

fect but for his guilty love, and so he comes to the enchanted castle where he cannot tell what he sees, and concludes that the quest is not for him.

VIII.—*Pelleas and Etarre.*

This is the opposite of Lancelot and Elaine. The Queen's sin is gradually destroying the good of Arthur's Court, so that here the woman is debased.

To Pelleas, Arthur's Court and Queen are perfect. As he rides to court, while resting in the shade, he is smitten by the beauty of Etarre, who is the leader of a band of maidens-errant who have lost their way while seeking Arthur's Court.

The beauty of her flesh abashed the boy,
As though it were the beauty of her soul.

She promises to be his if he wins the circlet, but when he wins she flouts him, calling him Sir Baby, and when he follows her, her men bind him and mock him and Arthur. Twice this is done, but still his love holds. Then Gawain appears, offering to conquer the castle for him. When Pelleas finds he does not return, and is unfaithful, his love disappears. Unbelief takes its place, and, like a madman, he rushes forth a scourge to publish the guilt of the Queen and Lancelot.

IX.—*The Last Tournament.*

Arthur and Sir Lancelot, finding a maiden-babe, with a ruby necklace, give her to the Queen to rear, who calls her "Nestling." But the babe dies, and Guinevere proposes a tournament for the rubies.

As the King is obliged to be absent, he appoints Lancelot as umpire, but the laws of the tournament are broken, and the glory of the Round Table is no more. The Queen herself, in horror, breaks off the revels, and retires pained at heart, while the necklace is awarded

to Tristram, the representative of free love, who, forgetful of his own sweet wife, "Isolt of the white hands," so far away in Tintagil by the sea, places the jewels on the neck of Queen Isolt, wife of Mark.

But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd throat,
Out of the dark, just as the lips had touch'd,
Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek—
"Mark's way," said Mark, and clove him thro' the brain.

X.—*Guinevere.*

That night, when Arthur returned, all was dreary and dark, and his fool, Dagonet, with many sobs, told him the Queen had fled.

In the nunnery at Almesbury she was cared for by the holy sisters, and partly soothed, partly angered by the prattle of the little novice, with her questions about the Court and her mournful song, "Late, late, so late."

Rumours come of the King's wars, especially those with Lancelot, and finally Guinevere and Arthur met once more, for that last parting before his last fight with Modred—a parting in which she learned, when too late, what she had lost by the guilty love for Lancelot, so that when he is gone she cries aloud.

Is there none
Will tell the King I love him, tho' so late?
I must not scorn myself. He loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.

Her life becomes pure, and she was made abbess when the old abbess died; but, after three years, she passed

To where beyond these voices there is rest.

XI.—*The Passing of Arthur.*

In the last battle, the death-like mist made confusion, and

There were cryings for the light
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.
And lastly a dead hush fell.

The wounded King sends Sir