

SYR DEGORE: EDITED FROM UTTERSON'S
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by

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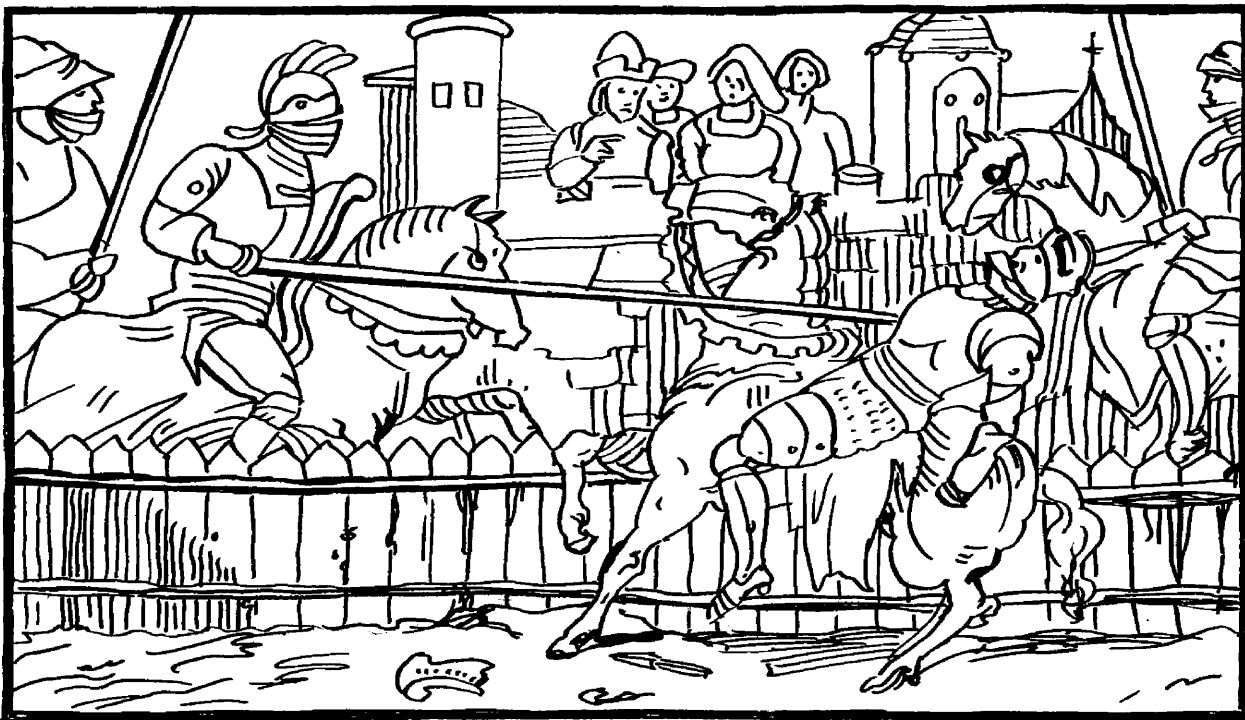
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Syr Degore.



I

The textual history of 'Syr Degore' may be summed up in a few words. The oldest and probably the best existing manuscript is the Auchinlech (A) W 41, in the National Library of Scotland (formerly Advocates' Library), Edinburgh. According to Wells, the probable date of this MS. is between the years 1330-1340. It is considered the most perfect and contains approximately 1070 lines. Three introductory lines of the poem are missing, as are also 6 lines following verse 36. It was first edited by Laing for the Abbotsford Club in 1849. In this edition, the Auch. MS. is followed by various readings from the Cambridge Fragment. It is described by Kölbing in English Studies, VII, 178-91. A philological and comparative study of this MS. appears in a very recent and German edition by Gustav Schleich of the University of Heidelberg, 1929.

The Cambridge University Library Fragment, (F) Ff 11 38, exists in some 615½ verses in a fifteenth century hand. It is written in folio form on paper in 247 leaves with double columns of about 40 lines each. Even though incomplete, this is considered the best after the Auch. MS.

The Ellesmere Fragments (S), Edgerton 3862, relegated by Wells to the end of the fourteenth century,

* Letters used by Schleich for reference to his chart.

are now in the library of the Duke of Sutherland. Miss Toulmin Smith describes these Fragments (Studies in Honor of Prof. Breul, V, 2, xii): "The two leaves of Degarré are inserted at the end of 'Sir Bevis of Hampton', with one leaf of that poem between them. They are written in precisely the same hand as the rest and are in good condition. There is no more of Sir Degarré in the book, the whole of which I have examined. Probably the book was formerly larger and perhaps contained the whole of Sir Degarré and the other romances complete; it has probably fallen to decay, and the restorer saved these two leaves and put them in a wrong place." These two fragments contain 64 and 75 lines and follow pages 95 and 97, respectively. It is also described in English Studies, VII, pp. 192-3.

The Rawlinson MS. (R) F. 34 is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. It is "On paper, written in more than one hand, in the fifteenth century, partly by John Bigge" (II, p. 291, 'Summary Catalogue Oxford).

The Percy Folio MS. (P), ff. 97, in the British Museum, is on paper, in a 17th century hand. It is divided into five parts and contains 900 octosyllabic lines. It is printed in Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript, III, pp. 16 ff. edited by Hales and Furnivall, 1867-69.

The Seldon (d), 4to C39, exists in 352 verses.

This imperfect fragment is dated as c. 1564 by Wells, and is in the Douce collection, Bodleian Library. It was printed by John Kynge in 1560. The title is over a wood cut of a knight on horseback at full gallop.

Of the "Black Letter Editions", the earlier is probably by Wynkyn de Worde (w), dated approximately 1534, by Prof. Schleich. It concludes with the lines "Thus endeth the treatyse of Syr Degore, Emprynted at London in Flete strete at the sygne of the Sonne by Wynkyn de Worde". This unique copy was acquired by Mr. Miller of Craigentenny in 1834 at the dispersion of Mr. Heber's Library. It is described in English Studies, XVII.

The Copeland (c) print is in the Garrick collection of old plays in the British Museum. It is undated but considered to be about 1545. It is in 4to. with 16 leaves, having 993 lines, with omissions between ll. 554-5; 752-3; 758-9. The title page is a wood cut, the vignette of which was frequently used in the Copeland prints. According to Mr. Utterson_x ('Early popular poetry', I, 112), from whose reprint the present study is made, it occurs also in the history of Arthur and his Knights, printed by W. Copeland in 1557. Mr. Utterson adds further, "A wood cut, so similar as scarcely to be distinguished from it, is also, to be found in the old French romance of 'Theseus de Coulogne', folio, Paris, 1534." The text is divided into six parts with the

caption for the first being missing; the others are as follows: "howe Syr Degore fought with a dragon in a forest and slewe hym"; "howe Syr Degore justed with the Kynge of England; and smote hym downe"; "Howe Syr Degore wedded his mother, the Kynges doughter of England, and how she knewe that he was her sonne by the gloues"; "How Syr Degore fought for a lady, with a gyaunt, and slewe hym"; "Howe Syr Degore fought with his father, and howe his father knewe him by the broken swerde." The rhythm is rough for the most part, but the rhymed couplets are unusually accurate. Occasionally, however, the poet employs assonance where his stock of rhymes fails. It is written in the Southwest Midland dialect, but possibly was copied from a Northern MS. The following text, taken from the Utterson reprint, has been recapitalized and repunctuated; the abbreviations have been lengthened, and readings supplied from other manuscripts where there have been omissions or the text found wanting.

A comparative chart showing probable relationships among the above manuscripts and prints has been worked out by Professor Schleich in his edition of the Auchinleck MS. I am taking the liberty of presenting it here. It is the editor's opinion, however, since the study in hand has been based largely on a reference to

the Percy Folio MS., that there is a much closer relation between the Percy MS. and the Copeland Print than the chart seems to show; in fact, both versions seem to have a common parent version. The reader will observe this in the annotations of the following text which shows approximately the degree of divergence by pointing any omission of a whole line or more by the Percy scribe. No attempt has been made, however, to show the minor deviations which for the most part consist in a rearrangement of words and the use of scribe's own special brand of spelling.

II

The story is certainly~~x~~ no later than the fourteenth century. Wells dates it as 'before 1325'. According to Miss Hibbard (p. 301) "In date, form, and context, 'Degare' belongs with the other Middle English versions of such lays as 'Orpheo', or the translations of Marie de France's 'Lanval' and her 'Lai del Fraisne'. From the Middle English redaction of this last poem, the Degare poet even borrowed definite ideas and phrases. But 'Degare', 'Freine, and 'Orpheo', must have all been of approximately the same date since in not one does the language antedate the fourteenth century, and since they were all copied in the Auchinlech Manuscript by the same

scribe, probably between 1330-1340". To quote Utterson, p. 111, "Both Warton and Ellis admit its high antiquity, as they concur in assigning its probable date to the beginning of the fourteenth century. In fact, the narrative itself affords some internal evidence of the period when it was composed, by speaking (l. 703) of the 'shone croked as a knighte'. The crooked or horned shoe was introduced in the reign of Wm. Rufus, and appears then to have been confined to the gentry. Strutt, however, supposes that this fashion did not long keep its ground; but, he says, it was afterwards revived, and even carried to a more preposterous extent than before. He is, however, of the opinion, that the longed piked shoes were not worn later than the beginning or the middle of the fifteenth century". As Wells makes the latest limit of the story, 1325, the earliest limit must be 1252 when the florin, a gold coin, was first issued at Florence (see l. 261.).

According to both Utterson (p. 311) and Miss Hibbard (p. 301), the story is of French origin. The name according to the former, if correctly spelt, is D'Egaré, or l'Egaré, a person almost lost, l. 230. Miss Hibbard bases her argument on much the same grounds. "The name of the hero, carefully explained to mean something that 'almost lost it is' (v. 214), suggests the French word 'esgaré' and the possibility of a French source.

Whether the Middle English version is a translation of this lost 'Lai d' Esgaré' or merely a clever imitation of the 'Lai' style, the incidents are certainly those typical 'adventures Whereof Britouns made her layes'." In this connection also, Miss Hibbard argues a French source for 'Emaré', since 'Emaré' may mean 'afflicted', and 'Egaré', the name which the heroine gives herself after having been set adrift on the sea, ('^{omit}Egare', which) may be translated as 'outcast'. If there is any basis to this argument, then the name Degaré, or D'Egaré, may show a possible connection with the 'Emaré' story, since they have also, in common the Unnatural father motif, the Otherworld nature of Emare though somewhat rationalized than is the character of the knight in Degaré, and finally, the reunion of the husband and wife in later years. This, however, is a somewhat sketchy argument and tends to throw too much weight on the meaning of names in Romance Literature. (see notes to lines 229-32). Loomis, in Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance, pp. 33-4, warns against taking popular etymologies of medieval poems too seriously. "A convention of Celtic story-telling that the intelligent student of Irish and Welsh legend must take into account is a singular passion for finding a meaning in names. 'To the 'ollamh' (that is, the chief rank of professional story-tellers) belong the etymologies of names, declares

the 'Book of Lecan' (O'Curry, op. cit. 24C). And that they lived up to their responsibilities is demonstrated by the existence of treatises devoted to the explanation of place names, the 'Dindsenchas', and of a treatise, the 'Coir Anmann', or 'Fitness of Names', devoted to the elucidation of personal names. It is not at all improbable, therefore, that the names of certain heroes, divine or semi-divine, as they have come down to us, are not the original forms. And we may properly be suspicious whenever we find a name explained by some striking anecdote. In such a case it is possible, even probable that the name has been modified in order that the story may be told to explain it". Mr. Loomis also points out that the Bretons and French had inherited the obsession for etymologizing, and he refers to such explanations as those they have given 'Avalon' and 'Perceval'.

