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

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[Podcast 14]

BOOK SIX THE GERMAN CYCLE OF THE HOLY GRAAL

[continues]

CHAPTER FOUR THE CROWN OF ALL ADVENTURES

The implicit, I must suppose, of each succeeding quest was that the earlier singer of le meilleur conte qui sot conté en cour royale had told the wrong story, and that some far higher flight of pure romance must justify the material which came into the hands of each. The most interesting contrasted instance is the Longer Prose Perceval put forward as an alternative to the Quest of Galahad, as if by one who cleaved to the old tradition concerning the hero of the achievement and yet had every intention of profiting by the high light of sanctity which overshone the symbol of Galahad. The least comprehensible contrasted instance is the competition instituted in the name of Gawain by Heinrich von dem Turlin in his poem of Diu Crône. The ambition seems so impossible after the Parsifal of Wolfram, but that poem was not appreciated—on account of its setting chiefly—by the general profession of minstrelsy. The instance further was, in its way, a certain justification

of Chrétien, who was followed in several respects and often appealed to by Heinrich. Diu Crône owes something also to the lost poem of Guiot, but whether by derivation through Wolfram or in a more direct manner is uncertain. That it justifies any claim to existence I do not think, but this notwithstanding it is a very curious romance, so much under the veils of enchantment that the whole action seems transferred into a land of faerie, while the gifts and dotations which are offered to the elect hero might have made any quest of the Graal almost a work of superfluity on his part. In place of the Castle of Maidens there is pictured a wandering island of the sea wherein dwell virgins only, and the queen of this wonderful people, exercising a royal privilege, offers the possession of herself in marriage and the rule of her kingdom to Gawain as her chosen knight; yet if this be incompatible with his purpose, she will tolerate their parting at need and will bestow upon him, as her token of goodwill, an elixir of unfading youth. The hero exercises his admitted power of choice in favour of the second alternative, and with good reason probably, since the island was doubtless one of those dreaming places where a thousand years are even as a single day, and after a moon of sorcery he might have issued bearing on his shoulders an age past all renewing, even by the Holy Graal.

The keynote of the story is in one sense the disqualification of Perceval, who—because he had failed once—had forfeited his vocation forever. The opportunity is transferred to Gawain, and Heinrich is indebted to Chrétien for the substance of those inventions by which he is covenanted to enter on the Quest of the Holy Graal. We, on the other hand, may be indebted to his own imagination for the aids that the powers of Fairyland combine to provide by means of telesmas and other wonder-working objects which safeguard the way of the Quest. Seeing that the failure of Perceval to ask the all-important question is held

insufficient as a warning in the case of Gawain, when he seeks to follow in his footsteps, he is reinforced by a particular caution at the Castle of Wonders. What he receives is indeed a dual counsel: he is not only to ask and to learn, but, in order that he may behold the Graal, he is urged to abstain at the table from all refreshment in wine. The maiden who proffers this advice proves to be her who carries the Sacred Vessel in the pageant at the Castle thereof. The analogy by opposition hereto is Gautier's story of the trick played upon Perceval by the Daughter of the Fisher King when she carries off the stag's head and brachet to punish Perceval for not asking the question.

We have had full opportunity to appreciate Gawain's share in the great adventurous experiment within the horizon of Wolfram's poem; we have seen also in Chrétien how and why, as a part of his own vindication, he set forth to seek the Bleeding Lance, but the quest proved a failure. Except the promiscuous proposal and fleeting undertaking in the Galahad Quest, Gawain does not figure as a knight in search of the Graal in the French romances till we come to the period of the Longer Prose Perceval. Even in Gautier the fullest account of his visit to the Castle of Hallows is apart from all notion of intention, as he is simply a gallant of the period in attendance on Guinevere, who herself is awaiting the return of King Arthur after the reduction of Castle Orguellous. On the other hand, Heinrich's Diu Crône pictures him expressly, and as if in real earnest, seeking to achieve the Graal, enduring also many adventures because of it. After the poem of Wolfram, his success does not seem to improve upon his failure in the other stories it is by way of superfluity, and it may be said almost that Heinrich takes him for another, as he was also hailed for a moment in Gautier's poem.

