as to winnings and losses, of all this the Lady Herzeloyde knew nothing. She was like the sunlight and made for love. Wealth and virtue that woman had, and of joys more than too much, for she had surpassed the limits of desire. Her heart was turned to the knowledge of the good, and hence 103 she won the favor of the world. The life of Lady Herzeloyde the Queen won praise, and her virtue was declared most admirable. Queen over three countries was she: over Waleis and Anjou, and she wore the crown of Norgals in her capital of Kingrivals. Her husband was so dear to her that if ever lady won so noble a beloved, it was nothing to her: she could countenance it without envy. When he had been away for half a year she did indeed expect his return, for on that her life depended. Then the sword blade of her joy snapped in two at the hilt. Alas and well-a-day that goodness should bear such misery and loyalty forever rouse such grief! Such is the way of the world: joy today, tomorrow sorrow.

One noonday the lady was sleeping a troubled sleep, when a fearful shock befell her. She thought a falling star was sweeping her into the air where fiery thunderbolts struck upon her with violence. These flew at 104 her all at one time, and then her braids crackled and sang

²⁹ I.e., Julius Caesar, when he crossed the Rubicon.

with sparks. With a crash the thunder made its rush and burst in a gust of burning tears. As she came to consciousness, there a griffon wrenched her right hand away. Then all was changed. She imagined fantastic things—how she was nurse to a dragon that tore her womb, and how this dragon took suck at her breasts, and how he swiftly fled away and left her so that she never saw him again. Her heart was bursting out of her body, and yet her eyes could not help but see that thing of terror. Seldom has anguish the like of that befallen a woman in her slumber. Previous to this she had been radiantly fair, but alas! how all that is changed: now she became of sorrow's color. Long and broad her grief became, and future affliction drew near her. Then that lady began to do what she had been incapable of doing before: she writhed and wailed and cried aloud in her sleep. Many maidens were sitting close by, and they rushed to her and woke her up.

Then came riding Tampanis, her husband's wise 105 chief squire, and many young noblemen besides. Then the borders of joy were crossed and left to rearwards. With lamentation they reported her lord's death. At that news Lady Herzeloyde felt pain and collapsed unconscious.

The knights wondered: "How could my lord have been conquered in his armor and as well armed as he was?"

His squire, pursued though he was by grief, nevertheless explained to the heroes: "Long life deserted my master. He had removed his coif of mail, forced to do so by the great heat. Accursed guile stole away that hero good. A certain knight filled a tall glass with a he-goat's blood and poured it on the diamond helmet, whereat the helmet became softer than a sponge.³⁰ May He Whom painters show us as the Lamb holding the Cross between His hooves, have mercy on what followed. When they rode out in troops against one another, ah! what a battle was there!

³⁰ In the twelfth-century *Bestiary* translated by T. H. White, we read under "Hircus the He-Goat": "The nature of goats is so extremely hot that a stone of adamant [the word here translated as 'diamond'], which neither fire nor iron implement can alter, is dissolved merely by the blood of one of these creatures."

The knights of the Baruch fought with all the force of bravery, and on the plain before Baghdad many a shield was run through as they rushed each other. Charges 106 of horsemen crisscrossed and interwove, banners were jumbled in confusion, and many a good knight perished.

Then came Ipomidon riding, and repaid my master with death for having unhorsed him once before Alexandria where thousands of knights could see it. My master void of guile turned to face this king, but he whose joust was to teach him to die, split his helmet, and his spear point bored through his head; a splinter of it was found lodged there. Still in his saddle, but dying, the warrior rode out of the conflict to a wide meadow, and there his chaplain came and stood over him. Then in a few words he spoke his confession and sent us here to bring this garment and the very spear point which parted him from us. He died without sin. His squires and pages he commended to the queen.

