

THE HIDDEN CHURCH OF THE HOLY GRAAL Its Legends
and Symbolism Considered in Their Affinity with Certain
Mysteries of Initiation and Other Traces of a Secret
Tradition in Christian Times

By Arthur Edward Waite

[Podcast 10]

BOOK FIVE THE GREATER CHRONICLES OF THE HOLY
GRAAL

CHAPTER ONE THE BOOK OF THE HOLY GRAAL AND, IN
THE FIRST PLACE, THE PROLOGUE THERETO
BELONGING

The Book of the Holy Graal is the most conscious, most cumbersome, most artificial romance in the literature. It is that also which is beyond all prodigal of wonders, and its wonders are the least convincing. In so far as concerns the history of the Sacred Vessel, it must be said that it materialises the symbol and it also distracts the legend. Robert de Borron finished his metrical romance by confessing that for want of materials he must, for the time being, hold over those branches of his chronicle which were intended to deal with the further adventures of Brons, Alain, Petrus and the connected characters of the story. In the meantime he proceeded to the life of Merlin, bridging the gulf of centuries by a promise to retrace the path when he had obtained the necessary data, though it is possible enough that the intervening distances of time may have

spelt little to his mind. All that could be construed as wanting is supplied by the Book of the Holy Graal, leaving nothing undone, but working through I know not what mazes of great enchantment. I have said that the artifice of the design—which obtains also for its expression—stands forth in full manifestation, even upon its surface. A hand more sparing might have worked greater marvels and left some sense of realism, at least in the order of faerie. And yet the prolix history has a certain touch of enchantment, all paths of disillusion notwithstanding.

From whatever point of view it is approached, the entire text will prove to be sown with difficulties—curious things in truth of the worlds within and without, but even as difficulties these have also their secret charm. It has vast sections of unnecessary matter which suggest an imperfect art of mere story-telling, and it also deals with materials which do not belong, more especially at its own period, to the horizon confessed by that art. Moreover, nothing is really finished, for, as one of its sub-titles indicates, it is the first branch of the romances of the r Round Table, or it is rather the prolegomenon to these. A cycle of the literature of chivalry is supposed to follow thereafter, which may mean that the writer had a mind to go further, or, alternatively, that his intention was to present the collated antecedents leading up to other documents which in one or another form were there already in being. Accepting either alternative, this prolix introduction in general, which presupposes and from which *ex hypothesi* there follows so great a cloud of romance, offers herein a first point of distinction from the trilogy ascribed to Robert de Borron. The latter lies, comparatively speaking, within such a narrow compass and yet A has a claim to completeness within its own lines and measures. There are other distinctions, however, which are not less marked in their character and are very much more important. The account

which I propose of the document will differ from ordinary critical and textual apprehension by way of direct summary, since it is actuated by exclusive objects which connect with the design of my study.

As the Lesser Chronicles of the Holy Graal are concerned with the reservation of a great secret or sacramental formula, so there is also a secret in the Book of the Holy Graal, and herein is the second distinction which we are called to make between them. That particular form of the Eucharistic mystery which we find in Robert de Borron and his line of anonymous successors is made void by the later romance; as if it had planned to show that there were no secret words of consecration, the actual mass-words are given in full, and although they are those of a liturgy which differs from the formula of the Latin rite and betrays oriental influences, the variations are local and accidental, and, except for liturgical history, they wear no aspect of importance. At the same time, when the Hermit of the Book of the Holy Graal is first received into that state of vision from which the transcript of the text follows, what he is promised by Christ is the revelation of the greatest secret of the world. But this is the book itself, which is invariably spoken of as very small—so small indeed that it can lie in the hollow of his hand. This notwithstanding, it is the greatest marvel that man can ever receive. In its original form it was written by Christ Himself, who committed to writing only: (a) the Book of the Holy Graal; (b) the Lord's Prayer; (c) the words written in the sand, according to the New Testament. To pronounce aloud the words contained in the book would convulse the elemental world, and it must therefore be read with the heart.

Not exactly on this consideration but not for less cogent reasons, the first thing which is apparent concerning it is that although the Hermit is covenanted to transcribe it and

to occupy in this task the period which intervenes between the fifteenth day after Easter and the day of the Ascension; although further he states expressly that what he wrote down is that which follows his prologue; the secret book committed to his charge is not that which he transmits as a memorial for those who come after him. I suppose that in registering this with a certain touch of fantastic gravity, my motive can be scarcely misconstrued; we are dealing with a parable or pretence, and the point is that it is not especially consistent within its own lines. After making every allowance for the variations of late editing, both intentional and otherwise, it remains that the text of the story voids the claim of the prologue, and this to such an extent that a substitute only is offered for that which was brought from heaven for the assumed illumination of Logres.

The Book of the Transcript is by the hypothesis of the prologue divided into four branches, of which the first concerns the lineage of the Hermit himself; and on the assumption that the Huth Merlin is correct in identifying the latter with that second Nascien, who, in the days of the enchanter and those of Uther Pendragon, was at first of the order of chivalry and afterwards a holy recluse, it will follow that the entire romance corresponds to this designation rather than an individual part. The second branch is that of the Holy Graal, which is the title of the collection itself: *Li Livres du Saint Graal*, and it cannot be allocated to a section. The third branch is called the beginning of the Terrors, and the fourth is that of the Marvels, which in like manner will not assist towards any logical classification, as we are concerned with something which answers in all its modes to the title of a wonder-book.

The most express, most ordered, most reasoned part of the entire history is assuredly what is termed the prologue; it is

there that the Hermit accounts for the manner in which he came for a period into the possession of the original text. It reads in certain passages like a story of initiation. The part is quick to self-deception, and one sees too easily that for which one is looking; but here are words which are exceedingly like the sign of recognition in a secret society: "The first Knight," says the Hermit, who has found refuge in a house of chivalry, "recognised me, as he believed, by a sign which I bore about me; he had seen me in a place which he named." But the Hermit evaded disclosures, for he was bent on concealing his mission, even as through the whole of his narrative he veils also his personality, though perhaps for the express object that it should transpire in the subsequent texts.

The circumstances under which he came to begin his story took place in Britain, 717 years after the Passion of Christ. It is to be inferred that prior to his mission he knew nothing concerning the Mystery of the Holy Graal, though he did know of his lineage, which may be intended according to the flesh or according to the mystical spirit, if its reference is to the grades of his initiation. On Maunday Thursday, after the office of Tenebræ, the Grand Master awoke him from sleep and gave him a book to ease his doubts on the subject of the Trinity. His immediate experience thereafter was the possession of a further gift, which was that of an infinity of tongues. He began reading the book and continued till Good Friday, when he celebrated a Mass of the Presanctified; between the breaking of the Host over the Chalice and his reception of the elements he was transported to the Third Heaven, and there was enabled to understand the Trinitarian Dogma by the dilucid contemplation of the Blessed and Glorious Trinity, with its distinction of Persons combined in the mystery of their Unity. In other words, this was the ecstasy of the Eucharist consequent upon his initiation into the sacramental power

and grace enshrined in the Book of the Holy Graal. After Mass he placed the book in the Eucharistic dovecote, or tabernacle, with the intention not to reopen it till Easter Sunday, when he found that it had been abstracted strangely, and he undertook a wonderful pilgrimage in search of it. The explanation of this disappearance is perhaps that the Mystery of the Graal is of that which was buried with Christ and with Him rises, and the subsequent communication of the priest signifies that Christ is placed spiritually in many sepulchres.

