Thesis.

For the Degree of Bachelor of Letters.

The Legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table.

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The Legends of King Arthur.

One of the most fascinating fields for literary research and investigation, is that of the early ballads and legends of a nation. The marvelous achievements of some ancient chieftains, and the many brave knights, the beauty and virtue of the noble ladies and the wise and wise-tongued sayings of some old sage, have for us the charm of a fairy tale. A soft, golden haze is thrown over the whole scene, concealing many little unsightly stains and scratches, softening the rough, angular outlines, adding a warmer, mellower tint to the richness of the coloring, and blending all into one beautiful whole.

If this be true in regard to all legends it is found to be peculiarly true in studying the legends of this own people. But when we come to look closely at these beautiful legends we find that there is by far more fervor than history connected with them.

Of the celebrated King Arthur, the great hero of England early mythology, but little is historically known, excepting that he was a powerful chieftain, who lived in England in the late century, and who united a number of petty kingdoms under himself.
He was a very brave warrior, and successfully resisted the invasions of the Saxon barbarians, and maintained throughout his lifetime the independence of the Celtic kingdom. Shortly after his death the greater part of England was conquered by the Saxons, and the Celtic as a separate nation in England perished.

But although the Celtic people were conquered, the national feeling for generations remained strong. The Celtic temperament is particularly impulsive, fiery, and intense, with quick instincts perspicacious with little deliberation and table, and a passionate love of beauty. The people are thus brevity, artists and poets. In the memory of the glorious deeds of their king Arthur lived long after his death, in the songs of the minstrels. 'The Celtic genius after its defeat in arms had its revenge in song."

For five centuries, the songs of King Arthur were sung in the castles of the nobles, and in the villages of the people. Wherever the Celtic population gathered, there at about the middle of the twelfth century Geoffrey of Monmouth outlined them, and wrote them into his history of the kings of England, claiming to have translated them from a book in the Latin tongue, which the archbishop of Oxford found in Brittany. This work gives us full, the prophecies of Merlin and the life of King Arthur. This work was followed by Wace, who wrote in French, sometimes translating exactly, more often paraphrasing and occasionally adding a fresh legend from Brittany. Geoffrey of Monmouth made
King Arthur a great national hero, and the writing of him in French
made Arthur a European hero, rivalling in popularity, Charlemagne.
But up to this time, the romances are haphazard tales of
physical courage of the bold daring deeds, and strong passions of the
man like men. But now a writer appears who introduces a new ele-
ment into these Arthurian Romances. Walter Mapes was a bright
man of the world, and a courtier in the time of Henry II, but he was
also a poet and a wit, a spiritual man of genius. He took the Arth-
rian Romances, arranged and harmonized them, and putting a soul
into them, made of them a beautiful poem. The legend of the Holy
Grail, and the main characters of Galahad and Perceval, were added by
him. The legend of the Grail was probably first written by a monk
to counteract the tendency of the many light ballads of chivalry.
Mapes romanticized and paraphrased in French by the
vision of Froiss. This last writer originated the story of Perceval and
the gentle Guin.

From the 15th Century to the beginning of the present
Century, these romances were buried in sight in dusty old libra-
ries, and the archives of colleges and monasteries. But at the open-
ing of this Century, a new interest in literature was awakened, and the
reader has taken them up, and put them in the form of a prose
poem.
The Arthurian legends begin with the story of Merlin the wise. In very early times, Brocéliande, the father of Brocéliande, and it was during his time that Brocéliande first appeared. The Merlin could tell all things, past, present and future, and he foretold of the coming overthrow of Fortunio, and of the restoration of the rightful king. All these things happened as he had said.

Whose reign lasted for a period many years, and, with the aid of Merlin, he overcame all his enemies. He married the widow of the Duke of Cornwall, the beautiful Guinevere, who was the mother of Lancelot. Merlin took the child and caused him to be brought up as the younger son of a nobleman, and kept his ignorance of his noble birth. When Arthur was 13 yrs of age, King Uther died, comforted by the promise that his son should succeed him, and that during his reign the wounds of the Sangraal should be fulfilled.

After his death, the council of the nobles met and after much strife elected Arthur king, where he had performed the wonder-foot of pulling the sword of Excalibur out of the miraculous stone, and thus proving that he was chosen by Heaven.