It is the editor's opinion, however, that the romance was originally composed and written in England, but shows traces of French influence; it is ^{omit} (however) certainly Celtic in plot. The fact that the Auchinlech Manuscript (1.7) gives 'In Litel Bretaygne', and the Copeland Version (1.9) gives 'In England', lends no weight at all to the argument. The chief points which argue against a French source and for an English₁ are: 1, the lack of courtly grandeur in description₁ and the lack of courtly love motif₁ exemplified in such a romance as

Chretien's 'Cliges'; 2, and the predominance of the adventure motif. French influence, however, is bound to be apparent in the romance because, in the first place the romance, as such, was introduced into England by the French; and secondly, after the Norman Conquest, in the transition period, when we may suppose this romance to have been written, there was a fusion of French thought and custom and language, with the Saxon. The Celtic influence is found in the Otherworld character of the stranger, the Wish-child motif, the Otherworld of Women guarded by a champion, and finally magic without magic-producing machinery; cp. notes in the text.

III

Briefly the story may be summarized as follows. A daughter of a king on the way to an abbay to do service on the anniversary of his wifes's death, alights in the forest to arrange her clothes. In the meantime, the company has ridden out of sight, leaving the princess and her maidens in the forest. Having ridden about in an attempt to find their way, the maidens exhausted with the attempt and the heat lie down under a chestnut tree and fall asleep, while the princess wanders off to hear the song of the birds and pick wild flowers, and to lose herself a second time. As she bemoans her wretched fate, a fairy knight appears, ravishes her, and leaves his pointless sword for the boy which he predicts

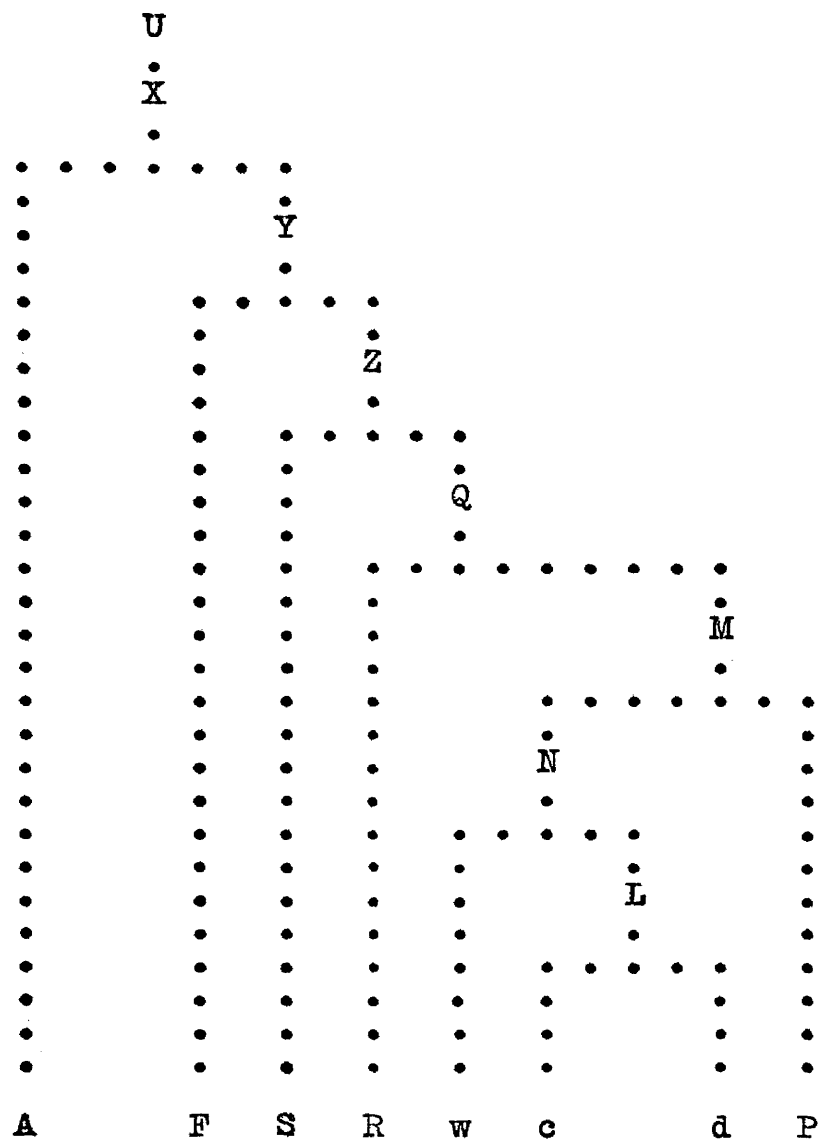
will be born. The princess finds her maidens, and they are met by the king's party. As it nears the time for the boy to be born, the princess confesses her plight to one of her maidens, and the fear that her father will be accused since she has known no other man. The maiden promises her that the birth will be kept secret. A letter is written asking that whosoever finds the boy, have him baptized, and bring him up with the money and that when he is of age, instruct him to marry no one whom the gloves which had been given to the lady by her lover and placed in the cradle, do not fit. The boy is found by a hermit who christens him, and gives him into his sister's care for ten years. When the boy is ten years old, he is then educated by the hermit till he is twenty. The hermit then gives him that part of his money which has not been spent on his keeping, the gloves and the letter. Degore sets out to seek his parents armed only with a sapling. In his first adventure, he kills a dragon thereby rescuing an earl who knights him and offers him his daughter in marriage. Degore tries the gloves on all the women of the household; they fit no one, and he departs well armed by the earl. The daughter of the King of England is offered in marriage only to the man who can throw the king in jousting. Degore prepares himself for battle by hearing Mass. He overthrows the

king, and forgetting the gloves, marries the princess. That same day he remembers the gloves, and the princess, who can put them on, recognizes Degore as her son. She tells him the story of his begetting, and gives him the pointless sword. Degore immediately sets out to seek his father. He rides west into a great forest. As night approaches, he finds a great empty castle; he enters and finds a fire burning in the hall and the table set. Maiden huntresses appear with venison and wine. A dwarf clad in green enters and seats himself, but will not speak. A beautiful lady and fifteen maidens appear, clad in red and green, seat themselves at the table and do not speak. After supper, Degore follows them to the lady's bower. The maidens bring him wine while the lady harps him to sleep. The next morning, the lady speaks and tells Degore that her castle is besieged by a giant who has killed all the men of her castle, excepting her dwarf, because she has refused to wed him. She promises Degore herself, and all her lands if he will help her. The giant appears, and after a stiff fight, Degore slays him; but he defers marriage with the lady for a year. He sets out again and is accosted in a forest by a knight who accuses Degore of killing his deer. They fight, and the knight notices Degore's pointless sword. He halts the battle, asks Degore his name, and produces the point of

the sword. Degore rejoices in the finding of his father and brings him back to England where he weds his mother. After the wedding, in great retinue, they proceed with Degore to his lady's castle where the wedding of Degore takes place with great solemnity.

It is evident from the above, that the romance is made up largely of folk-lore material. Among the motives may be mentioned especially; the Incest motive; the Wish or wonder child motive; the Abandoning of the child motive; the Cinderella, or Marriage-test motive, closely akin to the Recognition token motive; Forest reared child motive; Otherworld guardian motive; Father-son combat motive; Invulnerability motive; Defiant hunting and battle motive; Lovesickness motive; Delayed marriage; and, Family reunion motive. The story advances rapidly from one point to the next without digression, or the inclusion of unnecessary details, which sometimes results in insufficient motivation as in the case of the meeting of the lady in the forest with the stranger who declares he has loved her for a long time. While religious observances play an important part in the story, still the incidents themselves, have come under no ecclesiastical influence, but are, on the other hand, decidedly pagan and unmoral. This argues for the further belief that the romance is a composite of folk-lore motives, Celtic, for the most part, which antedate Christian theology. Yet, since it is improbable that the story existed as an

entity before the Christian era, (as is the case in many of the oriental tales which have Christianity superimposed on them) it is to be concluded, that the Degore poet was neither an ecclesiastic, nor was himself influenced by ecclesiastical dogma, but was, in all probability, a devout Christian, whose counterpart may still be met, for example, in parts of Ireland, in the simple and unelaborated faith of these people, innately charged with traditional folksuperstition.



A -- Auchinlech

w -- Wynkyn de Worde

F -- Cambridge

c -- Copeland

S -- Ellesmere

d -- Douce

R -- Rawlinson

P -- Percy

U, X, Y, Z, Q, M, N, L -- hypothetical versions.

Syr Degore

(How Syr Degore's father ravished a Princess, and begot him and how he was brought up by a hermit.)

Lordinges, and you wyl holde you styl,
A gentyl tale tel you I wyll,
Of knyghtes of this countré
That hath trauayled beyonde y^e see
To seke aduentures bothe nyght and day,
And howe they myght their strength assay;
As dyd a knyght, his name was Syr Degoré,
One of the best that was founde hym before.

Sume tyme in England there was a kynge,
A noble man of maners in all thyng; 10
Stout in armes and vnder shelde,
Full muche douted² in batayle and felde.
Ther was no man then, verament³,
That with him iusted in turnemente,
That out of his styrope might bryng his fote,
He was so stronge withoute doute.
The kynge had no children but one,

1. the; 2. feared; 3. truly,

11. 5-6, omitted in Percy.

1.7, variations Degore, Degare, Degarre, Degree;
sometimes the final 'e' is accented; sometimes not.

1.9, cp. Auch., "In Litel Bretaygne".

A doughter as whight¹ as whales bone.
 That mayden he loued as his lyfe;
 Her mother was deed, the quene his wyfe; 20
 In trauayle of chylde² she dyed, alas!
 But when that mayden of age was,
 Kynges somes her wowed then,
 Emperours, dukes, and other men
 To haue that mayden in maryage,
 For loue of her great herytage.
 But then the kynge did them answer
 That no man shoulde wedde her,
 But that if he myght with stout iusting
 The kynge out of his sadel brynge 30
 And done hym lese³ his styroppes two.
 Many assayed and myght naught do.

1. white; 2. childbirth; 3. set free, loose.

1. 18, cp Percy note, "When first taken out of the fish it is very white". "Percy like many early writers supposed ivory to be made from whalesbone. It was in fact made from the teeth of the walrus"--Dyce. See Hibbard, p. 278, n.8; "The Eglamour poet repeats somewhat helplessly such hackneyed phrases as "white as foam", ll. 25, 638; "white as flour", ll. 184, 920, 1210; "white as whalesbone". ll. 680, 780, 1053; etc."

ll. 27-30, see Hibbard p. 302: In Degore "though shortened and rationalized, the situation evidently comes from the large group of stories in which a king seeks to marry his own daughter. In the folk tales the desire generally rises because she alone can fulfill some special condition

Euery yere as ryght it wolde,
 A great feaste wolde he holde
 Vpon his quenes mornynge day,
 That was buried in an abbay.
 So on a day the kynge wolde ride
 To an abay there beside,
 To do diriges and masses bothe,
 The pore to fede, and the naked to clothe.

40

1. as it was right; 2. anniversary of death.

which the dead wife had made the king swear to observe. In English romances such as 'Apollonius' or 'Emare' the character of the Incestuous Father is more frankly recognized." See ll. 148-150, 'Degore'. See also Hibbard p. 25 n. 6, "The Incestuous Father appears in many versions of the 'Constance' story. In 'Manekine' the king has promised to wed no one save a woman like his dead wife; he is reluctant when his nobles wish him to marry his daughter. In the Catalan tale, 'Historia del Rey de Hungrie', the father loves the daughter because of the beauty of her white hands, and for this reason she cuts them off (Suchier, 'Beaumanoir', I, p. xlii). For folk tales embodying the theme of the Father Who wishes to Marry his Daughter, M. R. Cox in 'Cinderella' (Catskin) enumerates 71 tales. The third or 'Isomberte' version of the Swan Children story opens with a situation common to the 'Mankine' group, in which the princess flees to escape an undesired marriage. According to Paris, Rom. xix, 323, n. 4, the heroine in the type story escapes from the wooing of her own father. The author of the Apollonius story in the opinion of Klebs, (p. 299 and quoted by Hibbard p.170), was aware of the literary effectiveness of the incest theme used by Seneca and Ovid, Miss Rickert, (Modern Philology) 11 p. 357, thinks it likely that Charlemagne's refusal of suitors for his daughters may have caused legends of this sort to be associated with him. Eglamour in romance of that name must accomplish certain tasks before he can win Christabelle, likewise their son after he has married his mother in ignorance of their relation, will give her in marriage only to the one who defeats him in tournament. See note on ll. 541 ff. in 'Degore'. In the romance of 'Torrent of Portyngale' Torrent must accomplish five tasks

His owne doughter with him rode,
 And in the forest styll she abode,
 She called her chamberlaine her to
 And other maydens she dyd also,
 And sayde, adowne she must alyght
 Better her clothes to amend and ryght.
 Adowne they bene alyght all thre,
 Her damosels and so dyd she.
 A full longe stounde¹ there she abode,
 Tel all the meyny² from her rode.
 They gate vp, and after they wolde,
 But they could not y^e ryght way holde,
 The wodde was rough, and thicke, Iwis,
 And they toke theyr way all amysse.
 They rode south, they rode west
 Into the thicke of that forest.