That he might be directed rightly on his journey, the Hermit was led by an animal which combined the characteristics of the lamb, the dog, the fox and the lion; it was in fact that questing beast which reappears in later romance, and, according to its mystical sense, is explained by the Longer Prose Perceval. Ultimately he recovered the book; and this restoration was followed by a vision of our Saviour, who ordained its transcription, and on Ascension Day the original was reassumed into heaven. It will be seen that no pains are spared to exalt the work which follows this introduction; it is of mysterious and divine origin; a parchment copy is produced for earthly purposes by the highest of all ordinations; and as regards its source and nature it takes precedence of everything, even the canonical gospels.

The Doctrine of the Trinity was the great crux and mystery which seems to have exercised the minds of those who had entered the Path of Sanctity at the period immediately preceding the literature of the Holy Graal. It was the triumph of Faith to accept it, and he for whom it presented no difficulties had attained a very high grade of illumination. The hermit of the prologue to the Book of the Holy Graal is moved profoundly by the question, and its solution is the great incentive which is offered him when he

sets out on his pilgrimage to recover the vanished book, which, in spite of the content exhibited by its assumed transcript, is intended of itself—as we have seen—to allay his doubts on the subject. We should remember that in the year 1150 the Church had established the Festival of the Most Holy Trinity, and it was a quarter of a century later that the transformed Graal legends began to manifest on the horizon of romantic literature.

CHAPTER TWO NEW CONSIDERATION CONCERNING THE BRANCHES OF THE CHRONICLE

Not the least difficulty in the Book of the Holy Graal, regarded as a work of “truth in the art” of its particular mystery, is the divergence exhibited by the extant manuscripts. These differences meet us, perhaps chiefly, at the inception of the story, though they are with us even at the end. In respect of the latter there are texts which incorporate a distinct romance which is impertinent to the design of the story. In respect of the former, it should be understood that it is of the essence of the whole design to make a beginning from the same point of departure at which Robert de Borron started his metrical romance, and all recensions present therefore some kind of prose version reflecting his narrative. One of them—and it is the most available of the printed texts—has only moderately grave variations from the Lesser Holy Graal up to that epoch of the story when the company of Joseph of Arimathæa set out on their journey westward; but another presents a brief summary which scarcely stands for the original. It is not part of my province to express opinions belonging to the domain of textual criticism, but I think that the design of the Book of the Holy Graal is represented better and more typically by a manuscript like that which was made use of by Dr. Furnivall for the Early English Text Society, and this is the summarised form, than it is by a manuscript like that

which Hucher selected for the first printed edition, and this is the extended version.

The incorporation of De Borron elements serves one purpose which is material from my own point of view, as it sets in relief the distinction *ab origine symboli* between the actuating motives of the two cycles of literature. It will be remembered that in the metrical romance and its later reflections the narrative is broken rudely at that moment when the horizon has begun to expand by an inspired resolution of the company to part into several groups and proceed westward separately. Three subsequent divisions were involved hereby, and these Robert de Borron promised to expound in their proper order when he received true reports concerning them. The author of the Book of the Holy Graal undertook to supply these missing branches, but as the results differ, and in no light manner, from the manifest intent of De Borron, it may be deduced that they are not the real history, as this might have been set forth by the pious minstrel. On his part there was probably no design to bring Joseph of Arimathæa either to the Vaux d'Avoron or another part of Britain. The doubtful meaning of some of his lines must be taken in connection with the general scheme of his narrative. That scheme was to establish the mystery of sanctity in great seclusion under the government of a single keeper, with a life protracted through the centuries, until the time of its possible manifestation came. The Lesser Holy Graal is a reasonably faithful version of his nearly complete poem, though it is doubtful regarding Joseph's final destination. The Early History of Merlin is also faithful to what remains of De Borron's second metrical romance. Of the Didot Perceval we cannot speak so certainly, but in several points about which we have materials for judgment—and more especially regarding Moses—it does not correspond properly. It is even possible that the Didot Perceval is a

speculative completion of the trilogy, characterised by remarkable insight, and yet without any accurate notion of De Borron's design, this being manifested imperfectly by his extant literary remains.

It will be understood, therefore, that the Book of the Holy Graal, or the great romance which follows the parable of the prologue, begins, in the codex here followed, with a short account of the chief incidents in the life of our Saviour and the condition of Palestine at the period. It repeats the familiar story of the Lesser Holy Graal, but sometimes, as we have seen, only by way of summary, and always with many variations. The fact that Joseph is married and has a son in his infancy at the time of the Passion of Christ may be taken as the first important point of difference; he is named after his father, and to distinguish between them the orthography adopted by the romance to designate the son is Josephes, for which in the present account I shall substitute Joseph the Second. The next point of difference, with which we are also acquainted already, concerns the identification of the Holy Graal with the dish of the Paschal Supper—*en quoi li flex dieu avoit mangie*—instead of with the Eucharistic vessel of sacrifice; but it should be said that there is another text which follows the description in the Lesser Holy Graal. The circumstances under which the Great Hallow was discovered, after the apprehension of Christ, also vary, and in place of its abstraction by a Jew, who carries the Hallow to Pilate, it is found by Joseph himself in the house where the Pasch was eaten, and is removed by him to be kept for a memorial of the Master. As in the other romances, it is used to collect the blood, which, however, is done no longer on Calvary, but in the sepulchre itself. The general lines established by Robert de Borron are followed as regards the imprisonment of Joseph, the circumstances under which he was released by Vespasian after a term of forty-

two years, and the vengeance wreaked upon the Jews. All lapse of years notwithstanding, Joseph is reunited to his wife and son, is baptized, with a great number of his relatives, and he is directed by Christ to go with those who will follow him into distant countries, carrying neither gold, silver, nor any material possession except the Holy Graal. It is after this point that the prototype of Robert de Borron is abandoned once and for all. The first destination—reached by way of Bethany and the Wood of Ambush—is the city of Sarras, situated in a country of the same name on the confines of Egypt. From this land it is stated that the Saracens originated; the people are described as worshippers of the sun, moon and planets. It is also this place which is termed in later romances the spiritual city, though it is not on account of the faith found in its citizens—who appear to have been a perverse nation at the beginning and end—but because, according to the story, it contained the palais esperiteus, which name was given it by the prophet Daniel, who emblazoned it on the door thereof. The story is apocryphal, but the design is to show that even the seers of Israel were aware of the coming of the Graal, for it was in this palace that the Eucharist was first consecrated. It was the witness on the dry land, as the ship of Solomon was the witness on the open sea.

