

They fell back in shame. But the Stranger Knight staggered to his feet. "Let me at them!" he shouted. "Since they fight that way, I will vanquish them all at once."

Sore wounded and afoot as he was, his sword flashed to right and left, slashing at steeds and riders, until he unhorsed or sent all his assailants flying from the field.

With a fanfare of his silver trumpet, the herald proclaimed the Stranger Knight victor, and bade him come forward and receive the ninth diamond from the king.

"Give me air! I have no need of diamonds, since I have my death wound. Let me go hence to die in peace and follow me not."

While King Arthur and his court sat in sorrowful silence, the Stranger Knight rode away. His squire bore Sir Lancelot to a hermit's cell, and pulled the spear point from his side. Then the Lady Elaine brought him his own shield, and the ninth diamond, and nursed him back to health.

When Sir Lancelot rode again to Camelot he was welcomed with rejoicing. His prowess was proved to be as high as his fame, and he appeared in the lists no more. And, having no lady of his own to adorn, he had the nine great diamonds set in a diadem which he presented to the fair Queen Guinevere.

The Kitchen Boy who Became a Knight

GARETH, having learned gentle manners and all the feats of arms, wished to go to King Arthur's court and be a knight. But his mother, Queen Bellicent, was a widow.

Her two elder sons were Knights of the Round Table, and Gareth was all she had left in the world. So she wept and begged him to stay with her. Seeing that he was determined to go, she thought of a clever plan to keep him.

"Very well, my son; but you must go afoot, and in mean disguise. You must tell no one who you are, and you must work for a year at the duties of a kitchen boy."

She thought Gareth would be too proud to do that. But, knowing that he could still be a true knight in his heart, the noble youth put on the coarse clothes of a plough-boy, and walked through the green land to the royal city of "many-towered Camelot." He had been in the palace kitchen no more than a month when his mother relented and sent his sword and suit of armour, with a letter, to King Arthur. The King made Gareth a knight in secret, and promised that he should prove his worth by righting the first wrong.

That same day the fair Lady Lynette came to Arthur's court asking the aid of a knight. Her sister was a prisoner in Castle Perilous, guarded

by four wicked nobles. Only the greatest of knights could hope to rescue her. Expecting Sir Lancelot or other champion of renown, she was angry when only a kitchen boy was sent to her.

"Ride behind, as a servant should," she said, and she turned up a disdainful little nose. "You smell of kitchen grease."

Gareth was cruelly hurt by her scorn, but he did not forget the manners of a true knight. "Fair lady," he said, "I would rather fight

SIR LANCELOT AND ELAINE



Sir Lancelot, one of the bravest of the Knights of the Round Table, and Elaine, the "Lily Maid of Astolat," daughter of King Pellès.