50

1. space of time; 2. members of the household; 3. I know.

before he can wed Desonelle, Princess of Portugal. 11.
 11.39-40 see Faá Di Bruno, 'Catholic Belief', p. 166,
 "Catholics believe that the souls in purgatory continue
 to be members of the church of Christ, and that they are
 relieved (of the temporal punishment due to sins committed
 in life) by the sacrifice of the Mass, by prayer, and
 pious works, and alms deeds; these and other helps are
 called (suffrages) because they are applied to them by the
 faithful here on earth, with the intention of helping them".
 11. 43-4, omitted in Percy.
 11. 55 ff., probably an enchanted forest. According to Wim-
 berly (p. 123), the forest is a tabooed place. Mortals who
 invade its sacred precincts summon by a peculiar form of tres-
 pass (see pp. 314 ff.) an enchanted person or some other

And into a lande they came at the laste,
 Then weried¹ they wonder faste.
 They wust² they wel amisse they had gone,
 And adowne they lyght euerichone³, 60
 And they called all in fere⁴,
 But there might no man them heare.
 The wether was hote before the none,
 They wust not what was best to done
 But layd them downe vpon the grene
 (Under a chastein⁵ tree), I wene.
 Thus they fell on slepe euerychone,
 Sauyng the kynges doughter alone:
 She went aboute and gathered flowres
 And to here the songe of smale foules. 70

1. became weary; 2. knew; 3. each one; 4 all together;
 5. chestnut; 6. birds.

power of the wood. Upon the lady's having pulled a nut or broken the tree her supernatural lover accosts her. Cp. 'Hind Etin' Ballad and the 'Breaking of the bough in the Grove of Diana', Lang, Folklore, XVIII pp. 39-91. Smelling flowers or eating fruit of certain trees may cause pregnancy; (see Hartland 'Perseus I, 95 ff. '); cp. Grummere, 'Popular Ballads' p. 38. See also 'Tam Lin'.

ll. 61-2, omitted in Percy.

ll. 65 ff. This is probably a rationalized spell. In the ancient Irish tale of the "Inram Maelduin", magic sleep inducing music prevents the companions from entering the fairy island. (Revue Celt. IX, 489); see also, the Brown-Harvard Studies VIII, 75; cp. Wimberly (pp. 293 ff.) on the power of music as a soporific spell and as a counter charm. In the B version of the 'Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight', the Otherworld lover woos by the sleep binding strains of a harp; all succumb but Lady Isabel. See notes on ll. 752 ff. ll. 69-70, assonances are fairly common in medieval romances.

So longe she dyd forth pas,
 That she wist neuer where she was;
 The waye to her damosels she wolde haue nome¹,
 But she wyst neuer howe to come.
 Then gan she crye wonder sore:
 She wept, and wronge her handes thore²
 And sayd, "Alas! that I was bore,
 For well I wote I am forlore³,
 For wyld bestes wyll me rynde⁴,
 Or any man may me fynde. 80
 And then she saw a ioyful syght:
 To her came pricking⁵ a fayré⁶ knight.

1. taken; 2. there; 3. lost; 4. tear; 5. spurring;
 6. fairy.

11. 69-70, assonances are fairly common in medieval romances. (Cp. 1. 82 cp. Percy, "Afore her there stood a ffayre Knight". Cp. Auch. "Iich am comen here a fairi knyȝte", as evidence of the Otherworld character of the knight. His beauty and richness of dress and his appearing in the forest unarmed argue for his preternatural character. ll. 91. ff. For parallels to the Otherworld Lover see Hibbard pp. 207-208, " 'Partenopeus', in pursuit of a fairy boar sent by Melior, loses himself in the forest of Ardennes, until at last he finds on the shore a mysterious ship which carries him to Melior's magnificent city. The hero's hunt for a fairy animal as the preface to his meeting with the fee herself is found in 'Fuigemar', in 'Guingamour' in 'Graelent', and in the later romance, 'Generides.... In 'Fraelent', as in 'Partenopeus', the fee makes a curious pretence of anger and of helplessness before the young hero, but, having at last surrendered herself, she confesses that it was by her wish and means that he has been brought to her. She admits that she had long since heard of his prowess and loved him even when unseen, a confession which closely parallels that of the fee in Marie's 'Lay of Lanval', of the fairy dame d'amour in 'Le Bel Inconnu', and 'Libeaus Desconnus', of the fairy lover in Marie's 'Lay of Yonec', and of the fee again in the old French lay of Melion, poems for which a Celtic ancestry has been claimed. In all these instances the supernatural lover has the peculiar magnificence, the power, the lordly generosity, which are characteristic attributes of Celtic fairy folk". For further parallels on the Otherworld

Full well he semed a gentyl man,
 And riche clothes him vpon
 Wel-farynge¹ both of fote and hand:
 There was none suche in that land ,
 So stought² a man was he.
 He sayde, "Madame, God you se;³
 Be ye not adred of me right nought,
 I haue none armes with me brought, 90
 I haue the⁴ loued this many a yere,
 And now I haue founde you here,
 Thou shalt be my lemman⁴, or I go,
 Whether it tourne to wele or wo.⁵
 No more to do then, could she⁶,
 But wept and cryed and could not flye,
 Anone he began her to beholde,
 And dyd with her what he wolde
 And beraft her maynedhode.
 And then before the ladye, he stode; 100
 He sayd, "Madame, gentyl and fre,
 With chylde I wot well that ye be:

1. well-favored; 2. magnificent; 3. God bless you;
 4. mistress; 5. good or evil; 6. knew she how;

Lover see notes on ll. 715 ff.

11. 102-3, for instances of the 'Wish-Child' or 'Wonder-Child' theme, cp. Layamon's 'Brut'. Here the supernatural father appears as a knight in golden armour. See also the romance 'Tydorel'; the queen is wooed by an Otherworld being who foretells the birth of a son at parting (Paris, Rom. VIII, 66 ff.). Miss Hibbard (p. 302) is of the

Wel I wot it shalbe a knaue,

Therefore, my good swearde he shall haue;

1. boy-child.

opinion that this instance in 'Tydorel' was the inspiration for the similar one in 'Degore'. "Whether the Fairy Wooer was originally, as has been argued, the Angel in Joachim's garden (see Hibbard pp. 52 ff.), or whether he belonged to the lineage of splendid Other-world beings who appear in Celtic legend, there is little question that in this particular instance he was inspired by the account of Tydorel's father in the 'Breton Lay' of that name." Miss Hibbard's comment on 'Tydorel' is applicable to 'Degare' (p. 54): 'Tydorel' represents the Wonder Child story in its distinctly pagan form. No touch of moral obloquy is laid upon the mother for her liason with the Otherworld lover; no evil effect is traced in the nature of the child. If, however, this tale came under the gray influence of ecclesiastical thought, the splendid lover might readily be transformed, as he is in 'Gowther' into the Devil of Christian theology, the the godlike child into a monster of iniquity, and his joy and pride in his high lineage into loathing." The change to a monstrous child, however, might arise from the influence of the well-known monstrous birth motive, (cp. 'Chevalier Assigne', and 'Emare') quite independent of Christian theology. Alfred Nutt, in the 'Voyage of Bran', II, p. 239, has an interesting theory on the Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth, embodied in this Irish tale of the eighth century, which may help to explain the Wish-Child Motive in Degore. According to Nutt, extra-human beings may unite themselves to mortals and beget offspring, into which they transfuse some of their extra-human capacities and attributes. To quote, "... the second conception is also found in the form of the god's assumption of manhood, sometimes simultaneously with the manifestation of his extra-human (p. 240) personality, sometimes with temporary abeyance of the latter; in other words, god-incarnation (re-birth idea) occurs by the side of god-parentage. Furthermore, both conceptions are found, at an early stage, heroicised---the personages of the tales have more than human strength, courage, and beauty; their adventures transcend the ordinary experiences of humanity, but they are not, by definition, extra human; the world in which they move, however magnified, with whatever romantic colours endowed, is man's world, not god's world." Cp. also, the fairy lover, Muldumarec, in Marie's 'Ywonec', who at his death and discovery foretells the birth of a son who shall be called 'Ywonec' and who will avenge them both (Ellis, p. 56). See, also, (Ellis p. 86), the devil's

My good swerde (and auenaunt)¹

For therwith I slewe a gyaunt;

I brake the poynt in his head,

And in the felde I it leued.²

Dame, take it vp, lo it is here!

Thou spekest not with me this many a yere

110

And yet, perauenture³, tyme may come

That I maye speke with my sonne;

And by this sworde, I maye him ken.

He kyssed his loue, and went then:

1. comely, seemly (occurs four times in Chaucer);

2. left; 3. by chance.

begetting Merlin on a chaste woman. Cp. the begetting of King Alexander (Weber, p. 21, ll. 384-400).

"He saide to hire, "gentil leman, 396

"Y haue bygete on the a kyng

"That schal beo Phelippes maisterlyng;

"He schal conqueren mony kyng riche.

"In eorthe no worth him non y-liche" 400

Cp. the birth of Cuchulinn (Bran 2, p. 43) son of Dechtire and an unnamed lord of Faery. See Spence p. 45 for the begetting of Bres on the Danaan woman Eri by an unknown father who left with Eri a ring and the command for her son to give it to the man whose finger it fits.

1. 105, MS. reads 'of ameaunt' which may possibly be a proper name. It is more likely, however, that 'ameaunt' is a mistake in the copying of the stroked letters and that the Auch. reading used in the text is the correct form of the word; line omitted in Percy. Research does not reveal the existence of the word 'ameaunt';

1. 110, MS. reads 'For thou spekest etc.'

1. 114, recognition tokens are common in romance literature: in 'Eglamour', Eglamour and Degrebelle are recognized by their arms; La Fraisme is recognized by ring and robe; Milun, in Marie's lay of that name, recognizes his son by means of a ring; Cuchulain recognizes his son by means of a ring he had given his mistress, Aifa; Rustem recognizes Sorab by means of an amulet or bracelet given the boy's mother when he left (p. 394 Delécluze); "Si le tout

The knight passed as he come.
 All weping the lady the swerde vp nome'.
 She went awaye sore wepinge,
 And founde her maydens slepinge.
 She hed² the swerd as she myght,
 And called them vp anone ryght 120
 And toke theyr horses euermychone,
 And begane to ryde forth anone.
 And then there came at the laste,
 Many a knyght pryckinge faste;
 Fro the kynge they were sent
 To wete³ wyther they went.
 They brought them into the hye waye,
 And rode in feare⁴ to that abbay.
 There was done servis, and al thyng,
 With many a masse and ryche offering; 130
 And when servyce was all done,
 And gan⁵ to passe the hye none,

1. took; 2. hid; 3. to discover; 4. in company; 5. did.

puissant bénit notre union et qu'il te rende mère d'une
 fille, place cette amulette sur ces cheveux; mais si
 tu mets au jour un fils, attache-la à son bras, et
 elle lui insperera la vaillouse qui distinguait mon
 bisayeul Nériman". See note on ll. 102-3 on the ring
 given Eri by the stranger for their son; see also notes
 on ll. 174 and 944. In Marie's 'Ywonec', the dying
 Mulmudarec gives his mistress a sword which must not be
 touched by man until it is given to their son to be
 born when he is dubbed a knight and who will then
 avenge his death.