When Arthur came to the throne, he found England divided up into petty, rival kingdoms, always jealous of each other and ever ready to break into open warfare. His own kingdom was filled with strong, brave nobles, brought up to war like footsoldiers, who when
not engaged in foreign wars, was wasting their strength, tarnishing their honor, and weakening the kingdom by fruitless wars with each other.

King Arthur, by his wonderful valor, guided by the wise council of Merlin, soon succeeded in uniting these nobles under him, his many wonderful feats in arms excited their admiration and fear, while his goodness and virtue commanded their respect, and his kindly care for all his people won their love and confidence.

He took in marriage the golden-haired Guinevere, the daughter of a neighbouring king. The early part of Arthur's reign was filled with wars, first for the establishment of a strong, independent kingdom, and then for conquest of neighboring principalities. Arthur's kingdom in its widest extent included all western and southern England, parts of Ireland, France, and Norway.

In his first war Arthur was aided by the magic of Merlin, but after a time Merlin suddenly disappeared. It was said that Vivian, a fair maid of the court, had beguiled Merlin away into the woods. Thus she rebuffed her enchantments upon him and he never but once afterward held intercourse with men. The prophecies of Merlin's are still extant, but are chiefly impressive from their high-sounding phrases, mixed figure, and general ambiguity.

After Arthur had completed his conquests, and secured a permanent peace with all nations, he returned home, and estab-
listed his capital at Camelot.

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces,

And stately halls in every view,

And the work

Of ancient kings, who did their days in stone:

Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's court

Knowing all arts, had touched and every where

At Arthur's ordinance, felt with lessoning peak

And pinnacle and had made it swift to Heaven.

Camelot was situated upon the bank of a river. In the center of the city, on the lots of a hill stood the palace. Around the palace were four rows of statues. In the first row, beasts were slaying men; in the second row were slaying beasts; in the third row were horses, perfect men, and in the fourth side men with growing wings. In the center, high above, overlooking all, was the statue of Bristor.

In the palace was a large hall where the court was held.

This hall was lighted by twelve great windows of stained glass, each representing one of Arthur's great victories. Around the sides of the hall were hung in a noble row, the shields of all the knights in the kingdom, some embroidered, some canopied, and some blank. It was Arthur's custom whenever a knight had done a noble deed, to have it carved upon his shield; if he had done two noble deeds his shield was emblazoned; but if he had never done a single noble act, his shield was left bare.
In the center of the hall was the famous Round Table which was constructed by Merlin. Around the table were thirteen seats, each of which could be occupied by a knight, who exceeded in valor the knight who had occupied it before him. If an unworthy knight attempted to sit there, some harm would immediately befall him, but a true, worthy knight would find his name inscribed upon the seat in letters of gold. One of these seats was called the "singe porlous," because when a foreign knight attempted to sit there, the earth had opened and swallowed him up. No one had ever occupied this seat.

The knights of this high order were bound by oath to assist each other at the risk of death or lives, to live but one lady, and always to wear her colors, to be ever ready to succour the distressed, to attack singly the most perilous adventures. They must be ready to fly to arms at the first summons, and must never retire from the battle field until the enemy was defeated, unless might return and seperated the combatants.

The most celebrated of Arthur's knights were Sir Galahad, Sir Lancelot, Sir Percival, Sir Robart, Sir Pandar, Sir Hector, Sir Lionel, Sir Kay and Sir Bedevere.

Sir Bedevere was the king's butler. Sir Kay was the foster brother of the king, and throughout his reign was steward of the king's household. He was a brave knight, true, and loyal to the king, but
toward, naughtily and over bearing. Sir Parvais was Arthur's nephew, and
was one of the first to support the king when he came to the throne. Par-
vaen was called the sage and courteux. He was sharp and keen-eyed, but
of such a practical cast of mind, that he had no sympathy with poetic
inspirations. He was one of those to whose spiritual visions would never
come; he could only appreciate battle and beauty, as they became ap-
parent in the regular order of events.

But Sir Lancelot was the favorite here above all others.
He had been brought up in the enchanted lake of Vivian, the fairy;
and hence was first called Lancelot du Lac. In all jousts and tourna-
ments he bore away the prize, and in valor and renown there was
no knight could equal him. He was ready there for to avenge,
and to succor the distressed. He always sought for the Queen
Alenore, and never wore any lady's color. Not then's, excepting the single
occasion on which he wore those of the lady of Shallot.

