

A broken chancel with a broken cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land. 10
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water,¹ and the moon was full.
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 " The sequel of to-day unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights 15
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
 They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
 Shall nevermore, at any future time,
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
 Walking about the gardens and the halls 20
 Of Camelot,² as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I made,
 Tho' Merlin³ sware that I should come again
 To rule once more — but let what will be, be.
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm 25
 That without help I cannot last till morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
 Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how⁴
 In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake, 30
 Clothed in white samite,⁵ mystic, wonderful,
 Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a king :
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known : 35
 But now delay not : take Excalibur.

1. Water originally meant lake. Compare Derwentwater.

2. The capital of Arthur's kingdom.

3. Merlin was a great magician; a friend of Arthur.

4. Compare the account in *The Coming of Arthur*.

5. A rich, silk stuff interwoven with threads of silver and gold.