The kyng vnto his palais gan ryde,
And muche people by his syde.

When euery man was glad and blythe,
The lady sowned¹ many a syth².
Her bely waxed more and more;
She wepte, and wronge her handes sore.
So vpon a daye she gane sore wepe,
A mayden of hers tooke good kepe³,
And sayd, "Madame, for charyté,
Why ye do wepe? Ye wyll tell me,"
"Mayden, and I tell the before,
And ye me wray⁴, I were but lore⁵!
For I haue bene, euer, meke and mylde,
And truly, now I am with chylde.
And yf any man it vnder-yede⁶,
Euery man wolde tel in euery stede⁷
That my father on me it wan⁸,
For I loued neuer other man.
And if my father it may wete⁹,
Such sorowe his hert may gette,

140

150

1. swooned; 2. time; 3. heed; 4. betray; 5. lost;
6. perceive; 7. place; 8. begot; 9. know.

1. 136, swooning is a common element in medieval romance.
1. 142, verbs of desiring are frequently omitted, i. e.,
I desire that you tell me.
1. 149, seems to suggest that the poet had the Incest
motif in mind when he composed ll. 27-30; see notes.

That he shall neuer mery man be,
 For all his ioye is layde on me".
 And tolde the damesell all in fere,
 Howe the childe was begotten on her.
 "Nowe gentyl ladye greue you noughte,
 For styll¹ it shall be forth brought;
 Shall no man it wete certaynly,
 Trewly, madame, but you and I. 160
 Tyme was come, she was vnbounde²
 And deliuered both hole and sounde;
 A man-childe there was bore,
 Glad was the ladye, therfore,
 The mayden serued her at her wyll,
 And layde the chylde in the cradysell;
 She wrapped hym in clothes anone,
 And was all readie for to haue gone;
 Yet was the childe vnto the mother hold³.
 She gaue it twentye pound in golde, 170
 And ten pounce in syluer also,
 Vnder hys head she can⁴ it do;

1. secretly; 2. delivered; 3. dear; 4. can = gan
 (equivalent to preterite), trs. 'she did put it'.

1. 155-6, omitted in Percy.

11. 161-2, Cp. 'Le Freine' 11. 129-30:

"And deliuered, al with sounde
 To maiden childer sche hadde ybore."

1. 170, cp. Auch. "Four pound she tok of gold"---

Muche it is that a chylde behoues¹.
 She put with him a payre of gloues,
 Her leman gaue her them in a stonde²;
 They wold els on no (manne) honde,
 On childes, neither womans they nold³,
 But on his mothers handes they wolde;
 And bad the chylde no wyfe wed in lande,
 But the gloues wolde on her hande,
 For they might serue no where
 Saue the mother that dyd hym beare.

180

1. impersonal; is valuable to; 2. occasion; 3. would not.

11. 174 ff. See Hibbard (p. 303) "A parallel to this is hard to find, since gloves are a somewhat too sophisticated article of dress for folk-lore to make common use of, but there is at least one parallel in the fifteenth-century Catalan version of 'La Fille sans Mains' (Rom. XXX, 520), in which the dying wife of the Emperor Contasti begs him to marry no one less beautiful than she, nor one whom her gloves will not fit. This request motivates the episode of the father's insistence on marriage with his own daughter. Stories of this type, were, however, so widely diffused and the Catalan text itself is so late a composite, that there is no improbability in supposing that some much earlier version, using this particular feature, may have caught the attention of the original author of the 'Lai d'Esgare'." The gloves in question here, are undoubtedly 'fairy gloves' introduced as recognition tokens, and if you like, for the purpose of preventing the Oedipus-like situation which follows in dramatic irony. The glove marriage test is only a variant of the shoe marriage test found in the many versions of the Cinderella folk-tale. Miss Cox in 'Cinderella' enumerates countless instances of the shoe marriage test and only four instances of the glove test on pp. 18, #41; p. 33, #82; p. 41, #101; p. 76, #199. Similar to the glove and shoe test is the shirt test in 'Generides', the tears from which can be washed only by their owner, and in 'Guigemar, the fold in the lover's tunic which only she who had plaited it may undo. 11. 175-8, omitted in Percy, probably because their sense is

A letter with the chylde put she,
With the gloues also, perde¹.

1. 'par deus', by God, but weakened as an oath to some such word as 'really', 'truly'.

repeated in ll. 180-3; cp. Auch.: ll. 192-6,

"And seththen ~~je~~ tok a paire gloue
Pat here lemman here sente of fairi londe
Pat nolde on no manne honde,
Ne on child ne on womman ~~the~~ nolde;
But on hire selue wel ~~the~~ wolde."

1. 176, MS., 'woman^s': probably an error in copying. See Auch. reading in above note. MS. reads 'handes': ll. 183 ff. cp. with the corresponding passages in the Auch. MSS. of 'Sir Degarre' and 'Lay Le Freine^s'. Miss Hibbard (p. 302) is of the opinion that the Degare poet borrowed the description of the secret birth and the maiden messenger's carrying the child on a moonlit night to the door of a hermitage, from the English version of Marie's 'Lai La Fraisine'. Since nothing is said in the French version, of the moonlight, she believes that the English translator added this affective touch which the Degare poet in turn, borrowed.

"And knit hit wi³ a selkene thred, 201
Aboute his nekke; Wel God sped
Than was in ~~he~~ lettre þous iwite
(That who hit founde, sscholde iwite):
Par charité, ~~zif~~ ani god man
His helples child find can,
Lat cristen hit wi³ prestes honde
And bringgen hit to liue in londe;
For hit is comen of gentil blod.
Helpe³ hit wi³ his owen god,
Wi³ ~~he~~ tresor that vnder hit fet lis
And ten ~~3er~~ eld whan he (h)is,
Take³ him this ilke gloue two,
And bidde³ him, whar-euere he go,
That he ne louie no woman in londe,
But his gloues willen in hire honde;
For, sike³, on honde nelle³ þai nere
But on moder, that him bere."
þe maiden tok the child here mide
Stille awai in auen-tide,
Alle þe winteres longe ni³t.
The weder was cler, the mone li³t
Thanne war þe war anon
Of an hermitage in a ston;
An holi man had þer his woni³ng.
Þider þe wente on heying
An sette þe cradel at his dore
And durste abide no lengore
And passed for³ anon ri³t.

She knyht the letter with a threde
About his necke, a full good spede!

1. quickly.

(Le Freine)

"And toke a ring of gold fin, 134
And on hir right arm it knitt
With a lace of silke therin pilt:
And whos~~e~~ hir founde schuld haue in mende,
That it were comen of riche kende,
The maid toke the childe hir mide,
"And stale oway in an euentide,
And passes ouer a wild heth;
Thurch feld and thurch wode hye geth,
All the winter-long night.
The weder was clere, the moon was light,
So that hye com bi a forest side:
Sche wax all weri and gan abide.
Sone after she gan herk
Cokkes crowe, and houndes berk.
Sche arose and thider wold;
Ner and nere she gan bihold.
Walles and hous fele hye seighe;
A chirche, with stepel fair and heighe,
Than nas ther noither strete no toun,
Bot an hous of religioun:
An order of nonnes wele y-dight,
To seruy God both day and night.
The maiden abode no lengore;
Bot yede hir to the chirche-dore,
And on knes she sat adoun,
And seid wepeand her orisoun:
"O Lord", he said, "Jesu Christ,
"That sinful man bedes herst,
"Vnderfong this present,
"And kelp this seli innocent,
"That it mot y-chistned be,
"For Marie loue, thi moder fre;" 166

11. 185-6, 6mitted in Percy.

Then was in the letter wrytte
 Whoso it founde shulde it wytte,¹
 For Christes loue, if anye good man
 This wofull chylde fynde can,² 190
 Dō³ hym be christened of priestes hande;
 And helpe hym (for) to lyue in lande,
 With this syluer that is here,
 Tyll he may armes bere;
 And helpe hym with his owne good!⁴
 For he is come of gentyll blood.

And when she had thus done,
 The mayden toke her leue ryght sone,
 With the chylde in the cradell, and all thyng,
 She stale awaye in the euenynge, 200
 And went her way, and wist not where,
 Through thicke and thyn, in the brere.⁵
 She went all the wynter nyght,
 By shyning of the mone light;
 Then was she redely⁶ ware⁷ anone
 Of an hermitage made of stone.

1. take notice of; 2. did find; 3. have; 4. property;
 5. briars; 6. readily; 7. aware.

1. 191, cp. "get him" etc., Percy. Cp. the grief of Desonelle after her twin boys have been stolen by beasts: she grieves because she does not know how they will be baptized (ll. 1830-6, E.E.T.S.E.S. 1887).

1. 192, MS. reads "and to helpe hym to" etc.; Percy reading substituted.

11. 203-4, omitted in Percy.

An holy man had there his dwellynge,
 And thither she went without lesynge,
 And set the cradel at the dore,
 For she durst dwel no longer thore, 210
 But turned agayne anone ryght
 And came agayne the same nyght.
 The hermite rose on the morowe,

1. without lying, i. e., certainly.

1. 208, meaningless phrase; rhyme tag.

1. 209, cp. Marie's 'Milun' where the child is secretly sent to his aunt to be reared, accompanied by a letter giving the circumstances of his birth, and a gold ring through which means he might be discovered to his mother (Ellis, p. 60). Cp. also, (Bibl. Bleue, 2. p.6) in 'La Chevalier de la Mer', "Comment le petite garçonnet, fruit secret des amours du roi Perion et de la princesse Elisene, abandonné par Dariolette au fil de L'eau, fut recueilli par un gentilhomme nommé Gandales".

11. 213 ff, cp. corresponding passages in Auch. MSS. of 'Degarre' and 'Le Freine':

"The hermite aros erliche ~~po~~, 235
 And his knaue was vppe also,
 An seide ifere here mateins,
 And seruede God and hise seins.
 The litel child ~~pai~~ herde crie
 And clepede after help on hie;
~~pe~~ holi man his dore vndede
 And fond ~~pe~~ cradel in ~~pe~~ stede:
 He tok vp the clothes anon
 And biheld the litel grom.
 He tok~~pe~~ letter and radde wel sone,
 That tolde him, that he scholde done,
 The hermite held vp bo~~pe~~ his honde
 And ~~konked~~ God of al his sonde
 And bar ~~kat~~ child into his chapel
 And for ioie he rong his bel."
 (Le Freine)
 "The porter of the abbay aros,
 And dede his office in the clos;
 Rong the belles and taperes light,
 Leyd forth bokes, and al redi dight,

And eke¹ his knaue², also:

"Lord", he sayde, " I cry Thee mercy,
For nowe I here a yonge chylde crye."

This holy man his dore vntyde,

And found the cradell in that stede;

He lyft vp the shete anone,

And loked vpon the lytle grome³; 220

Than he helde vp his ryght honde

And thanked Jesus Christ of his sonde⁴.

He bare the childe into the chapel;

For joye of him he ronge the bel:

And layed vp the gloues and the treasure,

And christened the childe with great honour:

1. also; 2. boy-servant; 3. lad; 4. providence,
sending.