He was taken to Baghdad. The Baruch gave no consideration to the costs. With gold his coffin was 107 adorned, and great treasure of precious stones was expended on it. Within lies the blameless one. His youthful body was embalmed, and many were those that mourned for him. Over his grave was set a precious ruby through which he clearly shines. We were permitted to place a Cross on his grave for his comfort and for the defense of his soul, after the manner of the Passion by which Christ's death redeemed us. Its cost was borne by the Baruch, and it consists of a single precious emerald. This we did without the help of the heathens, for their ways cannot cherish the Cross by which Christ's death gave us redemption. In all seriousness the heathens now pray to Gahmuret as their noble god, but not for the honor of the Cross nor for Baptism's law which at final Judgment shall loose our bonds. His manly fidelity and his contrite confession give him a bright radiance in heaven, for falseness in him was shallow indeed.

An epitaph was engraved upon his diamond helmet, which was made fast to the cross above his grave. 108 This is what the letters say:

Through this helmet a joust slew a man who was brave.

GAHMURET

was his name, a mighty king over three countries. Each one avowed him a crown and rich princes followed after. He was born in Anjou and before Baghdad he gave his life for the Baruch. His fame towered so high that no one shall achieve its equal, however knights may be esteemed. The man is not born of mother to whom his courage vowed surrender—I mean any who works at the knightly trade. Help and manly counsel he unfailingly gave his friends; for women's sake he endured sharp pain; he was baptized and supported the Christian law, yet his death was a grief to Saracens. This is true and no lie. All his years of reason his bravery so strove for fame that he died with knightly glory. Over treachery he triumphed.

Wish him bliss who lies herel

And it was as the squire reported. Many a man of Wales wept. Well might they weep. 109

The lady was pregnant with a child that was stirring within her body, and they left her there helpless. Eighteen weeks the child had been alive within the mother⁸¹ who was now wrestling with death, Lady Herzeloyde the Queen. The others were weak of wit for not helping the woman, for within her body she bore him who will be the flower of all chivalry, if death misses him now. Then came a wise old man and stood over the lady to lament with her as she was struggling with death. He forced her clenched teeth apart and they poured water into her mouth. With that she regained consciousness.

"Alas!" she cried. "What has become of my beloved?" With a scream she vented her grief. "My heart's full joy was Gahmuret's high worth, but his audacious aspiration has robbed me of him. I was much younger than he, and

⁸¹ The law recognized the life of an unborn infant as beginning with the first stirring inside the womb after the eighteenth week of pregnancy. Hence the "eighteen weeks" of the text indicate "thirty-six weeks," or nine months, to the modern reader.

yet I am both his mother and his wife. I bear him here within me and also the seed of his life which our two loves gave and received, but if God is true, let Him grant me that it shall ripen into fruit! I have suffered too 110 much because of my proud and noble husband. What a blow death has dealt me! He never received a woman's love without being happy in her happiness, without suffering at a woman's grief. His manly faithfulness so instructed him, for he was void of guile."

Listen now to a further story of what the lady did then.—Clasping child and womb within her arms and hands, she said, "God send me the noble fruit of Gahmuret: that is my heart's prayer. God avert such senseless anguish from me, for it would be Gahmuret's second death if I were to kill myself while I am bearing that which I received from his love, from him who showed me a husband's fidelity."

Unconcerned as to who might see it, she tore the garments away from her bosom, clasped her soft, white breasts, and pressed them to her red mouth with the wisdom of mother-wit. "You are the holders of an infant's nourishment," that wise woman said; "the infant has been filling you in advance ever since I felt him alive within 111 my body." The lady found satisfaction in seeing that nourishment lying above her heart, that milk in her breasts, and pressing some of it out, the queen said, "You come from faithful love. If I had never received baptism, I would want you to be my baptismal water. I shall anoint myself with you and with my tears, both in public and in private—for I shall mourn for Gahmuret."

The lady bade them bring closer that shirt of the color of blood in which, amid the Baruch's host, Gahmuret had lost his life and met his warrior's death with true manly will. The lady inquired also for the spear point that dealt Gahmuret his death. Ipomidon of Niniveh, that proud and noble Babylonian, had paid such a warrior's debt that the shirt was a tattered rag from his blows. The lady wished to put it on as she had done on previous occasions when her husband returned from knightly expeditions, but they took it out of her hand. The noblest in all the land

buried both the spear point and the cloth of blood 112 in the minster, as a dead man is buried. Then in Gahmuret's land there was lamentation.