At Sarras Joseph found Evalach, its aged king, in great trouble through an invasion of his country by the Egyptians under Ptolemy. Joseph commended his conversion as a certain guarantee of his victory, but the king, though not disinclined, was not baptized actually until his enemies were dispersed with final slaughter. The power operating in his favour rested chiefly in a cross painted on his shield by Joseph. The story of the war and its wonders occupies a substantial part of the narrative, and before Joseph departed on his further journey westward the whole population of the country appears to have embraced

Christianity. Several churches were built in the city or its vicinity, bishops and priests were ordained, and masses were celebrated therein.

England is the Promised Land which the special providence of the story has allocated to the spiritual and material lineage of Joseph of Arimathæa; and after the departure from Sarras the sole concern of all the involved adventures is, separately or collectively, to bring the various characters to this country and to reunite them therein, the evangelisation of the existing inhabitants being the palmary term of all. Speaking of the rank and file, apart from several of the more important personages, the good Christians are transported hither miraculously on a garment belonging to the second Joseph, but those who are imperfect come by ship. Some of the great heroes arrive independently under circumstances which I shall describe in the considerations to each allotted. Joseph of Arimathæa reaches the general bourne, and though the superior importance of his son causes him to be almost effaced, we hear of him from time to time during long years of continued existence. At length he left this world to be united with Christ, to whom all his love was dedicated. He was buried at the Abbey of the Cross in Scotland, for which one codex substitutes Glastonbury.

There is a general sense in which the Book of the Holy Graal—like the metrical romance of De Borron—is the Book of the Divine Voice which speaks from the Sacred Vessel, though this is not used to pronounce oracles or to separate the good from the evil as it does in the earlier text. The difficulties which are raised by the story regarding that Mystery of Faith which it exists to show forth are so grave and so numerous that I must be satisfied with the registration of the fact and its illustration by one instance. The whole notion of the Eucharist is changed by the

supposition that, on occasion, it is administered to angels, for by no hypothesis can Christ be regarded as their Saviour.

Seeing that there is no clear division of episodes in the story, so that one section can be separated definitely from another, I shall attempt only a general grouping. The master-branch of the whole prodigal romance is that which embraces the mission of Joseph the Second—this is of the essence, and all else is, in comparison, of the accidental order. About this central figure the wonder of the Graal converges and the confused cloud of marvellous incidents; from the first even to the last, he is thus steeped in a light of mystery that “never was on land or sea.” Prior to the arrival at Sarras a command was received from the Son of God to build an ark, similar to that of the Old Covenant, for the reception of the Holy Graal. Public devotions were to take place before it, but only Joseph and his son had a right to open the Shrine, to look into the Reliquary and to take it in their hands. Two chosen men were deputed to carry the Ark on their shoulders when the company was on the march. The intention was evidently to invest the new symbol with the same authority as that palladium which once belonged to Israel. To provide sustenance for the band during the journey, each disciple—after the daily service of prayer—found in his lodging the food which he desired in abundance, but it is not said that it was provided by the Holy Graal.

While the conversion of the King and the issue of the war were still pending at Sarras, things of far other importance were taking place in respect of the Sacramental Mystery under the charge of Joseph and his son. The pilgrims on their advent had been lodged in that building which was named the Spiritual Palace. The inhabitants of Sarras did not know why it had received this designation, but the

arrival of the Christian cohort was to reveal the prophetic mystery—firstly, by the presence of the Ark and the Graal therein, and, secondly, by the sacred wonders which accompanied the ordination of Joseph the Second, with Christ manifested visibly as the Celebrant-in-chief. In that Palace, on the day following their arrival, the Holy Spirit advised Joseph the father that his son had been chosen to guard the Graal, as the Aaron of the new Rite, that he was to be ordained by the highest consecration, and was to transmit the priesthood to those whom he deemed worthy thereof. Joseph the Second received also the power to hand on the Sacred Vessel to whomsoever he would, and it is to be inferred that he committed everything in the plenary sense—as if Christ said to His successor: “My peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you.”

When the company were worshipping before the Ark in the Spiritual Palace, the Holy Spirit descended in still fire, as at another Pentecost, and entered into the mouth of each one of them, like the Eucharist of some final dispensation which has not been declared on earth. It communicated, however, the gift of silence instead of the gift of tongues. A Voice also spoke and though apparently it was that of the Spirit, it was also the voice of Christ. The discourse was memorable enough, but I can speak only of its end, when the younger Joseph was directed to approach and receive the most great honours which could be conferred on earthly creature. He opened the door of the Ark and beheld a man clothed in a terrible vestment of scarlet flame. There were also five angels apparelled after the same manner, each having six wings of fire, like the vision of Ezekiel. In their right hands they held various symbols of the Passion—about which we have heard already—and each in his left carried an ensanguined sword. The human figure was that of Christ, with the five wounds upon Him. It is said by the text that the Ark had been magnified strangely, so that it

would hold the Divine Personalities of the vision: but I conclude rather that when the door was opened, those who were empowered to behold looked as into a seering-glass, which contains at need the earths of the universe and the earths of the starry heavens, with all that dwell thereon. The state of the second Joseph is shown by the words addressed to his father, praying that he should touch him in nowise, lest the speaker be drawn from the joy of his entrancement. That which he next beheld was the crucifixion itself, presented in ritual form, with the angels for the actors therein. It seemed even as in one of the Greater Mysteries which I have seen with my own eyes, when the Adept Master is set on a cross of dedication and the officers of the high ceremonial are those who combine to immolate him. But the design in the case under notice was rather to certify concerning the Vessel of the Graal, for the side of Christ was pierced and the sang réal poured therein. The scene closed and a new scene was opened, this time more especially before the eyes of Joseph the father. What he beheld was an altar within the Ark draped in white over red, bearing the Sacred Dish, the nails of transfixion and the ensanguined head of the Lance. These objects were arranged on the epistle and gospel sides, but in the centre—or place of consecration—covered with a white corporal—there was a rich golden vessel with a covercle, also of gold, and it is recorded that all precautions were taken that the contents should remain hidden. A procession of angels entered with lights, aspergillus, thurible, incense-boat, and then—out of all knowledge—one carrying a head, as I suppose, on a salver, and another with a drawn sword. This pageant went about the house, as if for a Rite of Consecration, the Graal being also carried, and Christ entered, even as the Priest of the Rite, clad in sacramental robes for the celebration of Mass. The circumambulation being finished for the cleansing of the whole place—which, in spite of its name, had been the abode of evil and the

spirit thereof—Christ told Joseph the Second that he was to receive the Eucharist, and, as if constituted a secret pope, he was made and ordained sovereign bishop reigning over the world of Christendom. He was clothed with rich episcopal vestments and set in an episcopal chair, which the text says was still preserved at Sarras, where it proved to be another Siege Perilous and whosoever sat therein was maimed or destroyed utterly. Joseph was anointed by Christ, and with the oil which was used for this purpose the Kings of England were consecrated in later years up to the time of Uther Pendragon; but it was missing at his coronation. The ring of investiture, given to the prelate thus hallowed strangely, could be counterfeited by no human skill, nor could words express the virtues contained in its jewel.