In the course of his progress Gawain arrived at a bountiful and smiling land, as if it were the precincts of an earthly paradise, and on the further borders thereof he beheld a vast fiery sword keeping the entrance to a fortress with walls translucent as glass. I do not know, because it is difficult always to adjudicate in his case, why he should have regarded this wonder in the light of an evil omen, but this is how it impressed him, and he missed perhaps one among the greatest adventures when he retired so incontinently—whether it was a way of entrance into the higher Eden or into the fascination of a false paradise. Great as are the accomplished enterprises of Graal literature, I think that greater still are some of those which therein are hinted only, remaining unachieved or unrecorded. It seems clear that this fortress, at no indefinite distance from the Graal Castle, is that which Perceval would have entered in Gerbert's poem, and his incontinent eagerness contrasts favourably with the terror and the flight of Gawain. The Knight continued to traverse a land flowing with milk and honey, and he rode for yet twelve days, when he came upon Lancelot and Calogreant —another companion of the Round Table—both in a manner on the Quest. So these three shadows of those who should finish the experiment in utter reality came at last to their bourne. It may have been a region of sorcery which encompassed that abode, which we know to have been the House of the Dead, but it was assuredly like the intermediate region between the life of this world and the life A everlasting. There are few things in literature which savour so strangely of that visionary astral region, full of great simulations and full of false joy, which does not attempt to conceal the bitter heart of sorrow. The knightly company depicted on the meadow without the burg, performing evolutions in pastime, was like the "midnight host of spectres pale "which "beleaguered the walls of Prague." But the places of death are not places of silence;

the burg itself had a noisy throng within it, and so had the castle or palace—that Ghost's House and House of the Dead alive. The companions Were brought under safe guidance into the hall in chief, which was like the Kabalistic sphere of Venus—a pomp of external splendour, heavy with the crushed-out fragrance of heaped roses—as some mansion in an eastern fairyland. In the Hall of Roses there was seated the host who was to receive them—another patient sufferer of the ages, diverted in his pitiful weariness by youths playing chess at his feet. That game is a feature which in one or another form is inevitable in all the stories till the highest of the high quests intervenes and makes void so many of the old elements. It is played elsewhere by pieces having self-moving powers, but here it is played by the dead amidst shadowy sport and raillery; betwixt the one and the other there is perhaps suggested some vaguely mystic side of the old war in mimicry.

The questing knights had not been received to no purpose; there was a work which they were required to perform, supposing that they were properly prepared; for the unspelling quest is followed even to the grave. Lord or prince of the Castle, it is not said till the close whether the host is old or young; he is not termed the Rich Fisher and his genealogy is unknown. So also are most antecedents of the Hallows. The guests were treated royally and were entertained at a banquet, but at that time the Master of the House neither ate nor drank. On his part, remembering the warning which he received, Gawain ate only, and this in spite of solicitations on his entertainer's side, the doom of whom seems to have been working strongly, seeing that it drew to its term, and he was compelled to entreat that which would operate against his salvation. Lancelot and the other companion quenched their thirst with wine, which overcame them immediately, as if it were nepenthe devised for that express purpose, and they fell asleep. The lord of

the Castle fulfilled his office zealously, and again tempted Gawain; but, finding no better success, he desisted, and thereafter began the high pageant, the foremost in which were maidens, and she who was fairest among all—the crowned priestess who carried the Most Holy Reliquary—was recognised as her who had counselled him previously in the Quest—counselled him above all, as did other wandering messengers in the romances of Perceval—not to forget the question did ever he come to the place. If he could not be compelled therefore, he could at least be prompted, and the convention recalls that indicible word which ex hypothesi cannot be spoken or written and yet is communicated to the initiate of many mysteries, when he finds that he has been acquainted always therewith.

Before the company—which was numerous within as without—had taken their places at the table, a page of the chambers brought in the Hallow of the Sword and laid it at the feet of the Master. The inference is that this was the fatal weapon which, in the midst of the strife of kinsmen, had somehow brought woe on the Castle, but the particulars are not given, and of itself the weapon would be nothing to our purpose, except that it is the antithesis of other swords in the legends. Not only was it perfect then but would so remain for ever; it was adjudged to the successful quester and would break in no peril—an office of relaxed observance which shortened and simplified the Quest.

