

of Bulloigne, or any of the other eight, considering that he was a man born within this realm, and king and emperor of the same; and that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of his facts, and also of his knights. To whom I have answered, that divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as be made of him be feigned matters and fables, because that some chronicles make of him no mention, nor remember him nothing, nor of his knights. Whereto one said there were many evidences to the contrary. First ye may see his sepulchre in the monastery of Glastonbury; and also in Policroicon, where his body was buried, and after found, and translated into the said monastery; ye shall also find, in the history of Bochas, part of his noble acts, and also of his fall. Also in divers places of Engiand, many remembrances be yet of him, and shall remain perpetually of him, and also of his knights; first, in the Abbey of Westminster, at St. Edward's shrine, remaineth the print of his seal in red wax, closed in beryl, in which is written—"Patricius Arthurus Britaniae, Galliae, Germanae, Daciae Imperator." Also in the castle of Dover ye may see Sir Gawaine's skull, and Cradoke's mantle; at Winchester the round table; in other places Sir Launcelot's sword, and many other things. Then all these things considered, there can no man reasonably gainsay but that there was a king of this land named Arthur; for in all the places, Christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the nine worthies, and the first of the three Christian men. And yet of record, remaineth in witness of him in Wales, in the town of Camelot, the great stones, and the marvellous works of iron lying under the ground, and royal vaults, which divers now have seen. Wherefore, it is a great marvel why that he is no more renowned in his own country, save only it accordeth to the word of God, which saith, 'That no man is accepted for a prophet in his own country.'

The book is dedicated to those lords and ladies who alone in that age were able to indulge in literary tastes. The rest of the community are treated very cavalierly. Then follows the work itself, in five hundred and one short chapters, in which we are hurried from incident to incident with a rapidity most bewildering. There is, in fact, plot material sufficient for a stock-in-hand for a fertile novel writer's lifetime. Even as a study of English idiom of the sixteenth century, it is worth perusal. Malory takes leave of the reader thus:

"And, for to pass the time, this book shall be pleasant to read in. But, for to give faith, and believe that all is true that is contained therein, ye be at your own liberty."

And Caxton has also a word to say:—

"I, William Caxton, *simple person*,* present this book following, which I have enterprised to imprint. In which all those that dispose them to eschew idleness, which is the mother of all vices, may read historical (?) matters."

*Not of gentle or noble birth. Opposed to it in the old phrase, 'gentle or simple.'