When the ceremony was at length over and the divine discourse had explained one by one the spiritual significance of each part of his clothing, Joseph the Second was instructed by Christ to consecrate the sacred elements, and it thus came about that the people of the new exodus communicated for the first time: but the Host which was elevated by Joseph was the body of a child and that which was received by the faithful, in the mouth of each one among them, was living and undivided flesh. The administration to the cohort of worshippers was, however, performed by angels, one of whom took the paten together with the chalice and placed both of them in the Holy Vessel of the Graal. Whether the Precious Blood adhered to the Eucharistic Vessel and the content of the Reliquary thus suffered diminution we do not know, nor the purpose otherwise of the ceremony, which, fortunately for the spiritual side of la haute convenance, is not repeated either in the romance itself or anywhere in the literature.

Thus was the second Joseph consecrated in the super-apostolical degree, and thus did he see—at least in the sense of the story—all Christ’s mysteries openly. The issues which are raised by the narrative are much more complicated than will be gathered from the preceding summary. Scholarship has paid little heed to the importance of the sacramental question and all connected therewith, but it has not overlooked the pontifical supremacy which is ascribed to the reputed founder of Christianity in Britain. While the ecclesiastical consequence to these islands is perhaps the only thing which can be said to stand forth clearly, it must be added that if the intention was to make void one claim of the Papacy, there was never a design so clouded and veiled so sedulously. The brief for any secret pontificate is proclaimed much less openly than the general brief for the official Church, with all its ways and laws, as we are acquainted with its body—politic and spiritual—at the period. Still it is said expressly, in words ascribed to the Master: (a) that Joseph has been chosen as the first pastor of a new flock; (b) that his eminence is comparable explicitly in the New Law with that of Moses, the Leader of Israel, in the Law which had been now superseded; (c) that wherever he went, converting people and places, he was there to consecrate bishops and ordain priests, who would have power to bind and loose, even as the apostles; and that, in fine (d), to the younger Joseph was committed the government of souls, but to the elder that of bodies—the spiritual and temporal powers. It does not appear especially that the latter ever exercised his prerogative; but it may be recalled that whereas the first issue of the temporal power was after the spiritual kind, the second was after the material—on the one hand, Joseph the Second, who never married, whose office was devised by election; on the other, Galahad le Fort, who became an earthly King, who was anointed with the mystic oils by his brother Joseph, and who reigned gloriously. We may

speculate, but it will be all in vain, as to what was in the mind of the author when he substituted a son for the father, and, as if further to confuse the issues, gave both of them the same name. Whatever the explanation may be, from that moment when the younger man assumed the reins of government in the spiritual degree, the older ceased to retain even the shadow of power. As regards Galahad le Fort, his birth took place in Britain, and it was foretold to his brother in a vision that he would be the ancestor of a holy lineage of many men of religion, who should maintain the name of our Saviour in all honour and all power throughout these islands.

His great election and his association in the highest notwithstanding, the second Joseph was not intended to escape without the purgation of suffering. When he and his company were at Orcauz, in the district of Sarras, he was punished for attempting to bind a devil who was hovering over the dead bodies of certain Saracens; for this indiscretion, a great vindicating angel, with a marvellous countenance, drove a spear into his thighs and left the weapon therein. Subsequently, he was healed by another angel, who drew out the head of the spear. That which Joseph the Second should have contrived was apparently the conversion of the heathen, and in this having failed he was not to intervene between the destroyer and the victims. I mention these matters, firstly, because the office of wounding in the thighs recurs so continually in the romances, and, secondly, to note that for some obscure reason the injury in question never befalls the questing knights. The Lance used on this occasion is also important because of its after-history, for it was destined to prove the beginning of those great marvels which would occur in the land of Britain. At that time it is said that the Lance will drop blood and will strike—also in both thighs—another personage of the mystery, a knight full of charity and

chastity, who will suffer for as many years as Joseph had carried the weapon in his own wound for days. These, on the computation of the victim, proved to be twenty-two. The reference is here to King Pellehan, whose wounding is narrated, as we know, in the Huth Merlin, and who is healed in the Quest of Galahad; the wounding in question is the Dolorous Stroke inflicted by the poor knight Balyn; and it follows that the Book of the Holy Graal gives an origin of the Lance-Hallow which either differs from that of all other texts or it has omitted to mention that the angel of the judgment used the Spear of the Passion.

When the company of pilgrims at length reached the seashore, from which they must cross over to Britain, those who bore the Ark of the Graal on their shoulders walked over the intervening waters as if upon the dry land; of the others, those, who were in a state of grace crossed on the shirt of the second Joseph, as if on a raft; but the evil livers were left to fare as they could till ships could be found to carry them. I am not concerned with the events which followed the arrival of all and sundry in the promised land of their inheritance, but as regards Joseph the Second, his evangelical journeys through England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and, as it is, said, other strange countries, continue through the rest of the narrative, till at last he visits King Evalach in an abbey which had been founded by the latter and informs him of his own immediate death on the following day. This occurs accordingly at the hour of prime next morning, and he was buried in the abbey. So was Joseph the Second gathered into the Kingdom of the Father, and I pass now to the history of one who was designed as a witness through the centuries to that mystery which was from the beginning of the Christian times, who, in fine, could enter into his rest only through the arms of Galahad.

King Evalach received the name of Mordrains in baptism, and he remained in his kingdom after Joseph and his company continued their journey westward. The design of the story, as we have seen, is, however, to bring all its characters into la bloie Bretagne, and with this object it puts the most complicated machinery in motion for some of the palmary heroes. I must speak only concerning the term in its attainment, omitting in the present case the visions and the bodily transportations which befell Mordrains for his further instruction and purgation. He left Sarras ultimately and for ever, taking his wife with him and three hundred barons, and proceeding to the rescue of Joseph, whom a revelation had told him was imprisoned by the King of North Wales. His own realm was committed to the charge of the good knight Aganore, who was to be King in his place and so to remain if he did not return himself. He carried with him the white shield by the help of which he overcame the powers of Egypt, so that this also passed into the West and was kept in perpetuity as one of the Lesser Hallows. The journey took place by ship in the ordinary way; Joseph and his people were rescued in due course, and of all their enemies not one was left alive. For this providence public thanksgivings took place in the presence of the Graal, the Ark of the New Covenant being set open for the purpose. Evalach, who had experienced already the delicious effects which followed an exposition of the Sacred Vessel, desired to see with his I own eyes the interior of that Sanctuary from which the grace appeared to emanate. Though incapacitated by wounds received in the recent combats, he went to the door of the Ark and looked in. He saw the Holy Dish and the Chalice used for Eucharistic purposes. He saw also Bishop Joseph clothed in the beautiful vestments in which he had been consecrated by Christ. The romance says that no mind could conceive and much less the tongue express all that which was discovered to him. So far he had been kneeling with head and