The chirche dore he vndede,
And seighe anon in the stede
The pel liggen in the tre,
And thoughte wele that it might be,
That theues hadde y-robbed sumwhare,
And gon therforth, and lete it thare.
Therto he yede and it vnwond,
And the maiden child therin he fond.
He tok it vp betwen his hond,
And thonked Jesu Cristes sond." 192

1. 217, Auch. 'vndede', undid; the more usual idiom.
11. 226 ff, see Loomis' warning against taking popular
etymologies too seriously; see also the discussion
of the name 'Degore' in introduction. Cp. Auch. MS.
(11. 252-8):

"And cristned ~~be~~ child wif gret honour
In the name of the Trinite;
He hit nemnede Degarre:
Degarre nowt elles^{his}
But ~~king~~, ~~bat~~ not neuer, whar it is,
Or ~~king~~, ~~bat~~ is neg³ forlorn also;
Forthi the child he nemnede ~~fous~~ ~~fo~~."

And in worshipe of the Trinite,
 He called the childes name, Degore:
 For Degore to vnderstande, it is
 But thyng that almost is lost, Iwys;
 As thinge that almoste ago²,
 Therefore he called that chylde so.

230

1. I believe; 2. gone away, i. e., passed away.

Cp. 'Le Freine', (ll. 221-8):

"The abbesse lete clepe a prest anon,
 And lete it cristin in fun-ston:
 And for it was in an asche y-founde
 She cleped it Frain in that stounde.
 The Freyns of the asche is a 'freyn'
 After the language of Bretayn,
 Forthi, 'le Frein' men clepeth this day
 More than asche, in ich cuntray."

The son of Crystabell and Eglamour was named Degrebell
 'because he fell from the talons of a griffon'. Mr. Ellis
 (p. 535, n. 4) points out that it must be left to the
 sagacity of the reader to find out the language in which
 the word 'Degrebell' has the meaning. Since Fenice, in the
 romance 'Cliges', had no equal in beauty, she was so named
 because the Phoenix is the most unique and has no equal
 for beauty among the bird kingdom. Cp. also, 'Libeaus
 Desconnus', ll. 19-20:

"And for love of hys fayr vyys,
 His modyr clepede hym "Bewfys", and again,"
 "The chylde seyde, "Be seynt Jame, 49
 I not what ys my name-----"
 "Now wyll y yeue hym a name 61
 "Before your alle yn same,
 For he ys so fayr and fre;
 Be god, and be seynt Jame,
 So clepede hym neuer hys dame,
 What woman that so hyt be,
 Now clepeth hym alle yn us
 Lybeaux desconnus,
 For the love of me;
 Than my ye wete a row
 The fayre unknowe,
 Sertes so hatte he."

72

The heremite was an holy man of lyfe,
 He had a syster that was a wyfe;
 He sent the chylde to her full rathe,¹
 With much mony by his knaue,
 And bade (s)he shuld take good hede,
 The chylde to nouryshe and fede;
 And this littel chylde Degore,
 Vnto that citie was i-bore. 240
 The good man and his wife in fere
 The chylde they kepte, as it theyr owne were,
 Tyll it was x. winter olde.
 He waxed a fayre chylde, and a bold,
 Wel taught, fayre, and kynde:
 Ther was none suche in all that ende.²

1. quickly ; 2. ende for a probable lende = land.

Cp. also, "Pwyll, Prince of Dyved" (Mabinogion, p. 29),
 "...and they caused the boy to be baptized, and the
 ceremony was performed there; and the name which they
 gave unto him was Gwri Wallt Euryn, 'because what hair
 was upon his head was as yellow as gold'". See, also
 (Mab., p. 95), in "Kilhwch and Olwen", ... and the
 swineherd took the boy, and brought him to the palace;
 and he was christened, and they called him Kilhwch,
 'because he had been found in a swine's borrow'.
 Another parallel is found in the story of 'King Constant'
 (Everyman's Edition, p. 42): "Then he made a bargain with
 the surgeons to heal the child of his wound for eighty
 gold pieces; and afterwards, he brought him to the font,
 and caused him to be named Constant, 'because of his
 costing the abbey so great a sum to be made whole'".
 11. 233-4, cp. 'Le Freine'.

"And home to his house he it brought,
 And took it his doughter, and her besought
 That she should keep it as she can,
 For she was melche, and couthe than."

11. 237, MS. reads 'bade he'; cp. Auch. 'bad here take'.
 11. 243-6, omitted in Percy.

What tyme that x. yere was come and spent,
 Vnto the heremyte they him sente;
 The heremyte longed hym for to se;
 Then was he a fayre chylde and fre. 250
 He taught the childe of clerkes lore,
 Other x. winter withouten more;
 And whan he was of xx. yere,
 He was a manne of greate powere:
 There was no yonge man in that lande
 That myght stande a brayde¹ of his hande.
 And when the heremite that did se,
 That the man so stronge wold be
 A stalworth² man in any werke,
 And of his tyme, a well good clerke. 260
 He toke (him)³ his florence⁴ and his gloues,
 That he had kept from him in his house,
 But his x. pound⁵ that was sterlinge
 Was spent about the childes keping,
 The heremite toke him his letter to rede:
 He loked therin the same stede:

1. blow; 2. valiant; 3. gave him possession of; 4. a gold coin weighing about 54 grs. 5. pound weight of silver pennies.

1. 247, MS. reads 'spēt'.

11. 255-8, omitted in Percy. Cp. Havelok and Gamelyn, in the romances of those names for physical prowess.

1. 261, indirect object required for sense: cp. l. 265.

11. 263-4, omitted in Percy.

"Syr", he sayd, "By Saynt Charyté,
 Was this letter made by me?"
 "Ye, sonne, by Him that me deme' shall,
 Thus, I found thee"; and told him all. 270
 He set him downe on knees full blythe,
 And thanked the hermite man(i) si¹the;
 And sayd he wold not rest in londe,
 Tyll the time he had his father founde.
 He gaue the hermite halfe his golde,
 And the remnaunt vp he fold.
 He toke his leue, and fayne wold go;
 The hermite sayd he shuld not so:
 "To seke thy kynne thou mayst not endure
 Without good horse and good armure". 280

1. judge: 2. times.

11. 273-4, cp. Percy:

"Then sayes Degree, "I will not blinne

Till I have found my ffather, or some of my kin."

1. 276, marks end of Part I in Percy.

11. 277-8, omitted in Percy.

Howe Syr Degore fought with a dragon in a forest
and slewe hym.

"Syr Heremite", he sayd, "In dede,
I wyll haue no other wede¹
But a batte in my hande,
Myne enemyes therwith to withstand:
A full good sapelynge of an oke";
On whome² he set therwith a stroke,
Were he neuer so tall a man,

1. literally clothes, which might come to mean armour,
hence, weapon; 2. whomever.

11. 281-2, cp. Percy:

"then sayd Degree, by St. John
horsse nor harness Ile haue none".

1. 283, cp. Percy, 'bitter' for MS. 'batte'.

1. 284, MS., 'withstad'.

1. 283-9, see Hibbard, p. 303, "His (Degore's) bringing
up in the woodland hermitage and his setting forth
armed only with a rough sapling, suggest the beginning
of the Perceval story of the Forest-Reared Youth."
See also 'Peredur, the Son of Evrawc' (Mabinogion, p. 177),
the Celtic variant of the Perceval story, where the youth
Peredur kept from contacts with arms and warriors, inquires,
"What is a knight; what is a saddle, etc.?", and (p. 181)
drags a knight about the court to get his 'iron-coat' off.
Cp. 'The Emperour and the Childe' (Percy) p. 396), where
the child stolen by the bear, grows up to be a wild man
of the forest. See also, 'Libeaus Desconus' (Percy, II
p. 421), in which the youth Libeaus has been reared in the
forest and is untaught in the use of arms or warfare.
Cp. also, the Beatrix version of 'Chevalier au Cygne',
in which the boy Helias a typical forest reared youth,
is amazed at horses, armour, etc., but, after brief
instruction in their use, appears as his mother's champion.
See also, 'William of Palerme', in which the boy William
is brought up by a cowherd (E.E.T.S.E.S.1). See also,
Samuel, 17, 38 ff.: "Saul Armed David with his armour,
and he put an helmet of brass upon his head, also he armed
him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon
his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it.
And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I
have not proved them. And David put them off him. And
he took his staff in his hand...."

Nor yet so good armure him vpon,
He wold him fell to the grounde,
With that same bat in that stounde. 290
The childe kissed the heremite tho,
And toke his leue for to go.

Degore¹ went forth his waye,
Through a forest halfe a daye;
He herd no man, nor sawe none,
Tyll it passed the hygh none;
Then herde he great strokes fall,
That made great noyse with all.
Full sone he thought that to se,
To wete¹ what the strokes might be. 300
There was an erle both stout² and gaye,
He was come thyther the same daye.
For to hunt for a dere or a do,
But his houndes were gone hym fro.
Then, was there a dragon great and grymme,
Full of fyre, and also venymme,
Wyth a wyde throte, and tuskes greate,
Vpon that knight faste gan he bete.

1. discover; 2. magnificent.

11. 289-90, cp. 'Havelok', ll. 1806-7:

"Hauelok lifte up *he* dore-tre,
And at a dint he slow hem *fre*;"

Cp. also, 'Gamelyn' (l. 128), "Thus Gamelyn with his
pestel . made hem alle agast".

And as a lyon then was his feete,
 Hys tayle was longe and full vmmete¹; 310
 Betwene hys head and his tayle
 Was xxii. fote withouten fayle;
 His body was lyke a wyne tonne.
 He shone full bryght agaynst the sonne;
 His eyen were bright as any glasse,
 His scales were harde as any brasse,
 And therto² he was necked lyke a horse.
 He bare his head vp with great force;
 The breth of his mouth that dyd out blowe,
 As it had bene a fyre on lowe: 320
 He was to loke on as I you tell,
 As it had bene a fiende of hell.
 Many a man he had shent,³
 And many a horse he had rente,⁴
 And to that earle harde batayle began,
 But he defended him like a man,
 And boldely smote hym with his swerde,
 But of all his strokes he was not aferde.

1. immense, huge; 2. moreover; 3. killed; 4. torn.

1.313, cp. Percy: "his belly was like a whole tunne".
 1. 319-20, omitted in Percy; cp. Auch. "Ase fer out
 of a chimenai"; 'lowe' is equivalent to mound or hill.
 It may also mean fire or flame. The 'on' might be
 emended to read 'or' as the line is evidently corrupt.
 1. 322, dragons are fairly common in romance. Cp.
 the monster Grendel in 'Beowulf'. Probably the most
 horrible and vivid picture of the dragon in English
 literature is that one of Errour in Spenser's 'Faery
 Queen', Canto I stanzas 14-21. Cp. also 'Dragons' and
 'Dragon Lore', Ernest Ingersoll, 1922.

His skynne was harde as any stone,
 Wherefore he might hym no harme done; 330
 And when the erle Syr Degore se,
 "Helpe, Syr", he sayd, "For Saynt Charité!"
 And then answered Syr Degore,
 "Full gladly, Syr, and God before."
 When the dragon of Degore had a sight,
 He left the earle, and came to hym right;
 And the chylde¹ that was so stronge,
 Toke his staffe that was so longe,
 And smote the dragone so on y^e crowne,
 That in that wodde he fell downe. 340
 And then that dragon anone ryght
 Smote the chylde with suche myghte
 Wyth his tayle vpon the ryght syde,
 That he fell downe in that tyde:
 And he sterte vp² anone full ryght,
 And defended him with mucche myght,
 With that staffe that was so longe,
 He brake of hym both fote and bone,
 That it was wonder for to se;
 He was so tough he myght not dye, 350

1. title given a youth who has not yet been dubbed a knight; 2. started up.

1. 334, syncopated form of address for 'God go before you'. See 1. 88, "God you se", for 'God bless you'.

Tyll Degore one stroke at hym flonge,
 With hys staffe that was so stronge:
 He smote him on the crowne so hye,
 That he made his braynes out flye.
 And then the erle was glad and blythe,
 And thanked Degoré many sythé!
 And prayed him, he wolde with him ride,
 Vnto his palays, there besyde.
 And there he made hym a knyght,
 And made him good chere that nyght,
 Rentes², treasure, and halfe his lande,
 He wolde haue seased³ into his hande.
 Syr Degoré thanked hym truely,
 And prayed him of his curtesye,
 To let his ladyes to-fore⁴ hym come,

360

1. times; 2. tax as, tithes; 3. give possession, invest;
4. before.