King Arthur was one day riding through a dark, stormy
country, where his days were-gay by, two brother kings kept faith, fought and
killed each other without his horses had struck upon the ancient
tombeau set with diamonds. Whereupon the king made a cross of
tournaments, and offered these diamonds as prizes. Sir Lancelot
fought for and won, successively all but one, intending to make them
into a necklace for Guinevere. Where the last tourney was to be held
he feigned sickness, and afterward set off on disguise.

On the way he stopped at the castle of the Lord of Shalot, where he was very hospitably entertained. And this lord had a very beautiful daughter, Elaine, called the fair lady of Shalot, and Shalot appeared at the tournament wearing her cloak. In the combat, although victorious, he was severely wounded, and was carried back to the isle of Shalot. Here the fair lady cried for being through his long sickness, and fell deeply in love with him. When her husband he received the diamond. But Galahad's heart was filled with unlawful love for the queen, and he left the isle without any farewell to the fair Elaine.

And Elaine shut herself up in the ring-covered tower of the old castle, singing such sweet, plaintive notes, that the reapers in the fields paused in their work to listen. There, singing her sweet songs, and gazing for Galahad she died. And they took a boat, painted it black, and lined it with white satin. And they dressed her in white, with her bright golden hair falling around her, and laid her in the boat, with a fair white lily in her left hand, and in her right a letter to Galahad. Then turning the boat's head down the streams they sent it floating toward Camelot. It floated on past deep shadowy woods and sunny meadows, over little rapids and under bridges, until it
came to the busy wharfs of Camelot. There they drew in the boat and read the name about the prow, "The Lady of Shalot." They carried her up into the palace, and all the knights and ladies gathered around her, wondering and fearfully.

"But Shalot needed a little space," he said. "She has a lovely face."

"God in his mercy lend her grace."

The lady of Shalot.

Sir Percival was a youth who was knighted during the latter part of Arthur's reign. Percival had been brought up afar from Camelot, apart from the rest of the world in ignorance of arms and the modes of warfare. But one day by chance he met some knights and at once demanded arms like theirs. He swiftly began to set out for the court of the king, dressed as a backwoodsman. At the court Sir Kay and the other knights ridiculed him. But there was a maiden there, who had been at the court a year and had never been seen to smile. And the king's fool had said that she would never smile, till one who was to be the flower of chivalry should appear. This maiden came up, question to Percival, and told him that if he lied, he would be the bravest and best of knights. But a strange knight, having come in and insulted the queen, Percival said sent to avenge the injury. He went out an
overtimes the insolent stranger, and obtaining his horse and armor rode away to further prove his right of knighthood. He came to a clear, candle-lit hall and there on the throne sat a bearded, bearded man, who told him that he was King Tewd, his mother's brother. At the court of his uncle Perraval was taught all the arts of warfare and all the courtiers of chivalry, and he became strong, and valiant, and kind, and knight. He then returned to Arthur's court, and was knighted with great honor.

There are a great many stirring tales told of the heroic deeds of these knights, and some beautiful romantic legends. They constitute a large part of the tales of chivalry. At this time there came to Arthur's court a holy hermit clothed in pure white, bringing with him a beautiful young knight. The old man said to the king, Sir, I bring you a knight that is of king's lineage, and kindred to Joseph of Arimathea. This youth was called Sir Palahad, and he was the son of Sir Lancelot, but had been brought up at the court of his grandfather. Lord Sir Lancelot befits his son, and was greatly beloved, and all the court paid he would because a great knight. When Arthur knighted him he said: "God make him a good man, for beauty shall be true not, as any that bires."

Then the hermit led Sir Palahad up to the king.
petrified, and lifted up the cover, and there appeared letters that said: "This is the seat of Sir Palahad, the good knight. And all the knights marvelled greatly to see Sir Palahad sit securely in that seat, where no man had ever sat safely before. They said: 'This is the by whom the guest of the Sangreal shall be decided.'

The Holy Grail was the dish in which the Paschal lamb was served at our Saviour's last supper, and after his death in taking his body from the Cross, it was used to receive the gore from his wounds.