Now, the company in the Castle had feasted gallantly, like the guests who sat with the Master; though dead, they yet spoke—and that, it would seem, volubly—interchanging questions and answers, as if in mockery of the real question; but the strong wine of the banquet had no effect on them, and the Lord of the plenty meanwhile, as I have said, had fasted. But the appearance of the Graal

procession was the signal that he was to receive a certain shadow of nourishment—as if, after some necromantic supper, a disqualified Eucharist were communicated to one who had not partaken previously. We know already that the Reliquary contained the semblance of a Host, as from the Lance there exuded blood—neither more nor less, in this case, than those three mystic drops which ensanguine all the legends and connect them, as if undesignedly, with other and older mysteries. In the story of Wolfram the first nourishment drawn from the Graal at the banquet in the Castle Hall is described as bread, and Heinrich—following the prototype of Guiot or profiting by a caution in respect of the Feeding Dish—converts the sacred object into a simple ciborium. The Master of the Castle received therefore in bread and in the colouration of wine; but of the bread he took only a third part, as if it were the efficient oblation at the sacrifice of the Mass. There is no reason to think that these were consecrated elements, but there seems to have been a substituted Eucharist, in which the dead might be supposed to share, so that, prince or lord—or whatever it is right to term him—he was fed sacramentally and super-substantially in some sense, for this his only nourishment was administered once in a year. Therefore Gawain arrived at a happy season, to see and to speak; and on seeing these things, he overflowed in himself with the wonder and the mystery of it all, so that, acting on the spur of the moment, importunately he asked that which was vital to those who were suffering from death in life—the mystic question, the most conventional of all formulæ: What does it mean? There was no effect to begin with—no sudden change, I mean, as from life to death or from death to life; but if before there was the chaffer and traffic of light talk at a feasting, now it was the hubbub of a joy beyond suppression, as if the closing at last were taken in a great grade of long sorrow.

Gawain has asked indeed, but as regards the secrets of the Graal he is not told anything; it has come forth out of mystery and it passes away therein. It is said to be God's mystery—one of the Secrets of the King, and Heinrich has written about it—abscondere bonum est ["it is good to hide"]. Of the woe, the wasting and the endurance, when brother warred upon brother, he learned something, and we have heard enough; of Perceval's failure and the deepened misery therefrom he was told also, and the condition of release resident in the question. But the king himself was guiltless, and so also were the maidens; he, however, was dead with all the men of his household, but they were alive in the flesh and they would go forth in the morning. When that dawned presently, the released speaker vanished, the Graal also with him, and its mystery, never to be seen more.

The following points may be noticed in conclusion of this part: (a) There is no question anywhere of feeding properties in the Sacred Reliquary, except as regards the king—and him it feeds sacramentally; (b) the Spear does not distil blood until it is laid on a table, with the head apparently over the salver; (c) the recession of the Graal seems to have been adjudged because it has performed its work of feeding the dead Master, keeping him in the semblance of life, and once this office was perfected it went like a ghost. After what manner the variations which are introduced thus into the shifting pageant of the legend can be said to elucidate its object will not be determined easily. The doom that involves the dwellers in the Castle changes the symbolism but certainly does not exalt it. The romance, for the rest, is the work of one who has resolved to give the palm to Gawain at the express expense of Perceval, to the knight of this world in place of the knight celestial. It is the experiment of an inventor who has adapted some old

materials to another purpose, at once indeterminate and undesirable.

The date ascribed to the poem is about 1220, and its ingarnering as a whole is regarded as a little chaotic. It reaches some 30,000 verses, and though we hear generally concerning King Arthur’s Court and the Round Table, Gawain is the hero-in-chief. After his completion of the Graal Quest, various pageants of chivalry bring him back to his uncle and the fellowship, the story in this manner reaching its natural close.