shoulders bent forward, but he now arose and pressed nearer. In vain a voice issued from a burning cloud and warned him to desist; he advanced his head further, when paralysis and blindness overtook him. Of all his members he preserved only the use of his tongue, and the first words which he pronounced were those of adoration, even for the misfortune which had befallen him and which he also recognised that he deserved for surprising Divine Secrets. Even at the price of his health, and of age-long suffering thereafter, he would not have renounced the knowledge which he had attained in the Ark. One of the spectators asked what he had seen, and he answered: "The end of the world, the Marvel of all marvels, the Wisdom which is above wisdom, the King of every king." The last wish recorded on the part of Evalach, who henceforth was to be termed Mehaigné—that is to say, the Maimed King—was that he should be carried to a hermitage far from other habitation, as the world and he had no further need for one another. The second Joseph approved, because the day of Evalach's death would not be witnessed even by his children's children. He was carried on a litter to the hermitage and placed before the altar, where he would be in the presence of the Body of the Lord whenever Mass was celebrated thereat. Upon the site of the hermitage a fair abbey was built subsequently, and there Mehaigné remained till the coming of the younger Galahad—or, as the chronology of the story states, for 200 years. On the day which preceded the death of Joseph the Second that First Bishop of Christendom anointed the King's White Shield with his own blood, thus making a second cross upon it. It was reserved for the Knight Galahad, and should any one attempt to use it in the meantime he would repent it quickly. Mehaigné regained his sight so that he could behold this shield and the ceremony of the Unspotted Sacrifice.

With the story of Evalach there is connected that of his wife, Queen Sarracinte. While her husband was in warfare with the hosts descended from Egypt, she sent for Joseph to ask news concerning him, praying the apostle to intercede with God and to turn him to her own belief. Her mother had been converted through the offices of a certain hermit, and this, assisted by a vision, led to her own christening. Thereafter she was permitted to see a white box which was kept by the elder lady among treasures of jewels, and on being opened it proved to contain our Saviour under the element of bread. The mother received the Host, for it proved that she was departing this life, and she charged her daughter to keep the box secretly, and so have Christ every day in her company, as by a high dispensation had been permitted in her own case. When she was dead Queen Sarracinte went to the hermit, obtained Christ from him, as a sacred treasure, received the Host in the secret tabernacle and performed her devotions in its presence. Outside this amazing reservation, the point of importance is that although Joseph the Second was, by the hypothesis of the story, the first priest to consecrate the elements of the Eucharist, this was being done already—apparently long before—by a hermit in Sarras, who must have derived from the ordinary apostles. There is a suggestion of strange implicits in the names of the next character which I have placed on my list for inclusion in these major branches. He was Seraphe in his days as a paynim, carrying an axe keen as a serpent of fire and evoking in his need out of the invisible the vision of a white Knight mounted on a white horse, from which he dealt arch-natural destruction. In baptism, with the others who elected to be redeemed out of Sarras, he assumed the name of Nasciens, as if in a new generation he had been received into the militia crucifera evangelica, with a mission to enter the West and preach the Gospel with his sword. Seraphe was the son-in-law of Evalach the king—a

large man, strong-boned and broad-shouldered. Great and many were the miracles which brought him by slow stages to the Isles of Britain, but I will speak only of his sojourn on the Turning Island, from which he was rescued by that Mystic Ship of Solomon which fills so important an office in the Quest of Galahad.

Nasciens watched the vessel coming to him fast over the sea; it was richer than any other in the world, but no one was visible therein. He prepared to go on board, when he saw golden letters in the Chaldaic tongue giving warning that those who entered must be full of faith and clean in every respect. He was deterred at first, but after fervent prayer he entered, believing that it had been sent by God. He found therein a mysterious couch, having at its head a crown of gold and at the foot a marvellous sword, which was drawn ten inches out of the scabbard. Connected with the bed there were three spindles of strange colourings, though not as the result of artificial tincture; one was red, another white, and the third green. The story of the Ship is recounted at great length, and to express it as shortly as possible, the royal prophet of Israel had learned by a message from heaven that the last knight of his lineage would exceed all other chivalry as the sun outshines the moon. By the sage counsel of his wife, he built this ship to last for 4000 years, with the double object of making known to Galahad not only the royalty of his descent, but the fact that the wise king was aware of his birth in due time. The building was accomplished in six months, and then the Queen told him to provide King David's sword as an arm of might for his descendant. It was adorned with a new handle, pommel and sheath—all of great virtues—and a writing about it said that no man should draw it with impunity, save one who passed all others in prowess and perfection of virtue. Solomon would have also provided rich hangings, but was deterred by his wife, who testified that

they must be foul and of her own making, till another woman should, in the coming time, provide draperies that were glorious. The high office was reserved therefore for the most fair, faithful and unearthly sister of Perceval. In this connection, I may say that one of the side-problems of the whole narrative is that in spite of the wonderful counsel which Solomon receives from his wife, and in spite of the sacred, exalted meaning attached to the ship which was built by her directions, she is described as a woman who had deceived him and had embittered him regarding her sex.

The wooden bed seen by Nasciens was also placed in the Ship, and the sword was laid thereon as well as the crown, which was also that of David. By the same unaccountable directions the three spindles were of wood derived from the Tree of Knowledge in the manner here following. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit; the apple which she gathered brought with it a branch; the fruit was separated by Adam and the branch remained with Eve, who preserved it in their exile as a memorial of her misfortune. It was planted by her and became a great tree, which—both within and without—was white as snow. One day, when they were seated beneath it lamenting their unfortunate condition, Eve called it the Tree of Death, but a voice bade them comfort one another, for life was much nearer than death—whereupon they termed it by substitution the Tree of Life. They planted cuttings thereof, which grew and flourished; these were white like the parent tree, but after the conception of Abel they all turned green, bearing flowers and fruit. It was under the first tree that Abel was murdered—when it changed from green to red and no longer bore flowers or fruit; in later times it was called the Tree of Counsel and of Comfort.

When the Ship was fully garnished, Solomon placed a letter beneath the crown, giving warning to his descendant against the wiles of women and asking to be held in his remembrance; he recounted also the building. The Ship was launched; the king saw in a vision how a great company of angels descended and entered therein, as it sailed far out of sight.