11. 351-2, omitted in Percy: 1. 352, precedes 1. 351 in MS. 1. 354, cp. the (Middle English Version) the dragon fight in 'Beves of Hampton'; 'Guy of Warwick, in which Guy kills the dragon 'Come out of Irlond'; 'Torrent of Portyngale', in which Torrent kills the dragon as a task before he can wed Desonelle; Lludd's killing the dragons after they had drunk the magiz meade ('Lludd and Llevelys', Mabinogion); Ywain's rescue of the lion from a lion from a dragon ('Ywain and Gawain').

1. 359, two modes of conferring knighthood were early in practice; in the first the candidate knelt before a knight or a person of equal or higher rank, who struck him thrice with the flat of his sword and pronounced a brief formula of creation and exhortation over him; in the second and more complete procedure, there was one of two ceremonies observed, the courtly or the sacred. When the knight was dubbed at court, great feasts were held and the knight was presented with robes, arms, spurs and the like. In the sacred dubbing, the ceremony occurred at the church where the candidate had passed the night in a vigil of prayer and fasting.

11. 361-2, Percy includes:

Wyues, maydens, more and some,
 And also your doughter eke;¹
 And yf my gloues byn for them mete,²
 Or wyll vpone any of theyr handes,
 Then wolde I fayne³ take (thy) landes; 370
 And yf my gloues wyl not so,
 Then wyll I take my leaue and go.
 All the women were out brought,
 That there about myght be sought;
 All they assayed⁴ the gloues than,
 But they were mete for no woman.
 Syr Degore toke vp his gloues anone,⁵
 And also toke leaue for to gone.
 The earle was a lorde of gentyll bloud;
 He gaue Syre Degore a stede full good, 380
 And thereto⁶ he gaue hym good armure,
 That whiche was bothe fayre and sure,
 And also a page, his man to be,
 And an hakney to ryde on truely.
 Syr Degore¹ was glade and blyth,
 And thanked the erle many a sythe.
 He rode forth vpon his waye,
 Many a myle vpon sommers daye;

1. also; 2. fit; 3. gladly; 4. tried on; 5. immediately;
 6. also.

"And alsoe his daughter to be his wiffe
 and all his lands after his liffe."

1. 370, MS. reads 'my'; cp. Auch. 'pi londe' which makes better sense.

11. 386-7, omitted in Percy; cp. ll. 355-6, complimentary couplet with each line ending in a rhyme tag.

Vpon a daye muche people he met:

He houted style¹, and fayre them grete²,

390

And asked a squyre what tidynge,

And fro whence came all that folke rydynge.

The squyre sayd, "Syr, verament³,

They come from the parly^ament;

Fro a counsayle the kynge dyd make,

The which is fer his doughters sake:

But when the parlyament was most plener⁴,

The kynge let cry⁵ both farre and nere,

"If any man were so bolde,

That with the kynge juste wolde,

400

He shulde haue his doughter in maryage,

And his lande and his herytage¹."

It is a lande, both good and fayre,

And the kynge therto had none heyre;

But certes there dare no man graunt therto;

Many one sayd⁶; the might not do.

For euery man that rydeth to hym,

He beteth them with strokes grym;

1. waited, remained on horseback; 2. greeted; 3. truly;
4. in full session; 5. caused to be announced; 6. tried.

11. 395-6, omitted in Percy.

11. 400 ff., see notes to ll. 27-30, for discussion of
the Incest theme.

Some he breketh the necke anone;¹
 Of some he craketh both backe and bone; 410
 Some through the body he glytte;²
 And some to death he smytte.
 And to hym may no man do nothings,
 Suche a grace euer had our kynge.
 Syr Degore stode in a studye than,
 And thought he was a doughtie³ man;
 "And I am in my yonge bloud,
 And I haue horse, and armure good,
 And, as I trowe⁴, a full good steede.
 I will assaye if I maye spede,⁵ 420

1. immediately; 2. pass through with swift or unresisted movement; 3. mighty; 4. believe; 5. succeed.

1. 414, undoubtedly, this is the "divinity that doth hedge a king", though in the case of Degore and his grandfather, there are no special signs indicative of this divinity as for example in 'Havelok'; see ll. 585 ff.:

"She saw ~~her~~-inne a liht ful shir,
 Also briht so it were day,
 Aboute ~~he~~ knaue ~~her~~ he lay.
 Of hise mouth it stod a stem
 Als it were a sunnebem;
 Also liht was it ~~her~~-inne
 So ~~her~~ brenden cerges inne.
 'Iesu Crist!' (quath) dame Leue,
 'Hwat is ~~at~~ liht in ure cleue!
 (Ris) up, Grim, loke hwat it menes,
 Hwat is ~~he~~ liht (here), as ~~hou~~ wenes?'
 He stirten bo~~ke~~ up to the knaue ..
 'For man shal god wille haue ...'
 Vnkeueleden him, and swi~~ke~~ unbounden,
 And sone anon (upon) him funden,
 Als he tirueden of his serk,
 On his riht shuldre a kyne-merk;"

And¹ I may beare the kinge downe,
 I may be a man of great renowne.
 And if that he me fel can,
 There knoweth no body what I am;
 Death, or lyfe, what so betide,
 I wyll once against hym ryde."
 Thus in the citie hys inne² he takes,
 And rested him, and merye makes.
 So vpon a daye the kynge he met:
 He kneled downe, and fayre hym grete³; 430
 He sayd, "Sir Kyng of mucche myght,
 My lord hath sent me to you right,⁴
 To warne you howe it shall be:
 My lorde wyll come, and fight with the;
 To iust with the my lorde hath nome⁵."
 The kynge saide, "He shall be welcome,
 Be he knyght, or barowne,
 Erle, duke, or churle⁶ in towne;
 There is no man I wyll forsake,⁷
 Who all maye wyne, all maie take." 440

1. but if; 2. lodging; 3. greeted; 4. directly;
 5. undertaken; 6. thrall, servant; 7. refuse.

11. 425-6, omitted in Percy.

Howe Syr Degore justed with the Kynge of England,
and smote hym down.

So on the morowe the daye was set
The hynges auysed much the bet¹;
But then there was no lyuying man,
That Degore trusted muche vpon;
But to churche that tyme went he,
To heare a Masse of the Trinite.
To the Father he offred a floryne,
And to the Sonne another fyne,
The thirde to the Holy Ghost he offred;
The preest in his masse, for him he prayed. 450
And whan the masse was done,
Vnto his ynnere he went anone;
He dyd arme hym well in dede,
In ryche armure good at nede.
His good stede he gan to stryde,
And toke his spere, and forth dyd ryde;
His knaue² toke another spere,
And after his mayster he gan it bare.
Thus in the felde Syr Degore abode³ than,
The kynge came with manye a man. 460

1. prepared much the better; 2. boy-servant; 3. waited, remained.

11. 443 ff., perhaps the poet was a bit cynical on this point. Cp. 'Torrent of Portyngale', in which Torrent prefaces each exploit with pious supplication. See, also, Perceval and Introduction, Part III.
1. 460, marks end of Part II, Percy.

Manye came thyther redelye,¹
 To se the iustinge trulye.
 All that in the fyelde were,
 They sayde and did swere,
 That they neuer or that tyme se²,
 So fayre a man with their eye,
 As was y^e yonge knyght, Syr Degore,³
 But none wyst³ what man was he.
 They rode togyther at the last,
 On their good stedes full faste. 470
 The kynge had the greater shafte,
 And more he coude of that craft ;
 To dashe him downe then he mente
 And in his shilde sat suche a dente⁴
 That hys good spere all to-braste⁵,
 But Degore was stronge and sate faste.
 Then sayd the kynge, "Alas! alas!
 For me befell neuer suche a case:

1. readily, truly; 2. before that time saw; 3. knew;
 4. blow; 5. broke to pieces.

11. 469, ff., are a variant of the Father-Son Combat Motif. See notes to 11. 920 ff.

11. 471-2, omitted in Percy.

11. 477 ff., Degore is undoubtedly, invulnerable, a common characteristic of folk heroes. This is probably connected with the idea of the Forest-Reared Youth as in the case of Helias and Perceval. Cp. MacCulloch, 'Childhood of Fiction, p. 19.

There was neuer a man that I might hit,
 That euer might my stroke (with) sit;¹ 480
 This is a man all for the nones,
 For he is a man of great bones."
 Then toke the kyng a greater tre,²
 And square "also mote I the,³
 And if his necke wyll not a-two
 His backe shall or that I go."
 The kyng rode to hym with great randowne,
 And thought to haue dasshed the childe downe:
 He smote Syr Degore sone anone,
 Right before the breste bone, 490
 That his horse was rered on hye,
 And Syr Degore was fallen nye.
 Syr Degore thus his course out yode,
 He was so angry in his mode:

1. withstand; 2. lance; 3. So might I thrive.

1. 480, MS reads 'sit'; cp. Auch. 'withsit.'

1. 481, "all for the nones", a meaningless rhymetag, rendered in to modern English by some such phrase as 'all for the occassion'.

11. 483-4, omitted in Percy. 'Square' is a northern form and even though there are but a few northern words in the text, the appearance of even these argues a common parent source for both the Percy MS. and the Copeland Print.

11. 492-3, cp. Auch. MS:

"And Degarre his cours out ritte
 And was agramed out of his witte."

"Alas!" he sayd, "I haue myssed yet
 And he hath me twyse hyt,
 And neuer ones with him I mette;
 By God, I shall auyse bette'.
 They rode togither with great might,
 In their shyeldes their speares pight;² 500
 In their shields their speares all to-broke;
 Vnto theyr handes with the stroke.
 And then the kynge began to speake,
 "Gyue me a speare that wyll not breke:
 For he shall anone be smitten (adoun),
 Though he be as stronge as was Sampson;
 And if he be the deuyll of hell,
 I shall him soone downe fell."
 The kynge toke a speare, styffe and stronge,
 And Degore toke anether, good and longe: 510
 And stoutlye to the kynge he smytte;
 The kynge fayled and Degore hym hyt.
 And Syr Degoré so him bete,

1. arrange better; 2. pitched, fell.

1. 495, not a good rhyme with the following line; 'yet' should probably read 'yit', for the older form 'ȝit'.

1. 497, omitted in Percy, but Percy MS. reads;

"By God I will auyse better,

I will not long be his debtor."

1. 500-3, the spears split in the contestants' hands with the force of the impact against the shields.

1. 505, MS. reads 'downe'; Auch. 'adoun', a slightly earlier form, makes a better rhyme.

He made the kinges horse turne vp his fet.
 Boldely, he rode vp, than,
 And semed a full goodly man.
 The kyng was out of his sadel cast,
 Wherof his doughter was sore agast.
 Then was there muche noyse and cry,
 The kyng was sore ashamed, for-thy.¹ 520
 Well I wote, his doughter was sory,
 For then she wist, redely,²
 That she shulde maryed be,
 To a man of a straunge countre,
 And lede her lyfe with such a one,
 That she wist neuer fro whence he come.
 The kyng sayde to Syr Degore,
 "Come hyther, fayre sonne, me before:
 And³ thou were asgentyl^a man,
 As thou semest to loke vpon, 530
 And⁴ thou coude witte, and reason do,⁴
 As thou arte doughty man to,
 I wold thyncke my lande well beset(t)e,⁵

1. therefore; 2. truly; 3. if; 4. if thou couldst know and reason, i. e., if thou are as intelligent as etc.; 5. bestowed.

11. 515-8, omitted in Percy.

11. 522-4, cp. Percy:

"Ffor then shee wist that shee must marrye
 vntill a man of a strange countreye
 the which before shee neuer se..."

1. 529, MS. reads, 'gentyl a man'. (omit)

1. 533, MS. reads, 'besete'.