CHAPTER FIVE THE TITUREL OF ALBRECHT VON SCHARFENBERG

The secret doctrine of Guiot de Provence and the high tradition of the starry heavens not only failed to convince the minstrel world in Germany concerning the indefectible titles of Parsifal, with its root-matter written in the starry heavens—of which our example is Heinrich—but it failed to hold even those who had no alternative and more elect hero to offer—of which the example, within certain limits, is Albrecht. It came about that at the end of that century which had seen the light of Wolfram there arose the succeeding light of him who was to follow, and, having regard to the welcome which he received, the German world was evidently looking for another. He came to announce—like the French romances before him—that the Graal was taken away. Albrecht von Scharfenberg was a Bavarian poet, who wrote about 1270. He undertook to carry the whole experiment to its term, which he did in a vast poem of 4,000 verses, written in the obscure style of his predecessor-in-chief, whence—and for other reasons—the distinct individualities were confused for a considerable period. He incorporated various materials, for there was firstly the intervention of an anonymous and unknown poet,

who seems to have undertaken but not completed the task, and, secondly, there were certain so-called Titurel fragments which were the work of Wolfram himself. Of the first I can say nothing, except that he is believed to have projected a complete chronicle of the Graal and its keepers, drawing for this purpose on the source used by Wolfram. It is a matter of speculation at what point he broke off and for what reason, but his mantle fell upon Albrecht. Of the materials left by Wolfram we know all that is needful, and they are quite unconsonant with our purpose. They are two in number, and the opening lines of the first fragment explain why they have been termed a Titurel poem. They are really, by Wolfram's evidence, parts of the early history of Sigune and Schionatulander—respectively, the cousin of Parsifal and her lover, whose embalmed body she carries with her so long in the Parsifal poem. Contrary to the evidence of this, it appears from the fragments that the lover met his death in satisfying a whim of his mistress. Albrecht, or his precursor, incorporated these fragments, and in many ways otherwise the Younger Titurel, as it is called, while it covers the same ground, also supplants the earlier knightly epic and carries the history of the Graal—as I have indicated—to its final term. I have explained that the lateness of the poem has excluded it, in the mind of scholarship, from the canon of the Graal; but it has some aspects of importance, and its consideration will help us better to understand the position and claim of the German cycle. To that cycle it makes a real contribution, and it differs in this respect from the metrical romance of Lohengrin, which is ascribed to the year 1300. This is an important document for the legend of the Swan Knight, but its allusions to the Holy Graal are mostly of the occasional kind. As such, however, they offer a complete revolution of the whole Arthurian cycle in respect of the close in disaster of all those gracious times of chivalry. The star of the king's destiny does not close in blood and warfare—

“In dark Dundagel by the northern sea”—

owing to that frightful fatality by which Arthur begat Mordred on the body of his own half-sister. Other stars intervened in their power to avert the doom and vengeance for that which was done in ignorance. In place of the dubious mercy of healing at the hands of Morgan le Fay in the mystic island of Avalon, the king—at the head of his whole chivalry—carries the Graal to India, and he and they are its guardians even to this day in the remote, undeclared places of the eastern world.

The Titurel differs also from that interned manuscript concerning Parsifal and the Round Table which is preserved among the treasures of the Vatican—being the sole copy that is known. It was written a little earlier than the year 1336, and it incorporates Manessier’s conclusion of the Conte del Graal with materials derived from the Parsifal and Titurel. It is therefore a work of compilation, and does not as such concern us.

Now, one important point with regard to the poem of Albrecht is that he rejected the antecedent history of the Holy Graal bequeathed by his earlier German peer in poetry and reverted for his thesis concerning it to the more orthodox traditions of Northern France. In a word, the sacred object is no longer a stone, whether that in the crown of Lucifer or that which consumes the Phœnix and at the same time incubates the egg which the bird has laid. It is the Eucharistic vessel of Joseph, with whom its history begins, so that once again—and but once in the German cycle—we can kneel in spirit while Mass is being said in the Sanctuary, looking towards that time when we also, at the secret words of consecration, shall behold the five changes.