The Sangreal to gether with the Sacred Lance was kept as holy relics by Joseph of Arimathea, and when he removed to Europe he brought them with him. They were carefully guarded and were exhibited to pilgrims. Whosoever touched these sacred relics was healed of all diseases. These relics were handed down from one generation to another. From among the descendants of Joseph of Arimathea one was chosen, time to time, who took especial charge of them. But to do this he must lead a life of holiness and of purity as though word and deed.

One time occasion the keeper of these relics, for a moment, forgot himself, and allowed some unholy thoughts to cross his mind. ImmEDIATELY the sacred lance was waked, and in-
fledged upon him a wound which never healed. This man was ever afterward called "le roi Oschurr."—the Sinner-king. He brought these relics to England. But after a time, the world became so wicked that they were taken back to heaven. There remained a legend that when all men became truly earnest seekers for good, the Sangrail would come again, and the world be cured of this. And it was for this end that Arthur was striving.

Sir Tanaun was one day out seeking an adventure, and as he passed through a word he heard a hillside a groaning as from one in deep distress. He turned but could see no one. At the sound a voice said, "I am Merlin, impressed by the call of mortal distress, I shall never more speak to you of any other person, save only my mistress. But do thine best by King Arthur, and change this from me, to undertake the quest of the Sacred Grail. The knight is already born, and has received knighthood at his hands, who is destined to accomplish the quest." So Tanaun returned to Arthur with the message.

At this time also the sister of Isoual, a pure and holy nun, saw a vision of the Grail, and bidding her eyes upon Isoual, bade her undertake the quest.

As the knights sat at the Round Table one day awaiting the return of Arthur, there came a terrible peal of thunder, while
shook the whole kingdom. A long train of light streamed down the hall, and then along the trunk they slowly passed the Holy Relic, covered with white satin, and enveloped in a cloud, so that none saw it except Sir Palahad. Then many knights arose and General and many others swore a vow to follow the Samemak a year and a day until they found it.

But when King Arthur returned his brow darkened, and he said that the quest was not for all of them, but only for his few. For the many it would be but following the will of the wise. "Alas," said he to Gawain, "I have long claimed me with the vow that ye have made, for ye have kept me of the fairest fellowship that ever there arose together in any realm of the world; for when ye shall depart hence, I am sure that all shall never meet more in this world."

The knights who most eagerly undertook the quest were Palahad, Perceval, Lancelot, Robert, and Gawain. Of these Gawain alone became quickly convinced that the quest was not for him, and abandoned it.

Sir Robert went sadly forth, his heart heavy for Lancelot, praying that the vision might come to his friend. Everywhere he lent a helping arm to the distressed and needy, thinking now but little or not at all of himself; but doing every helpful act for the weak and oppressed in all the lands that he passed through.
And, at last, misunderstood and wronged by the very ones
he was striving to help, he was thrown into prison. And there while
nursing sadly war the woes of others, a heavy stone was lifted without
hands from the massive door, and through the opening streamed a
light of glory, and he saw the Holy Grail.

Sir Lancelot rode out through a fearless forest, seeking
wild adventures, and whether the cause were right or wrong he al-
ways rode it. But no trace of the Sangrail came to his mind. At last
he came upon a little chapel near a stone cross, and saw within
the candles burning upon an altar; but when he sought to enter, he
could find no door.

So at length he lay down in the shade of a tree and
fell asleep. In his dreams he saw two white falcons come up to the
cross, leaving a letter on which lay a sick knight. And the sick knight
prayed that the holy vessel might come down to him, so that he
might touch it and be healed.

Then Sir Lancelot saw the lighted candles come before
the cross, but he could see no one that brought them, and a salver
having upon it the Holy Grail came out before the sick knight. And
the sick touched it and kissed it, and immediately he was healed.
And he arose and thanked God, and his squire came and an-
ced him. But he marveled at the clucking knight that he had not
the power to awaken and touch the Graal. "I dare it right wilt say
said the eques, "that the knight is stained with some manner
of deadly sin, whereof he seeks never a fitness." Then the knight
and eques departed.

And Sir Lancelot awaked his deep sorrow, and when
daylight dawned he rode away to a hermitage, and brought the
good hermit to hear his confession. And he told the hermit all his
life; how he had loved the queen unmeasureably, and how all his
great deeds had been done for her sake, and for fame, and never
only for God's sake, and but little or naught had he thanked God
for the victory.