And if it were fiue tymes bette.
For worde spoken I must nedes holde,
Before my barons that be so bolde.
I take¹ the my doughter, by the hande,
And cesse² thee in all my lande,
To be myne heyre after me,
In ioye, and blysse for to be."

540

1. give; 2. seise; transfer possession, legally;
enfeoff.

Howe Syr Degore wedded his mother, the Kynges doughter
of England, and how she knewe that he was her sonne
by the gloues.

Great ordynaunce¹ was there wrought;
To the churchē dore were they brought,
And were there wedded verament,
Vnto the holye sacramente.
Looke what foly happened there,
That he shuld wed his owne mother,
The whiche had borne hym on her syde,
And yet he knewe nothyng that tyde,²
He knewe nothyng of her kynne,
Nor she knewe nothyng of hym,
And both together ordeyned to(libbe),³
Yet, paraduenture, they may be sybbe.⁴
Thus dyd Syr Degore, the bolde,

550

1. ceremony, arrangements; 2. happened; 3. live;
4. kin, related.

1. 547, cp. Percy: "The which had borne him of her syde."
Cp., also, Auch.: "That sche vpon here bodi bar."
ll. 549-50, assonance employed in lieu of rhyme.
1. 551, MS. reads 'bed', which is probably a mistake,
considering the poet's accuracy in rhyme, as a whole. Cp.
Auch. MS.:

"And be wedded togeder to libbe
Par auenture, and be negh sibbe"

1. 554, time and space are as nothing in Medieval Romance.
Twenty years or more, tournaments have been in order for
the hand of the princess, and she is still as young and
beautiful and as desirable as when the first one was held.
Cp. in 'Eglamour', Degrebell's winning his mother in
tournament, their subsequent marriage. The incest motif
creeps in here, however, when after the discovery, suitors
for his mother's hand must meet him in jousting, this motif
which would mar the hero's character in Degore, is entirely
lacking. See Hartland, 'Primitive Paternity', II pp. 132 ff.

He wedded his mother, to haue and to holde;
Yet, He let them not synne in fere,¹
(God, that all thinge mai stere).

It passed on the hye tyme of none,
And the daye was nere-hand² donne,
To bed was brought both he and she,
With great myrth and solempnitie.

560

Syr Degore stode, and beheld, than,
And thought on the heremite, the holy man,
That he sholde neuer, for-thy,
Wedde no wydowe, nor ladye,
But-yf she myght the gloues two,
Lyghtlye vpon her handes do.
"Alas!" then sayde Syr Degore,
"The tyme that euer I was (bore)!"
And sayd anone, with heuy chere³,
"Me had leuer⁴ than all my kyngdome here

1. together; 2. almost; 3. sad countenance; 4. rather.

and the adventure of the Bishop of Valence, Irish Texts Soc. ii, pp. 69-81.

ll. 555-6, there is an evident omission of one line after l. 555 in M.S.; both lines are omitted in Percy. l. 555 in MS. reads 'but yet'. Cp. these lines in the Auch MS.:

"But God, that alle thinge mai stere
Wolde nowt that thai sinned ifere."

ll. 559-60, a customary ceremony in the Middle Ages. See F. Critchlow, 'On Forms of Betrothal and Wedding Ceremonies in the Old French Romans d'Aventure, Chicago, 1906.'

That nowe is seased into my hande, 570
 That I were fayre out of this lande!"
 The kynge these wordes harde¹ tho,
 And sayd, "Dere sonne, why sayest thou so?
 Is there ought agaynst thy wyll
 Eyther done, or sayde, that doth the yll?²
 Or any thyng that is mysdone?
 Tell me, and it shall be amended sone."
 "Nay, lorde", he sayde then,
 "But for all the maryage that done hath bene³,
 I wyll not with no woman mell,⁴ 580
 Wyfe, wyddow, nor damosell,
 But-yf she myght these gloues do
 Lightlye vpon her handes two."
 And when the lady gan this here,
 Anone, she chaunged all her chere,
 And all together toured her mode⁵,
 Her vysage waxed reed as any bloude.
 She knewe that the gloues longed⁶ to her,
 And sayd, "Geue me the gloues, fayre syr!" 590
 She toke the gloues in that stede⁷
 And lyghtly vpon her handes them did.

1. heard: 2. displeases you; 3. been; 4. meddle;
 5. spirit; 6. belonged; 7. place.

11. 587-8, omitted in Percy.

She fell downe, and began to crye,
 And sayd, "Lorde God, I aske mercy!
 I am thy mother that dyd thee bere,
 And thou arte myne owne sonne dere."
 Syr Degoré full soone tho,
 Toke her vp in his armes two;
 Then were they glad and blythe;
 They kessed together many a sythe'. 600
 The kyng of them had greате meruaile,
 Of the noyse they made, withoute faile,
 And was abashed of theyr weping,
 And saide, "Doughter, what is this thyng?"
 "Father", she sayde, "Wyll ye it here?
 Ye wene that I a mayden were:
 Nay, trulye, father, I am none,
 For it is xx. wynter agone!¹
 This is my sonne, God it knowe,
 And by these gloues, se it, Looe!³ 610
 She tolde hym all together there,
 Howe he was begott(en) on her.
 Then spake Syr Degoré,

1. times; 2. for xx. winters; 3. lo!

1. 612, MS. reads 'begotted'.

"Swete mother", then sayde he,
 Where is my father wonninge?¹
 And when herd ye of hym tydyng?
 "Sonne", she sayde, "By Heauen-Kynge,
 I can tell of hym no tydinge:
 But when thy father fro me wente,
 A pointlesse swerde he me lente, 620
 And charged me to kepe it than,
 Tyll the tyme thou were a man."
 She fet² the sworde full swithe³,
 And Syr Degore it out swythe⁴:
 Longe, and broade, it was, perdie⁵,
 There was none suche in that countrey.
 "Truelie", sayde Syr Degore, than,
 Woso it owed⁶, he was a man.
 Nowe, God of Heauen, He me kepe:
 Nyght, nor daye, I will not slepe, 630
 Tyl the tyme I may my father se,
 In christendome yf that he be."

 He made him mery that ylke⁷ nyght;
 On the morowe when it was day-light,
 He went to churche to heare a masse,

1. dwelling; 2. fetched; 3. quickly; 4. drew; 5. indeed;
 6. owned; 7. same.

1. 621, see notes l. 114, on recognition tokens.
 1. 632, marks end Part III, Percy.
 1. 635, see Introduction, III, and notes ll. 443ff.

And made hym redi for to passe.
 Then sayd the kynge, "My next kinne,
 I wyl gyue the knyghtes with the to wyne¹."
 "Syr", he sayd, "Grammercy², than,
 Wyth me shall go no other man,
 But my knaue that may take hede,
 To myne armure, and to my stede."
 He lept on horse, the south³ to say,
 And rode forth on his iurnay:
 Many a mile, and manye a waye,
 He rode forth on his palfray;
 And euermore he rode west,
 Tyll they came to a forest.

640

1. go; 2. best thanks (grant mercy); 3. truth.

1. 645, MS. reads 'miles'.

11. 647, ff. Degore is evidently approaching some sort of
 enchanted land; cp. notes to 11. 55 ff. According to
 Wimberly, the Otherworld may be a forest, but is usually
 lies beneath or 'beyond the sea' (p.126). Cp. 'Syr Degore',
 11. 3-4: "Of knyghtes of this countre
 That hath trauayled beyond y sea". "Cp. Ellis, p. 548,
 (Eger & Grim) "Having passed over a spacious moor, bordered
 by lofty mountains, I arrived on the banks of a deep river;
 and having discovered a ford which had been described to
 me, continued my journey through a forest which encircled
 the forbidden land,..... the Land of Doubt." See also, in
 'The Voyage of Bran', p. 142, the summary of Bran's
 Presentiment of the Happy Otherworld: "It may be reached
 by mortals specially summoned by denizens of the land; the
 summons comes from a damsel, whose approach is marked by
 magically sweet music, and who bears a magic apple-branch.
 She describes the land under the most alluring colours--
 its inhabitants free from death and decay, they enjoy in
 full measure, a simple round of sensuous delights, the land

Vnto some towne fayne¹ wold he ride,
 But there was none on neyther syde.
 Some after he found a castell clere,
 A lady trewly wonned² there

1.
 1. gladly; 2. dwelt.

11. 653-4, omitted in Percy.

1. 655, see Hibbard, p. 304, on the Castle episode in 'Degore': "All this seems to have some definite connection with Giflain, Gawain's son, about whom, near the beginning of the thirteenth century, Renaud de Beaujeu wove the elaborate romance, 'Le Bel Inconnu' (ed. Hippeau, 1860). Renaud's source seems also to have provided material for the Middle English poem sometimes ascribed to Thomas Chestre, 'Libeaus Desconus' (ed. Kaluza, 1890). In both versions the hero similarly comes to the castle of a lady possessed or persecuted by a militant suitor. In Renaud's courtly version she is described as skilled in the Seven Arts, "la pucele as blanches mains" (l.1925), and is recognizable, despite Renaud's rationalizing tendencies, as the Fairy Mistress of a Bower of Bliss. Her magic powers are described by Renaud as amusing illusory arts which she practices upon her lover in teasing punishment for seeming lack of devotion (see ll. 766 ff.). He is made to think himself in dire peril and later has to endure the laughing jests of the lady over his previous terror. In 'Syr Degare' the lady's fairy music enchants and inhibits the hero, and her words, though more sedate and brief, have the same jocose quality. Of this there is nothing in the 'Libeaus Desconus', for here the lady is a sorceress, an evil 'dame d'amour', ungraced by jest in her relations with Gingelein. But if in these respects 'Degare' is closer to the French poem, the more prosaic description of the castle and the special reference to the great fire burning in the hall (see ll. 673-4), seem closer to the text of 'Libeaus'. The explanation may lie in the knowledge possessed by the author of the French 'Lai d'Esgare' of the lost common source of 'Le Bel Inconnu' and of 'Libeaus', or in the knowledge possessed by the author of the Middle English 'Degare' of these two extant texts."

Wylde beestes there went hym by,
 And foules songe there ful merely! 650
 So longe they rode tyll it drewe to nyght,
 The sonne went down, and fayled lyght;

1. merrily.

itself is one of thrice fifty distant isles lying to the west of Ireland; access to the whole group is guarded by Manannan, Son of Lir. The first island touched at is the Island of Joy, the second, the Land of Women. The chief of the women draws Bran to shore with a magic clew, and keeps him with her for, as it seems to him, a year. Longing seizes one of the mortal band to revisit Ireland. All the wanderers accompany him, but are warned against setting foot to land. On returning to Ireland, they find they have been absent for centuries, and the one who in defiance of the warning touches earth, is forthwith reduced to ashes." No such taboo, however, is laid upon Degore, possibly because he himself is partly faery in origin. On this point, see 'Voyage of Bran', p. 159; Cuchulinn is summoned by one of the dames of Faery who is filled with love for him. The land lies over the water, and upon the trees are sweet singing birds, etc. Cuchulinn penetrates the Otherworld and returns thence scathless. His immunity from death or old age on his return to earth, is attributed to his half-divine nature, since he was supposed to have been of the same race as Manannan and Fann. See notes to ll. 102-3; cp. also, p. 164, in which Maelduin and his companions are entertained on the twenty-seventh island, the Island of the Amorous Queen, by the queen and her seventeen daughters. For further details concerning the Otherworld, see A. C. L. Brown, 'Iwain', Harvard Studies in Philology and Literature VIII, (1903); L. Paton, 'Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance', pp. 83 ff., (1903); T. B. Cross, 'The Celtic Origin of the Lay of Yonec', Revue Celtique XXXI, 461, n. 3; Hibbard, 'The Sword Bridge of Chretien de Troyes and Its Celtic Original', Romanic Review, IV, 178 ff. (1913). H. R. Patch 'Medieval Descriptions of the Otherworld', Publications of the Modern Language Association XXXIII (1918). (Bibliography according to Miss Hibbard, 197, n. 4).

l. 649, probably hand in hand with the Forest-reared youth motive, as there is nothing in the story to indicate any connection with Grateful beasts motive. The degare poet may have had in mind, however, stories of John, Daniel, and the Christian martyrs.