Nasciens learned further that the Ship typified the Holy Church of Christ, and as the latter has only faith and truth therein, so in its symbol no faithless men could have part; confession and repentance were necessary qualifications to enter Church or Ship. The inscriptions in the Vessel were Holy Scripture; in a word, as the text suggested, it was a symbol rather than a ship. The sea over which it sailed signified the world; the bed was the Holy Altar, on which the Divine Son is consecrated and offered daily; in another sense, it was also the Cross of Christ. The white spindle meant Christ's virginity, the red one His humility and love, while the green one signified His patience.

So far as regards the Ship of Solomon, and in respect of Nasciens himself, before closing his story, I must speak of two visitations which befell him. Soon after his conversion he was filled with the same desire to know the Mysteries of the Graal for which Mordrains paid afterwards so heavily and yet was so well recompensed; he raised up the paten which covered the Sacred Vessel and by his own account he beheld the foundations of knowledge and religion, the beginning of all bounty and all gentility. We may remember here the old poet who said that Christ was "The first true gentleman that ever breathed"; and doubtless the sacramental mystery is also a mystery of courtesy. Nasciens was blinded for his presumption and remained in this affliction till the healing of Joseph the Second from the wounding of the angel. His second visitation occurred on

board the Ship of Solomon, wherein he had been united with his son and subsequently with King Mordrains. To the latter he showed the Sword of David, but when the King took it in his hands the weapon broke in two pieces and rejoined as suddenly. At this moment they were warned to leave the Ship, and in the act of obeying Nasciens was wounded grievously between the shoulders by the Sword. He regarded this as a chastisement in loving-kindness for his sins, but the episode is made more intelligible by another codex, which shows how he was tempted to draw the Sword from its sheath and use it as his defence against a giant when no other weapon was available. It broke in the mere brandishing and so remained, but it was rejoined, unaccountably enough, by the handling of Mordrains. Towards the close of the story, a certain King Varlans too finds the Sword of David in the Ship of Solomon and uses it to slay Lambor, who was one of the twelve sons of Brons and at that time Keeper of the Graal. There followed great sorrow and suffering in the lands of both rulers; both were ruined by the stroke; and Varlans, on restoring the weapon to the Ship and therein sheathing it, fell down dead. It will be seen that a kind of enchantment thus befalls these parts of Britain, though the Book of the Holy Graal is rather the cycle of adventures than that of enchantments. The Sword was to remain sheathed until drawn by a maiden—that is to say, by the sister of Perceval.

There is another story of a sword which belongs properly to a different branch of the romance, but it may be mentioned in this place. Joseph of Arimathæa is wounded, as usual, in the thigh by a false steward, leaving half of the sword in the wound. With the upper half Joseph heals a Saracen Knight, whom he has converted newly, and then uses it to withdraw the point from his own flesh; it comes out unstained by blood, and Joseph foretells that the two parts shall not be joined together till he arrives who shall end the

adventures of the Graal. This is the Hallow which is resoldered by Galahad at Corbenic when the Holy Quest has ended.

So far as Nasciens is concerned the remainder of the story deals more especially with his deeds of valour in connection with the conversion of Britain, which he reached at length by ship and was instrumental in bringing over those who had been left on the further shore by reason of their departure from grace. His death took place prior to that of the second Joseph, and he was buried in the abbey of white monks where Mordrains awaited his end.

Celidoine, the son of Nasciens, is in one sense a lesser character, but in the symbolism of the story he seems to stand for something that is important. He is said to have been born under the happiest of starry influences and was himself a reader of the stars, from which he drew presages and on one occasion ensured a Christian victory in consequence. The meaning of his name itself is explained to be the Gift of Heaven. One day Mordrains had a vision concerning him, and therein he was represented by a lake, into which Christ came and washed His hands and feet. This signified that God visited Celidoine daily because of his good thoughts and actions. Nine streams issued from the lake, typifying the boy's descendants. Into eight of them Christ also passed and made a similar lustration. Now the ninth was troubled at the beginning—foul even and turbulent—but in the middle it was translucent as a jewel and at the mouth more sweet and pleasant than thought can picture. Before entering this stream Christ laid aside all His vestments and was immersed wholly—that is to say, in the good works of Galahad. The troubled source signified the stain on that knight by reason of his conception, and the removal of the vestments meant that Christ would

discover to the haut prince all his mysteries, permitting him in fine to penetrate the entire secrets of the Graal.

The external life of Celidoine, who reached Britain by himself in a boat, does not concern us except in broadest outline. As his father wrought with the sword of earthly knighthood in the cause of Christ, so did the son fight with the sword of the spirit—that is to say, with the tongue of eloquence, and paynim clerks and sages could not withstand him. Among many others he converted the Persian King Label and was married to his daughter. As he was a prodigy from the beginning and was knighted in his eighth year, he is comparable to a sanctified Merlin.

One section of the romance which certainly calls to be included among the major branches, and may even be considered by some as important of all, has been reserved here till the last, and this is the permanent House of the Holy Graal. During the keepership of Joseph the Second the Vessel, and the Ark which contained it, shared in the travels of the apostolate, but it found a place of rest during the reign of his successor—who was Alain, as we shall learn later. With a hundred companions he had proceeded to the realm of Forayne, where the King was a knight of worth, but a paynim and also a leper. He inquired whence his visitors came, and was told from Jerusalem; he asked further whether his disease could be cured, and was assured that it was more than possible if he forsook the evil law and became a Christian. To this the King consented, and after his conversion and baptism he was healed by the sight of the Graal, this being the only occasion on which the Vessel was shown to a stranger. It is important also to note that though Alain was the Keeper of the Hallows, he was not an ordained priest and he employed one for the purpose of baptizing. It follows, therefore, that the episcopal functions of Joseph the Second did not devolve on

his successor, and it is certain also that there was no sacerdotal character attributed to the still later wardens—or, among others, to King Pelles, who was the Keeper in the days of Galahad. The new convert was christened Alphasan, and he proposed to build a castle for the reception of the Graal, to marry his daughter to Joshua, the brother of Alain, and to make him the heir of his kingdom, if the Graal remained therein. Hereto Alain consented; the castle was built; and at its completion they found an instruction emblazoned in red letters on one of the gates, saying that it should be called Corbenic, the meaning of which, as we know, is the Treasury of the Holy Vessel. This is on the authority of the text and it is not an unreasonable persuasion to believe that the author knew what he intended to convey by the word which he seems to have compounded; but as it has not given universal satisfaction we have variants, of which some are as follows: Carbonek = Caer Banawc—the Castle of the Corners, or the Square Castle, but this has nothing to commend it; Corbenic = De Corpore Benedicto, which is high phantasy, but is charming in that sense; Cor-arbenig = the Sovereign Chair, which is perfect past all desiring if the House of the Graal was the seat of a secret doctrine.