The Titurel claims to give the perfect and rectified history of the Vessel and its Wardens from the beginning to the end thereof. Considering that the first Graal King is the real centre of interest, an excessive space is devoted to Sigune and her lover—but this I refer to the anonymous poet who preceded. At the inception it gives the generations of the secret dynasty from the days of Vespasian, when Berillus the Cappadocian, who had great possessions and was moreover of the Christian faith, took service with the Roman general at the siege of Jerusalem and followed in his train subsequently when he was called to the throne of the empire. Berillus married Argensilla, the daughter of the emperor, and a considerable part of France was thereafter assigned to him in fief. He had as issue Titurisone, who married Elizabel of Aragon and of her—after long years and precious offerings in pilgrimage at the Holy Sepulchre, because of their childless condition—there was born Titurel, this name being, as one writer has indicated, a contraction of the parental names. It will be seen that the genealogy takes back the so-called Angevin dynasty to a very early period of the Christian centuries, as well as to those districts which abut on the Holy Fields. The remaining succession in the keepership follows the indications of Wolfram, and the main outlines of the Quest are also followed in substance, with no remarkable exception. Wolfram knew nothing of that sister of Parsifal who attained to such spiritual heights in the Quest of Galahad, and Albrecht—who knew indeed, since he had fair opportunity to be acquainted with the whole cycle—does not, if I remember, mention her; but, on the other hand, he has not elected to ignore the marriage of Parsifal or all reference to Kondwiramur. It follows that, in dedicating that hero to the great exaltation, he considered that his virgin celibacy was not a first qualification within the domain of Nature. And these words may be called an introduction to a short statement concerning the ascetic

aspects of Die Jungere Titurel. They are supposed to be somewhat pronounced, and to impress upon the poem a peculiar ecclesiastical aspect, which I interpret as meaning that it carries the seal of sanctity rather than the seal of ethics and other preliminary exercises in the school without the gates. At the same time, I see nothing in the poem to connect it with the mystical degrees, and I see nothing to indicate the conscious existence on the part of the author of any subsurface sense. It lends itself to a construction of this kind only in the way that all great books of romance—and greater than is this book—speak otherwise than in the external tongues to the higher part of our nature. It is only by reflection from the sources in Northern France that the Titurel reproduces—as we shall see that it does—the recession of the Graal. Perhaps—but I do not know—Albrecht may have divined dimly that the heaven of Galahad's attainment and the land of Prester John are neither of them out of this world, and, so far as distance goes, not especially more remote than the corner of the nearest street. In such case, by saying that it went to India he would know that he was telling the same story as he who testified that the hand which had no body came right to the vessel and so took it and bore it up to heaven. Perhaps—in the alternative sense—the episode spelt nothing more for the poet than a good illustration of that which follows from the common unworthiness of the world. He describes the evil time which fell upon things outside the precincts of the Temple, and it was in pursuance of their own counsels of prudence, rather than by an instruction from within, that the Keepers of the Holy Vessel in fine convened the cohort of the Templar chivalry and that Parsifal, accompanied by them and carrying the Hallows of the House, went in' quest of his brother Feirfeis, so reaching India.

The Parsifal of Wolfram indicates that Prester John was the issue of this brother; but the Titurel represents him as an independent ruler in the East, despite his attributed genealogy, and gives such an account of himself and his wonderful kingdom that the reigning keeper is minded, and indeed prompted by Feirfeis, to bequeath the Graal to his care. When, however, he came into his august presence, bearing the Holy Vessel, the Priest-King offered his realm and crown to him who was the Graal King. Parsifal, on his part, desired to enter his service, for report had well assured him that all material and spiritual riches abode with Prester John, even the Seven Gifts and the Twelve Fruits of the Divine Spirit of Counsel. But the decision was not between them, for there was an intervention on the part of the Graal, by which it was ordained that Parsifal should remain as he was, the Guardian of the Holy Vessel. He became therefore the heir of Prester John and assumed his name. At the prayers of the keeper, the Castle and the Sanctuary of Mont Salvatch were transported in a single night to India, like a mystic city of Irêm, so that the great Palladium had again its proper asylum. It was this, I conclude, that led to the whole chivalry remaining as they were in the East, whereas, if they had relinquished their trust, they would have returned whence they came. So does the House of the Doctrine follow the transit of Doctrine, as the house of man at his highest is wherever the highest is attained. It is for this reason that Wisdom has finished its temples, seeing that its proper habitations are waiting all over that world which once was built in Wisdom.