On the fourteenth day thereafter the lady gave birth to a child, a son, and of such a size that she hardly survived.

Herewith this adventure's dice are cast and its beginning determined, for only now has he been born to whom this tale is devoted. His father's joy and sorrow, his life and death, you have heard a deal about these. Know, then, whence he comes to you and how he was cared for, the hero of this tale.

They hid him away from all chivalry until he should come to the age of reason. When the queen recovered consciousness and took her baby into her arms, then she and the other ladies intently observed the tiny pizzle between his legs. He could not be other than fondled and cherished, for he was possessed of the organ of a man. Later on, he was to be a very smith for the swords with which he struck fire from helmets, and his heart had manly courage. It was the queen's delight to kiss him 113 over and over again, and always she kept calling him "*Bon fils, cher fils, beau fils.*"

Directly the queen took those little brownish-pink buds of hers—I mean the tips of her little breasts—and pressed them into his tiny mouth, for she who had borne him in her womb was also his nurse. She who fled from all womanly misconduct clasped him to her bosom, fancying to herself that she had prayed Gahmuret back to her arms. Toward haughtiness she did not lean: humility was her way.

Wisely the Lady Herzeloyde said, "The supreme Queen gave her breasts to Jesus, Who afterwards for our sake met a bitter death in human form upon the Cross and Who kept faith with us. Whoever underestimates His anger, his soul will fare ill at Judgment, however good he has been. This I know to be a true report."

The country's mistress bathed in the dew of her heart's affliction, and upon the boy rained down the tears of her eyes. A woman's true fidelity was hers. Her lips could form

in both sighs and laughter: in the birth of her son 114
she did find delight, but her mirth drowned in fording the
flood of her sorrow.



If there is anyone who praises women better than I, I will surely not be the one to hold it against him. I would be glad to hear their joys extended far and wide. For only one of them am I unwilling to do loyal service, and against her my anger is still fresh—ever since I found her in disloyalty. I am Wolfram von Eschenbach, and I know a thing or two about poetry, and I am at tongs at holding my anger against a woman. This one has offered me such an offense that I cannot do other than hate her. On account of this the others hate *me*. Why, alas! do they do so? Though their hatred troubles me, it is their womanhood that is to blame, since I did go too far and I have done myself harm. This will probably never happen again, but they should not be over-hasty to storm my bastion, or else they are likely to run into defensive combat. I have not forgotten how to judge both their manners and their lives. To any woman 115
following propriety I shall be a defending champion of her reputation: her distress troubles me to the depths of my heart.

A man's praise limps like a spavined horse when he declares all women are off the board just to show his own lady to advantage.³² Any lady that wants to inspect my rights, both see them and hear them, I will not deceive her. My birth was to the knightly trade, and if my bravery is underrated by one who loves me for my poetry, I consider that she is weak in her wits. If I seek a good woman's love, and if I am not to win her love's reward by my shield and my spear, then let her bestow her favor accordingly. A man

³² Perhaps a rebuke to Reinmar von Hagenau, who so praised his lady to the detriment of all other ladies in a poem which had the refrain: "*daz ist in mat*." ("That checkmates them," i.e., takes them off the board and out of the game.)

aiming at love through knightly deeds is, after all, playing for very high stakes.

If the women would not take it for flattery, I would add further unknown words to this story for you, I would continue the adventure for you. But if anyone requests me to do so, let him not consider it a book. I don't know a single letter of the alphabet.³³ Plenty of people get their material that way, but this adventure steers without books. Rather than have anybody think it is a book, I would sit 116
naked without a towel, the way I would sit in the bath—if I didn't forget the bouquet of twigs.³⁴

³³ This is the line: "*ine kan decheinen buochstap*," endlessly disputed as to whether it is to be understood literally or in broad irony.

³⁴ The bouquet of twigs used in steam baths to stimulate circulation. "Fig leaf" would be the equivalent for Western readers.