The Holy Vessel was placed in a fair chamber, as if on an Altar of Repose, and on the next Sunday Joshua was married to the King's daughter. His coronation also took place, and in the feast which followed the company was replenished by the grace of the Graal with all manner of delicacies. That same night the King made the fatal mistake of sleeping in the palace which he had built, and he awakened to witness a Mass of the Graal, celebrated in his room apparently. It was, I suppose, at the term of the service that the Vessel is said to have been removed suddenly, and there appeared one wearing the likeness of humanity but composed as if it were of flame. He upbraided

the King for reposing in a House so holy as that where the Vessel was worshipped, and as a warning to all who should come after he smote him through both thighs with a sword. The sword was withdrawn, the figure vanished, and Alphasan died ten days afterwards. It was in this way, and at first by the voice of the victim, that Corbenic came to be called the Palace of Adventure; many knights attempted to sleep therein subsequently, but they were always found dead in the morning, one strong hero of Arthur's chivalry excepted, and he suffered for it otherwise.

CHAPTER THREE THE MINOR BRANCHES OF THE BOOK OF THE HOLY GRAAL

The things which remain over from the last section for consideration at the term of this inquest are chiefly derivatives from the metrical romance of De Borron, including those further adventures and histories which he promised to provide if he could. It was not sufficient for the putative Walter Map that England was the spiritual patrimony guaranteed to the eldest son of the new Church of Christ and the first Bishop of Christendom, but that he might exalt it further he transferred thereto several palmary episodes which in the work of his precursor had been allocated to the regions on the hither side of Syria, or wherever he brought the company of Joseph to its first prolonged halt. The most important of these postponements is the doom which befell Moses; it is also told differently, and is connected with a collateral story concerning one who was fated to suffer a similar punishment, of which the Lesser Chronicles know nothing. This personage is Simeon, who is sometimes said to be the father of Moses, and he is first referred to when the company are crossing the channel on their way to Britain. Simeon and his son sink then into the water because they have broken their vows of purity, and they have to be saved by the others. Long after

the arrival of the whole fellowship at the term of their voyaging we hear first of the Graal table, at which Joseph the Second and Brons sit together with a wide space between them; but the explanation of the empty seat differs from that of De Borron, signifying the place occupied by Christ of the Last Supper. It can be so occupied only by one of greater sanctity than are those at the Second Table. It follows that for the purposes of this romance the consecration of Galahad was greater than that of the first Bishop of Christendom, who held the warrant of his ordination from Christ Himself. When the information was made public, Simeon and Moses speculated as to its truth and reason. Being sinners, they regarded it as false, and Moses undertook to occupy the seat if permission could be obtained from Joseph the Second The latter was told by those who were parties to the conspiracy that a man counted among the sinners was worthy to take his seat at the Graal. Joseph was much astonished, knowing under what circumstances he had crossed over to Britain, but his informants persisted, and though he could not believe in the goodness of Moses, he gave him leave to try. This was without reference to the voice of the Graal, which was consulted on the occasion according to Robert de Borron, and it illustrates my previous statement that in the later romance the Sacred Vessel does not pronounce oracles or act as a touchstone. Joseph, however, warned Moses himself, when the time came for the trial, not to make the attempt, unless he knew that he was worthy, as he would repent thereof, seeing that it was the place of the Son of God. Moses was struck with terror but still persisted, and, before he had sat long, seven burning hands came from Heaven, set him on fire like a dry bush, and carried him off through the air. Shame fell upon his sinful companions, who inquired whether he was lost or saved; they were told that they should see him again, and that then they would know his fate.

At a later period, when the company were approaching the forest of Darnantes, they were directed that they must enter therein, and were told that they should see Moses. In a valley they came presently upon a great house and, passing through open gates, they entered a great hall, wherein burned a great fire. Out of the fire came a voice, which begged Joseph to pray for the speaker, that his sufferings might be alleviated by the mercy of God. This was the voice of Moses. Joseph the Second, who was present, demanded whether he was saved or lost, and the answer was that still he had hope of grace. He had been transported by devils, who meant certainly to plunge him in hell; but a hermit compelled them to release him, as in spite of his sin he had not deserved endless torment. The fire was destined to encompass him till he was delivered by that good knight who would end the adventures of the Graal. Alain, who was also present, asked more specifically who he was, and was told that it was his cousin Moses. Simeon also spoke to him, when he was advised, and Canaan—another of the evil fellowship—that they should seek to be better than they were, and to be cleansed from sin by the Bishop. Joseph the Second and Alain prayed for Moses, that his suffering might be lessened. A beneficent rain then came down into the fire, softening its fervour by extinguishing half thereof, so that the poor sufferer was eased greatly. Simeon inquired how long such flames might endure, and was told by Moses that it would not be so long as he deserved, because he would be released by Galahad, who would not alone end the adventures of the Graal but all those of Britain.

In spite of the warning which came to them from a source that illustrated so bitterly the neglect of warnings, Simeon and Canaan not only remained without grace but made haste to complete with that which remained for them to do in the order of heinous offence. Joseph of Arimathæa and

some part of the Christian cohort had now entered Scotland, where we have seen long ago that they were sustained by the Holy Graal. In this benefit of refectation Simeon and Canaan were precluded by their condition from sharing, with the result that they had nothing to eat for two days and nights. Simeon claimed that he had done more for God than either Joseph or Petrus, and that he was suffering for their sins; on the other hand, Canaan declared that he was punished for the deficiencies of his own immediate kindred. Simeon covenanted to take vengeance on Petrus and Canaan on his brethren. The issue was that, grievously and almost incurably, Petrus was wounded in the neck with a poisoned knife, and the twelve brothers of Canaan were despatched with a sword. The visitation of these crimes is varied strangely in respect of severity, and it illustrates, I think, some vague and undeclared sanctity in the mission of Petrus. If so, it is a reflection from Robert de Borron, though in the later story there is no brief from Heaven, or other warrant, as the evident seal of mission. In any case, he who only wounded Petrus was transported, like Moses, by spirits of fire, while he who was a twelve-fold fratricide was, by the comparative mercy of earthly judgment, only buried alive, with time to repent before death overtook him almost in the ordinary course. Long and long afterwards, when Galahad le Fort, who had become King of Wales, was riding through that country, he saw a great fire burning in a dry ditch. A voice came therefrom which proved to be that of Simeon, who was expiating in this manner his outrage on Petrus. At the same time—and again like Moses—he was not beyond redemption, and he entreated his auditor to found a place of religion, wherein monks could pray for his soul. Galahad le Fort promised to erect an abbey and to be buried himself therein. Simeon said further that his torment would cease when a pure and worthy knight should come and extinguish the flames. This would

be he by whom the adventures of the Holy Graal should be brought at last to their term.