It is to Ethiopia or Turkey that other legends refer the retreat of Prester John, which really was “built in the unapparent.” There is therefore no need to co-ordinate rival versions, nor would such a task be possible in the conflicting accounts of Albrecht and Wolfram. To vary the issues of confusion, I will mention only that, according to

the Dutch Lancelot, the Priest-King appears to have been Perceval's son. It is thought that the reticence of Wolfram on the whole subject is explicable by the fact that there were few materials at his period, while in the fifty subsequent years the rumours of the eastern legend had extended and was available to Albrecht. But it should be mentioned that the first rumour is referable to 1156, and before the end of the twelfth century it had the support of Maimonides as well as of the wandering Israelite, Benjamin of Tudela. The seat of Peter had done more than confess to an attraction when an embassy was sent to Prester John bearing a written communication from Alexander the Third; and before 1180, or at and about this time, the Emperor of Constantinople is supposed to have received the celebrated letter in which the mysterious potentate announced his own existence with consummate grandiloquence. It was a pretentious and impossible document in the worst style of false-seeming, but it created great interest and great wonder. It concerns us only because it may have provided certain materials both for Wolfram and Albrecht. The palace of Prester John is like the Castle of Mont Salvatch drawn out into a greater wilderness of building, and the Parsifal allusions to the Earthly Paradise are recalled by the account of that spring which is three days' journey from the Garden of Eden. Whosoever can drink of its water will have, through all his later life, the aspect of thirty years—precisely that period which was maintained by the Templar chivalry owing to the presence of the Graal. The myth has been noticed exhaustively by several writers; it never required exploding, but that work was done in the seventeenth century by Julius Bartolocci in his Magna Bibliotheca Rabbinica.

I have only to add concerning Albrecht and his Titurel (a) that in the earlier part of the fourteenth century it was not only allocated to Wolfram, as we have seen, but was held to

be his master work; (b) that all assertions notwithstanding, the hypothesis of Albrecht's acquaintance with the poem of Guiot is regarded as precarious; (c) that the Titurel represents King Arthur and his knights as travellers in search of the Graal after it had been taken away: it was a vain journey, of which Parsifal had calculated the probabilities beforehand when he took leave of the Round Table; but the adventure—as we have seen—is the root-matter of that other fable which was conceived subsequently by the author of the metrical Lohengrin.

CHAPTER SIX THE DUTCH LANCELOT

The quest undertaken in our work of high research is long enough, and it is also toilsome enough, to spare us from the consideration in full of any extraneous issues, though these are yet of our kinship; but I am speaking of a great literature to those who are unversed therein, albeit they are not otherwise unacquainted with the mysterious ways in which God declares Himself. I am called upon therefore to say something of all the branches, but must touch lightly where we are not concerned deeply. The Dutch Lancelot is a compilation which is known only by a single text, and this is incomplete, unfortunately, the first part out of four original parts being now wanting. The authorship is unknown and so is the date of composition; but, by those who are competent to speak, the extant manuscript has been assigned to the early part of the fourteenth century. Were it otherwise, it might be said with greater certainty than is now possible that it had taken the chief field of Graal romance for its province. The missing first volume must have contained indubitably the earlier life of Lancelot, and it may have included by inference some part of the quest and initial failure of Perceval at the Graal Castle. The second book contains the adventures of Agravain, the brother of Gawain, a knight of pride and violence; but this