The hermit counseled him to foregoke his sin, and to live
a wholly pure and noble life, so that finally, the Graal might come to
him. And Sir Lancelot repented him greatly. Thereafter the Graal appeared to him in a vision, but because of his sins he was not
or permitted to go near and touch it.

Sir Percival, the brave and virtuous knight, set out on
the quest, famed of his past victories, and confident of success in this.
So he rode many days. And thus he understood how the king had
said that many shield, follow-wandering, fire, and the thoughts of
all the evil deeds he had done, and feared greatly, that the vision
was not for him. And as he rode the country, because barren an
desolate around him, and everything he touched withered away.
An armed warrior, a fair lady, and a noble city, each instant,
crumbled at his touch, and he cried, "If I meet the Holy Grail to
now it would crumble at my touch." And he came to a little her-
mitage and there confessed to a hermit, and the good hermit re-
plied: "Say, thou lackest true humility; thou hast not lost thyself
to save thyself as Palahad."

Then Palahad came also to the hermitage, and they
partook of the Sacrament together. Gerard saw only the usual
service, but to Palahad the Grail appeared, and he saw the
face of the Christ-child in the holy bread.

"I, Palahad, saw these things, and more yet:
Hail this Holy Thing failed from my side, nor come
Bread, but moving with red might and day,
Blood-red, And be the strength of this Orbis,
Shattering all evil customs in my realm;
And clad with the Pagan tides, and bare them down
And broke through the all, in the strength of This
same victor. Behold my time is heard at hand.
And, hence I go, and one will crown me king,
Far in this spiritual city, and come there, too;
For thus shall see this vision ere I go."
So Percival went with Galaad, and they entered a ship, and there on an altar they found the Sangreal, and they made great reverence to it. And Galaad prayed to Our Lord that, at what time he would he might pass out of the world. And a voice said: "O, Galaad thou shalt have thy request, and when thou askest the death of thy body, thou shalt find the life of thy soul."

Now the wind bore the ship far away to a wonderful city, and the inhabitants came out and claimed Galaad as their king. And they dwelt one year in that city. Then Galaad and Percival went to the altar to pray, and Joseph of Arimathea appeared to them, and Galaad began to be told spiritual things. Then he prayed to be taken from this world, and after bidding his friends, farewells, he knelt by the altar. And Percival saw Galaad's soul borne up to Heaven by angels, and a hand came down and took the Holy Grail, and drew it up to Heaven, and it has never been seen since on the earth.

Then Percival returned to Camelot, to King Arthur and the remnant of his goodly fellowship of Knights. For, as Arthur had predicted, many had followed wandering fires, and had fallen into all kinds of dangers. Some had been killed, and others had seen the vision. Of these, Galaad had died, and Percival had resolved to enter a monastery. But Arthur gathered the
remnant around him, and filled the empty places as fast as possible. For a time the memory of the pure and perfect Idelahad, and
the influence of the Saxe Prail kept the court pure and harmonious.
But, at length, these forces weakened, and sin crept in.

Huskin says, that the crowning excuse or the ultimate
failure of all human life comes by the hand of a woman. Whether
this be true in practical living or not, we find it the theme of all
the poets, from the Garden of Eden, and the Siege of Troy, down to
Nekasbeer and the modern novelists. So in this story of King Arthur,
the failure of his noble life-work, came through the weakness
and folly of the golden-haired queen.

It was said that at the marriage feast, an old min-
strel was singing in praise of the great and noble deeds of the king, and
of this high action and pure character, and he sang that "Could he
find a woman so great in her womanhood, as he is in his man-
hood, they twain might change the world." But ere he ended his
song, he turned pale, the harpe fell from his hands, and the
words died from his lips.

So in after years, the minstrel's song was remembered.
For the beautiful queen loved Sir Lancelot, and was false to the
king. Thus evil crept into the court, while Arthur was listening to
make pure, and many corruptions, and his affections wore the result.
Then when the end came, Lancelot fled to his country, and Guinever
looked refuge in a convent. And while the king went with his army
to besiege Lancelot's castle, Modred raised a rebellion against him.