It is towards the close of the story that Petrus is first mentioned in the Book of the Holy Graal, and the reference is at that point which corresponds rather thinly to the institution of the Second Table. It is he who inquires why there is a vacant seat left thereat, and who is told that it is the place of Christ. After the assault of Simeon, the wound of Petrus was examined and a healing by herbs was attempted, but this did more harm than good. He was at length left in the charge of a single priest, while the company proceeded on their way; but, seeing that he expected to die, he asked to be carried to the seashore and to be placed in a ship which was found lying thereby, with its sails set. The priest was not allowed to go further, and the vessel put out presently with its solitary occupant. He was taken to the Isle of Orkney, where ruled the pagan King Orcaut, whose daughter witnessed his arrival. She went on board the ship and so contrived that Petrus was healed in the end by a Christian prisoner who was in the hands of her father. As the issue of the whole adventure the heathen King was converted; Petrus married the daughter; he lived a long and worthy life as the successor of Orcaut; and he had a valiant knight for his own heir. He died in fulness of years and was buried at Orkney, in the church dedicated to Saint Philip.

It will be seen that if the author of the Book of the Holy Graal designed in this account to supply the missing branch of Robert de Borron concerning Petrus, he again—and quite manifestly—told the wrong story, for setting aside all question of the written warrant, the true destination of Petrus was not Orkney but Avalon, and there is no correspondence otherwise.

In nearly all those incidents which, from other points of view, are similar to some of Robert de Borron, the part assigned by the poem to Joseph of Arimathæa is transferred to the son in that prose romance which is its wresting rather than its extension. A notable instance is the demand for advice by Brons concerning his twelve boys. It is late in the story and long after the arrival of the pilgrims in Britain that the question arises which appears pregnant with consequence in the metrical romance. Brons has been himself so insignificant throughout that his name appears scarcely, though he is entitled to sit with Joseph the Second, each on one side of the vacant seat at the Second Table. As in the earlier text, eleven of the sons expressed a desire to marry, while the twelfth elected to lead a life of virginity. Joseph the Second manifested great joy at the choice thus made and foreshadowed the reward which was to follow. It is indicated further by the fact that the son, and not Brons, was directed to fish in the lake and obtain that slender catch which gave him thenceforward the title of the Rich Fisher. In this case, however, it was used by a miracle to feed those whose desert did not allow them to share in the graces and favours of the Holy Table. When Joseph the Second was dying there stood Alain by his bedside, and, being asked why he was weeping, he answered that it was because he was to be left like a sheep that has lost its shepherd. He was then told that he should be the shepherd after Joseph, having the lordship of the Sacred Vessel, with power to deliver subsequently to another inheritor full of grace and goodness, on condition only that the Hallow remained in the land.

We come in this manner to speak of the successions and genealogies, and in the first place concerning the Keepers of the Graal. Alain, by a curious disposition, died on the same day as Alphasan, the builder of Corbenic, and they were both buried in the church of that city dedicated to Our

Lady. The text at this point is a little vague in expression and has been interpreted wrongly, but the succeeding warden was evidently Joshua—that brother of Alain who was most loved by him. He was succeeded in due course by his son Eminadap, who married the daughter of a King of Great Britain and had Carceloys as issue. He in turn begot Manuiel, and from him sprang Lambor, whose death and that which followed I have mentioned previously. This was the first Maimed King of the Graal, and on him followed immediately one who was the Maimed King par excellence of suffering and miracle of final healing—that is to say, Pellehan. But the Book of the Holy Graal says that his wounding was in the battle of Rome, and it knows nothing therefore of the Dolorous Stroke inflicted by Balyn. Seeing, however, that both texts testify that Galahad will heal, and he only, I think it must be inferred that the two accounts refer to the same person, who must be distinguished from King Pelles, though there is an inclination in some criticism to conclude otherwise, and I have shared it tentatively. The genealogy is quite clear that King Pelles was son of Pellehan, and there is not any real difficulty about the son succeeding in the life of the father, as this occurs in the case of Joseph the Second and is the rule rather than the exception in the counter-succession of the Perceval Quests. It follows from the Book of the Holy Graal that four of the Kings whom I have enumerated were termed Rich Fishers in succession and that all of them reigned in Terre Forayne, which the Vulgate Merlin terms—or for which it substitutes—Lytenoys.

The other genealogies are useful only in so far as they show the descent of the persons-in-chief who appear in the Greater Chronicles. The most important is that of Nasciens, which leads up through many names—but they are names only—to King Ban of Benoic, the father of Lancelot, and hence to Lancelot himself, as well as Galahad. The haut

prince was therefore descended on the male side from the royal line of Sarras, over which he reigned himself after the Quest was finished; on the female side he was descended from Joseph of Arimathæa, through Galahad le Fort, as the Romance of Lancelot shows. Sir Gawain is also represented as coming from this root, which was that of King David, but his descent was through Petrus, the genealogy of whom is clouded rather deeply in the text, as it is indeed in the romance of De Borron.

At the conclusion of the Book of the Holy Graal the story professes to turn to the life of Merlin. Two of its codices contain a long interspersed digression concerning the two countries belonging to Mordrains and Nasciens after they had departed therefrom. Their power and influence were much increased under Grimaud, the son of Mordrains. When Sarras was destroyed, with the exception of the Spiritual Palace, it was rebuilt more splendidly than ever. These things do not concern us, for in dealing with the great prolix romance I think that my summary has been confined, in accordance with my design, to those matters which belong to the Mystery of the Graal as it is manifested in the Greater Chronicles, and where it has been possible to the Eucharistic side of that Mystery as the most holy motive of all my long research. On this subject there is one thing further to say. The doctrine of transubstantiation, as it is presented in the Book of the Holy Graal, and its continual transition into the notion of physical sustenance, are things which scandalise rather than discounsel the soul; but as we saw in the poem of De Borron that Eucharist and Reliquary were alike understood spiritually, so here it will be found in the last sifting that the spiritual side also emerges and becomes at times prominent. When Joseph the Second, in obedience to the heavenly voice, departed from Sarras and its King, that he might preach the new faith to the Gentiles, it came about in the course of

the journey that provisions were wanting. In this extremity he knelt before the Ark, wherein. was the Holy Vessel, and implored the help of God. Following the directions which he received, cloths were laid on the greensward, and the people took their places. The elder Joseph, pursuing his care of the physical bodies, ordained that his son should take the Graal in his hands and follow him round the cloths while he circumambulated three times, when—this being accomplished—all who were pure of heart would be filled with the rare sweetness of the world. This office took place at the hour of prime; the father and son sat down with a vacant place between them—as if something were lacking which at a fitting time subsequently would make perfect all holy ministry; the Vessel was covered with paten and corporal; and the result was that those who were privileged to take part were filled with Divine Grace, “so that they could neither conceive nor desire anything beyond it.” That was a refectio in which material nourishment shared not at all, and though the episode does not occur in all the codices, there is something that corresponds to its equivalent. An instance in point is found in Mordrains, the King, who, after he has attained all earthly knowledge, and has received as the price of attainment the orbicular wound of Plato, is maintained through the centuries by the Eucharist, as Amfortas in the German cycle and the alter ego of both in the Conte del Graal. There are otherwise indications, and they obtain through the Greater Chronicles, that the proximity of the Holy Graal transformed the earthly festival into an experience in extasis and the good things here below become the *bona Domini in terra viventium*.