is already late in the history of the hero-in-chief, and it is in the so-called Agravain section that Lancelot pays his first visit to Castle Corbenic and that the conception of Galahad is encompassed. The poem reverts thereafter to dealings with Perceval, and has traces of a tradition which is not extant in the romances of Northern France. There are variations, for example, in the development of the tasks proposed by the messenger of the Holy Graal to the knights of King Arthur's Court. Correspondences are traced: (a) with the variations in the Montpellier MS. of the Conte del Graal; (b) with the Vatican German Perceval; and (c) at a distance, with Wolfram's Parsifal. The Quest of Galahad occupies the third book, and the fourth brings all to its term in the Morte d'Arthur. The Dutch romance is a poem, and even in this, its present dismembered form, it is a work of vast extent. As in respect of my own province I have not assumed all languages, I know the original only by the collation of available channels of research. That which has impressed me concerning it is the important, though fluidic, analogy which it offers to the poem of Heinrich in its judgment on Perceval. Therein the Lord of the Hallows and those by whom he was engirded had great hopes of the latter, but because he had entered the Castle and did not ask the question he was discarded once and for all. Now, the Dutch Lancelot, at the conclusion of the second book, has a text of unknown origin which I have held over in my previous enumeration to speak of more adequately here. This is the episodic or biographical romance of Morien, the son of Agloval and the nephew of Perceval, a black knight, corresponding to Feirfeis, who is Perceval's half-brother in the romance of Wolfram. Morien is, however, a Christian when he arrives in the realms of the West, and he is in search of his father, to whom he is in fine united. It is in the course of his story, which is otherwise unimportant to our purpose, that we learn as follows concerning the Holy and Sacramental Mystery:

1. King Arthur—who here, as otherwhere, manifests his unfailing love and anxiety for Perceval—is represented lamenting his loss because he had gone in search of the Graal and the Sacred Lance, but there were no news concerning him. Now, the text states—and this is on the part of the King, by the way of foreknowledge or prophecy—that he will never find them—that is to say, upon earth. (2) The same conviction may have entered into the proper heart of the Son of the Widow Lady; but Sir Gareth, the brother of Gawain, is he who announces the reason, which is not on account of his failure but because Perceval sinned in leaving his mother to die of grief at his absence. On this account he might search till the Kingdom which is above descends on the Kingdom which is below but his pains would be his only meed. We see here that a responsibility which is of right made transient only becomes permanent and insuperable for a moment—but this is in appearance solely. (3) Perceval, on his part, has been convinced of his sin and has embraced the life of a hermit as the proper path of atonement. (4) But Arthur and Gareth notwithstanding, the intention of the tale is to restore Perceval forgiven to the higher life of chivalry, and we have accordingly (5) the vision of Sir Agloval, the brother of Perceval, who speaks of a Golden Staircase seen therein, which, by interpretation, is more than the sunbeam whereon the Graal enters in the Great Quest, for it symbolises the Sacred Vessel as another ladder of Jacob leading to the Throne and the Kingdom, and this is also for Perceval as the days of the life of him. It followed that he should yet have his place in the Quest, and it was foretold that in such high service he should pass to his reward on high. That which is here foretold is of course fulfilled to the letter in the part which follows thereafter—that is to say, in the Quest of Galahad.

The Dutch Lancelot is in some respects that which I indicated at the beginning, an attempt to harmonise all the cycles by dealing (a) with the Quest of Perceval and its initial failure; (b) with that of Gawain, corresponding to the Montpellier intercalation of the Conte del Graal; and (c) finally with the union of Galahad, Perceval and Bors, according to the plenary inspiration of the Great Quest. I recur now to the point which I made at the close of the third section. The Dutch Lancelot offers the position of a text which had every opportunity to profit in universals and not in particulars only by the poem of Wolfram; but, though it is under the obedience of the prototype created by the Parsifal and the Conte del Graal for the early history of Perceval, it redeems him only at the close, by a kind of tour de force, in its adaptation of the story of stories.

The conclusion of all this inquiry into the German cycle of the Holy Graal is that the hand of Guiot is traceable, at whatever distance, through all its length; at times it is the ruling hand, at others it intervenes for a moment. He seems also reflected into the Greater Chronicles in Northern French; for, setting aside those almost accidental connections which are found in the Book of the Holy Graal, there are the similitudes, which I have termed haunting, in the Longer Prose Perceval. The King of Castle Mortal is drawn in much darker colours than Klingsor, the magician of Wolfram, but they derive from the same root.