After the battle with Modred, Arthur, mortally wounded
was left in the field with only one attendant, Sir Bedivere. At
the king's command Sir Bedivere took the sword Excalibur and
pulled it into the lake. And an arm came up out of the water, Drake
in white samite, received the sword, and brandished it three
times and drew it down into the lake.

Then Sir Bedivere carried the king down to the lake,
and a boat came toward the shore to meet them. In this boat were
three queens who took King Arthur with them, and sailed away to
the isle of Avalon, there to heal him of his wounds. And Sir Bedi-
ver went sorrowfully away at once. The next morning he came to
a little church, and near by it was a fresh made grave. The hermit of
the church said: "In truth, I know not who lies buried there, but a
dead knight was brought hither yesterday night by three queens with
many ladies."

So Sir Bedivere knew that King Arthur lay there, and he
remained ever after with the hermit, and lived right with fasting
and prayer. When Sir Lancelot heard of the king's death, he was
filled with grief, and hastened to Avalon to the queen. But she
brought him with many lamentations to return to his own country, and never to see her more. So Lancelot went away and entered the hermitage with Sir Bedivere.

There they lived six years, when the queen died, and shortly after Lancelot died also. And as they lay in the office, Sir Hector came that way, for he had sought Lancelot seven years and when he found him dead he made many and bitter lamentations. "Ah, Sir Lancelot," he said; "Here thou liest. Thou wast never matched of more earthly knight's hand, and there went the courteous knight that ever bare shield; and there went the truest friend to thy brother that ever bestowed horse; and there went the kindliest man that ever drew sword; and there went the meekest man and the gentlest that ever sat in hall among ladies; and there went the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest."

So one can read these legends without feeling that there is a wonder-ful depth of meaning in them. We see lofty purposes, aspirations for purity, goodness, true manhood, struggling with temptations to the base passions and appetites — the spiritual nature striving to rise above the more physical. We see lofty purposes and noble endeavors thwarted and apparently defeated, yet accomplishing much good. The final disaster is not complete,
the good is withheld but there is a promise of its ultimate triumph for the king shall come again. It is a drama of the world's history.

Arthur, the central figure towers above the others in the greatness of his manhood. He is the ideal king, bending all his energies to the elevation of his people, relieving the oppression, striving in every way to make his part of the world gold, and binding his knights to the same purpose. Around him are portrayed the different types of characters just as we find them in the English world of today. Sir Pausing, Sir Lionel and Sir Hector, and many others are common, natural men, not spiritual, who did not especially hunger and thirst after righteousness but wanted easy pleasant lives. The typical type of these men was Lamold, with his strong arm and dauntless courage, nearest the king and best beloved by both king and people, because the most thoroughly human.

Then we see Sir Kay with his great warm heart self-forgetful, and hence great, through his strong sympathies with the troubled and sorrowful. Out of the higher types is the firm and perfect, Palahad, seeking spiritual things alone, all else to him but phantasms. It is remarkable that until the present century, no characters have been delineated in all English literatures of so fine a type, as those of Arthur and Palahad.
To each of these different types of character are presented some of the problems of the spiritual life. By the higher nature the world is undertaken with the greatest enmity, and it is realized that the highest, alone obtaining the complete victory, the many turning away baffled, the visions eluding their sight. And just as the product result is almost inexcusable, and the world bids fair to become faint and writhing, the visions is rudely thrust aside.

There is a wonderful picture in the picture of the god king standing alone amid the wrecks of his life, with his own people, and telling, rallying about a traitor, his fair wife no longer his. The first he most trust to be exactly false, and the world seeming farther than ever from perfect goodness.

No! the man alone could not change the world, and all men were not ready to change. But the picture is not all bad. A man had lived his whole life, and was ready to leave it, and the memory of his noble deeds would live long after him. Although he had last regenerate the world at once, he had made the less of all his knights, nobler and better. And it was the memory of both that secured even the guilty race a better living. He had done all that one man could do, and he himself is steadfast amid all the ruin around him.

There is great beauty in these old romances. The
characters are all drawn with remarkable clearness and force. They are real, lifelike men, and we see them moving about and hear them talk. The central character is of the highest type, and are beautifully and symmetrically delineated.