It is obvious that in such a summary account of the German cycle there are points, and they are indeed manifold, which have been omitted from the foregoing sections. Those who have preceded me in England with valuable and extended monographs on individual texts and with studies of particular groups will be the first to dispense generosity towards a work which embraces the whole literature in a single volume, more especially if they are able to realise

that I am not addressing their audience, but rather a school set apart and among whom no knowledge of the subject can be presupposed safely. It is for this reason that I have had to recover the same ground on several occasions, increasing the difficulty of my task, as it was not less important to avoid verbal repetition in devotion to the high canons of literature than to spare my readers the weariness of continual reference to anterior sections or books. Before leaving the German cycle, I will embrace in a brief schedule certain accessory matters, belonging to its several parts, which—without being essential thereto—are of sufficient interest to demand inclusion.

The Parsifal of Wolfram— It should be noted (1) that there is no passage of Hallows from East to West; there is no enchantment of Britain; and there are no times which are termed specially adventurous; (2) that Parsifal's uncle, Trevrezent, confessed to having tampered, with the truth in respect of his Graal history, so as to dissuade the hero from the Quest, and that this is possibly the root-reason of the uncle's misdirections in all the romances.

The Lost Quest of Guiot— (1) There was a great movement of literature from Southern to Northern France and through Northern France to England at the period of Henry the Second He married Eleanor of Guienne, who is said to have brought Provençal poets in her train. If therefore we can suppose that Guiot de Provence and his poem antedated all other Graal literature, they may have become known in this manner, and it will then seem at first sight that we have accounted for the appearance subsequently of Graal literature in Northern French. But this is an explanation with the disadvantage of a fatal facility, because Guiot, as we can divine concerning him, is incapable of accounting for Graal romance outside the one text that we know him to have influenced in Germany. (2) It

was on an illusory assumption of this kind that the Perceval legend was classed as Celtic by Schulze, but the Graal, on the other hand, as Provençal. The first statement is true obviously, but the Graal of Guiot is not the Graal of Northern France. The marriage of Schulze's two classes is said to have been contracted about 1150; but I do not believe that any sacramental mystery was incorporated by southern romance; only the shadow of the Eucharist is found in Wolfram. (3) The test of such a possibility is the affirmed traditional hostility to the Church of Rome on the part of most troubadours. Northern French romance had no such implicit: it is a literature written round the great heart of Christian catholicity. (4) The analogy of troubadour poetry with Graal literature is slight after all. If we set aside the Conte del Graal, love, for example, is only an accident of the cycle, and it is totally absent from two of the highest texts. The mystic side of human love in poetry and its Provençal reflections are a light of Moslem ecstasy. (5) Scholarship holds that Wolfram and Chrétien drew from the same source, more especially as regards the adventures of Gawain. This raises a question respecting the identity, language and real locality of Guiot. It is acknowledged on all sides that if he had written in the langue d'oc, he would not have been understood by Wolfram. One speculation identifies him with the author of the Bible Guiot, but this person was of Provins in the Alsace-Lorraine district. The suggestion, I suppose, is that Provins was mistaken for Provence by Wolfram. Had Guiot promulgated in the South so wonderful a legend as that of the Graal, it is incredible that his name should never have transpired among his contemporaries; though his poem is now lost, his memory should at least have lingered.

The Spanish Cycle— (1) We have seen that Spain has no indigenous literature of the Holy Graal; it has only accidental reflections by way of translation, and with all

deference to the curious implicits connected with the Jew of Toledo, I think that this is final as to anything of prototypical matter of the Graal having come out of the Peninsula. (2) This notwithstanding, if ever the missing Guiot should be discovered in fine, it will be probably in a Spanish monastery. Whatever language he wrote in, the poet had evidently Provençal sympathies, interests and erudition, and we know that in 1820, on the evidence of Fr. Jay me de Villanueva, there were large collections of unedited Provençal poets in the archives of Spanish churches. This is readily explained (a) by the intimate union between the court of Provence and that of Barcelona; (b) by the union of the crown of Provence and the crown of Aragon in the person of Alphonso the Second, and it is Aragon that once at least was especially rich in such manuscripts; (c) by the popularity of Provençal poetry in Catalonia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A poem breathing the Provençal atmosphere and inspired by the Provençal spirit, though not actually in the langue d’oc, may well have drifted into Spain from Provence without leaving traces behind it at either point.