We find, like in these early English legends, a high degree of poetic beauty. The whole story is adorned with poetic images. Where can such be found the beauty of a more beautiful prose, than in the story of Lancelot's vision of the Lady, or of the Lady of the Lake.

Great delicacy of pronounciation and feeling is mingled with this, as in all tales of Chivalry. Matthew Arnold quotes the following passage, as an illustration of this: "And Percival arose in the morning, and went forth, as I beheld, a shower of snow had fallen in the night, and a hawk had killed a wild fowl in front of the tree. I saw the eyes of the horse had seen the hawk away, and a swan had alighted on the bough. And Percival stood and contemplated the blackness of the snow, and the whiteness of the snow, and the whiteness of the snow, and the blackness of the snow, and the blackness of the snow, and the blackness of the snow, and the white of the horse's hair, and the hair of the lady's hair. But he loved, which was blacker than jet, and to the freckled spots upon her cheeks, which were redder than the blood upon her hair."
On first reading these legends seem to have something of a fragmentary character. But upon closer examination, it will be seen that they are all founded around a common center, to which they are subordinate. The noble impulse given by the great king runs through all the different legends, and binds them into one whole.

Another important characteristic of these Gothic Romances is the deep and genuine love of nature. Daudet, in the midst of his deepest sorrow, is somewhat comforted by the singing of the birds in the forest.

The theme is of the highest. It embraces the deepest problems of human life, treating of men in all their natural loves and hatreds, hopes and fears, their pains and purposes, and touching upon the hidden secrets of the spiritual nature. True Romances are not simply portraits of historic characters, not simply pictures of the days of Chivalry, but rather a story of the world's inner history; its struggles, its progress, its defeats, a story of the world's life, not its deeds or actions. This theme is a universal, spiritual fact, not simply one which concerns a few individuals, but one which is of deepest interest to all stocks and humanity, and which must always continue to be constant to the world's needs.
These legends are closely connected with the English character. The English are a practical people. Even in their ideal fancies, in their philosophy, and in their poems they demand that some useful truth be taught, some good be the aim. Their literature and their fine arts are grounded in utility. Theory is coupled with practice and thus its truths thoroughly tested. This may not result in the most rapid progress, but every advance is more surely established. The good gained is not lost in a longer failure.

But the English character is the product of a race
With the "pull and unfebrile Roman" element is mingled, though in less degree, the quick, intuitive Celtic element, and this another Faculty for

shrew. Though the British Romans have their origin in the poetic
mind of the Celt. This is apparent in the outlines of the narratives,
the extensive conquests of King Arthur, the glittering tournaments,
and the magnificent festivals. But the deeper-meaning, the core of life
which makes the poem speak to every one, comes in later through
the completed English mind.

In reality of facts, and in despite of poetic insights, these
English legends contrast favorably with the mythology of other na-
tives. The Celtic mythology with the old Norse and its confused men
of beautiful imagery. Modern fundamental truths are hidden away
in ideas, but this great underlying meaning of the whole, seems to
be hopelessly obscured or lost. But into this later English mythology has been infused a clearer, truer, and more compelling divine meaning. It contains the very essence of Christianity — the deepest truths that concern man’s soul.

The influence of these legends upon their own times must have been very marked. Relished as they were through several centuries in the field and by the fireside, chanted in song and story, sung in camp and castle, their influence in forming and keeping before the people a high ideal was very great.

From the 15th century until the latter part of the 18th, these romances were buried from sight. Then they were brought out, collected and published by Walser in his history of English poetry. The English people had become weary of classical research, and returned with increased ardor to the early poems.

Part of these legends have been written in the form of a prose poem by Tennyson, and the whole collection has been carefully compiled by Bulfinch. Many of the greatest writers and poets of the present century, acknowledge a debt of gratitude to these early ballads. Wordsworth, Scott, and Tennyson, especially, have drawn much inspiration from them. They are constantly increasing in popularity and are constantly increasing in popu-

larity.
I never saw a material act, and cease to be imitations of our art, more or less foreign to the genius of our people, these old romances expressing as they do the genuine English character will form its grand work. For this lies in these expressions of the soul of the race in its childhood, genius capable of being developed into great and grand utterances. We need not go back to Greece and copy from her mythology, nor revere the Madonnas and the saints of the early Christian Church, but build from our own legends, that art distinctive in character which the English people are to contribute to the world.