A fayre castell of lyme and stone,
 But other towne there was none.
 Degore sayde to his knaue, that tyde,
 "Wyll we to that castell ryde,
 And all nyght abyde wyll we,
 And aske lodgyng, for charyté."
 The drawbridge was vndrawne tho,²
 And the gate stode open also;
 Vnto the castel they gan³ theym spede,
 And fyrst he stabled up his stede;
 And then he set vp his hackeney;
 Inoughe they founde of corne and hey.

660

1. time; 2. then; 3. did.

11. 655 ff., cp. 'Libeaus Desconus' (Ritson p.57,
 "Thanne sawe they yn a park (l. 709)
 A castell stout and stark,
 That ryally was adyght.
 Swych saw they never non,
 Imade of lyme and ston,
 Ikarneled all abowte."

1. 657, lime and stone seems to have been quite popular
 as building material for medieval castles. Mention is
 also made of it in the ballad, 'The Wife of Ushur'.

11. 666-8, cp, Auch. MS.:

"First he stabled vp his stede:
 He taiede vp his palefrai,
 Inou3 he fond of hote and hai,
 He bade his grom on heying
 Kepen wel al here thing."

He went aboute, and gan to cal,
 Bothe in the court and eke in the hal; 670
 Neyther for loue, nor yet, for awe,
 Lyuinge man none there they sawe.
 And in the middes of the hall stoure,¹
 There was a great fyre in that houre;
 Then sayd his man, "Leaue syre,"²
 I haue wonder who made thys fyre?"
 "If he wyll come agayne thys nyght,
 I wyll hym abyde³ as I am a knyght."
 He set hym downe vpon the dease,⁴
 And made him wel at ease. 680
 Then was he ware⁵ sone of one,
 That in at the dore he gan gone,

1. strong; 2. dear sir; 3. tarry; 4. dais, raised platform where the tables were placed for the lords of the castle and guests of high rank; 5. aware.

1. 672, the deserted castle is paralleled in 'Perceval', 'Libeaus Desconus. In 'Degore', it is probably a rationalized Otherworld of Women. See also, 'Mabinogion', p. 152, on the Otherworld of Women in the 'Lady of the Fountain': "And there were no women in the castle except those who were in one hall. And there I saw four-and-twenty damsells". See notes to ll. 647 ff., on the Island of the Amorous Queen. See, also, Loomis, pp. 90 ff. ll. 673-4, seem to refer to one of the earliest types of medieval castles, in which the fire was built in the center of the hall, and an opening in the roof directly above to allow the smoke to escape. Cp. Auch. MS.:

"Amidde the halle flore

A fir was bet, stark and store;"

ll. 677-8, there is nothing in the text to indicate that these lines are spoken by Degore; it hardly seems possible, however, that the knaue would make such a statement and refer to himself as a knight.

And (four) maydens, fayre and fre,
 That were trussed vp to the kne.
 A twayne of them bowes dyd here,
 And two of them charged were,
 With venison, that was full good.
 Then Syr Degore vp stode,
 And blessed² them anone ryght:
 But they spake not to the knyght
 But went into the chambre, anone,
 And shytted the dore full sone.
 And anone after, therewith all,

690

1. girded; 2. greeted.

ll. 683-4, MS. reads 'three maydens', obviously a mistake in the scribe's copying, since there is no mistake in the arithmetic of the Auch. MS.; Percy also has 'three', which seems to favor the argument that both the Percy MS. and the Copeland print have a common parent version as their direct source. Cp. Auch.:

"Four dammaiseles, gent and fre,
 Ech was nakked to the kne."

Since this is a fairy land of women, it is not strange that we meet maiden huntresses, who like the pagan gods and goddesses are represented with symbols of their particular forte.

l. 689, medieval greetings were in the form of blessings.

Cp. Auch.: "And gret hem wel fair aplizt." Cp. also,

ll. 38 and 334 in 'Degore'.

l. 690, some form of taboo is usually attendant upon the meeting of mortals and Otherworld beings. The commonest taboos were speaking and eating. Thorkill, in 'Saxo', warns the Danes to be silent in Guthmund's realm, since only those versed in the manners of the country should exchange words with its inhabitants (Wimberly, p. 281). Since Degore is part faery by nature, he may be said to be versed, and therefore neither recognizes nor suffers ill effects from the lack of observance of any taboo.

l. 693, a filler, and probably the worst line in the text.

There came a dwarf into the hall
 Foure foote was the lenght of hym,
 His vysage¹ was both great and grymme;
 And the heere that on his heed was
 It loketh as yelowē doth in a glasse;
 With mylke white lace, and goodly ble,²
 But full stoutly then loked he.
 He ware a cyrcote³ that was grene,
 With blaunchmer it was furred,⁴ I wene.
 He was well clade, and wel (dight),⁵
 His shone was croked as a knyghte.
 He was large both of foote and hand,

700

1. countenance; 2. countenance; 3. surcoat; 4. black and white fur; 5. clothed.

11. 694, ff. dwarfs are rare in romance and usually indicate a story of Celtic source. Chretien de Troyes makes use of them as a rule, to serve hostile knights; cp. the dwarf in 'Lancelot' (p. 274), and in 'Ywain' (p. 233). In 'Peredur, the Son of Evrawc' (Mabinogion, p. 180), a dwarf who has remained mute for a year, breaks silence with the proclaiming of Peredur as the 'great foot'. In 'The Lyfe of Ipomydon' (Weber, p. 342), a dwarf accompanies the damsel who seeks aid for her lady. In 'Ywain and Gawain' (Ritson I, ll. 2390 ff), a hostile dwarf appears who "...bar a scowrge with cordes ten/ Thar-with he bet tha gentil men", etc. An excellent description which parallels that in 'Degore' is found in 'Libeaus Desconus' (Ritson II, p. 41):

"The dwerk was clodeth yn Ynde, 1. 121
 Before and ek behynde,
 Stout he was and pert;
 Among alle Crystene kende,
 Swych on ne schold no man fynde,
 Hys surcote was overt.
 Hys berd was yellow as ony wax,
 To hys gerdell henge the plex,
 Idar well say yn certe;
 Hys schon wer with gold ydyght,
 And kopeth as a knyght,
 That semede no provert. 1. 132

It may be, however, that the dwarf is so-called here because he is misshapen.

1. 703, Ms. reads 'done'; Percy 'dight' substituted.

1. 704, see introduction.

As any man was in that lande.
 Syr Degore loked on him tho;
 And to hym reuerence dyd do,
 And he to him wolde speake no worde,
 But made him redy to laye the borde. 710
 He layde the cloth, and set forth bread,
 And also wine, both whyte and reed;
 Torches in the hall he dyd lyght,
 All thyng red to souper he dyghte:²
 And sone after with greate honoure
 There came a ladye out of her boure,
 And with her came maydens fyftene,
 Some in reed, and some in grene.

1. then; 2. prepared.

1. 710, cp. Auch.: "But sette trestles and laid the bord'." The great hall of the medieval castle served a number of purposes, since it was used both as a living room by day and a sleeping room at night for the lower members of the household; hence, these tables were portable ones and set up at mealtime on trestles.
 1. 718, green and red are Celtic Otherworld colors. According to Miss Wimberly, wherever fairies are described in balladry, they are dressed in green (pp. 175 ff.); Thomas Rymer, in the ballad of that name, wears a green costume during his sojourn in the Celtic Fairy realm; the witch Allison Gross offers her prospective leman a mantle of 'red scarlet'; in the 'Wee Wee Man', the elfin ladies are all dressed in 'glistening green'. Fairies as such, appear less often in romance than they do in ballads, but when they do appear they are usually described as dressed in red or green, as for example, in 'Eger and Grim' (Ellis, p. 548-9), Sir Graysteel, the Otherworld guardian, wears red armour,^{Scottish} and Loosepain is clothed in 'scarlet'. See also, 'Minstrelsy', by Scott (ed. Henderson) II, p. 354; Wentz 'The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries', pp. 312 ff.; Keightley, 'Fairy Mythology', p. 290.

Syr Degore followed anone ryght,

And nought she spake vnto the knyghte,

720

But yede[†] and washed euer^ychone,

And to souper gan they gone.

The ladye was fayre and bryght,

In the myddes of the desse, she set downe ryght:

1. went.

11. 721-2, since eating was done by means of the fingers, it was not only good manners but also very necessary to wash the hands before and after eating. Cp. Chaucer's description of his Prioress (11. 127-136, Prologue):

"At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest,
In curteisys was set ful muche hir lest.
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte."

Cp. also, 'Libeaus Desconus' (11. 98-9):

"Duk, erl, and baroun,
Whesch and yede to mete;"

Cp. also, 'Sir Orpheo' (l. 473),

"The steward wasched and wente to mete".

Cp. 'Emare' (11. 217-9; 889-92):

"Then the lordes that were grete,
They wesch and seten down to mete,
And folk hem serued swyde."

"Then the lordes that were grete,
Wheschen ayeyn after mete,
And then com spycerye."

Cp. also, 'Le Bone Florence of Rome' (l. 1009):

"Then they wysche, and to mete begone."

See also, 'Tractus Urbanitatis' in the medieval book on manners, i. e., 'Babees Book', p. 14, ll. 39-44.

"To the mete when þou art sette
Fayre and honestly thow ete hyt:
Fyrst loke þat þy handes be clene,
And þat þy knyf be sharpe and kene,
And cutte þy breed and alle þy mete
Ryȝth euen as þou doste hit ete."

On euery syde sat maidens fyue,
 Fayre and goodly, as any was alyue!¹
 "Bygod!" then sayde Syr Degore,
 "I haue you blessed², and you not me....
 But you seme dombe. By Saint Johan,
 I shall make you speke, and³ I can!" 730
 Syr Degore coude⁴ of curtesye;
 He yede and sate before the lady,
 And when he had taken that seate,
 He toke a knyfe, and cute his meate⁵.

1. alive; 2. greeted; 3. if; 4. knew; 5. food.

1. 725, cp. Auch. MS. :

"Amidde þe sat anon riȝt,
 And on aither half maidenen fíue."

The disagreement in number of the two MSS. is probably the result of the differing conceptions of the medieval table, held by the poet and the scribe. The table in the Auch. was probably a single straight one, while that in the Copeland, was probably in three divisions placed at right angles to each other, the center portion being raised upon the dais and reserved for the lady of the castle and those of high rank, the lesser personages sitting according to station along the sides.

1. 726, according to Wimberly (p. 178), surpassing loveliness is characteristic of feminine beauty. Cp.

'The Lady of the Fountain' (Mabinogion, p. 152):

"And there I saw four and twenty damsels, embroidering satin at a window. And this I tell thee, Kai, that the least fair of them was fairer than the fairest maid thou hast ever beheld in the Island of Britain, and the least lovely of them, was more lovely than Gwenhwyvar, the wife of Arthur, when she has appeared loveliest at the Offering, on the Day of the Nativity, or at the feast of Easter."

11. 729-30, cp. Auch. MS.:

"But þai be domb, bi and bi,
 þai schul speke first, ar I."

Full lytell meate at souper eate he,
 He dyd so beholde that mayden fre;
 Hym thought she was the fayrest lady
 That euer before he dyd see:
 All his heart, thought, and myght,
 Was in that lady that was so bright. 740
 And when they had supped all,
 The dwarfe brought water into y^e hall.
 Then gan they washe euerychone,
 And then to chamber gan they gone,
 "Trewly", quod Degore, "And after I wyl,
 To loke on that lady all my fyll:
 Who² that me warneth, he shall aby,
 Or to do him make a sory crye."

1. entirely (adv.); 2. Whosoever.

11. 735 ff., Degore has begun to show symptoms of love-sickness. Were the poet French, we might expect at this point, page after page discussing these symptoms, such as one finds in Chretien's 'Cliges'.

11. 737-8, cp. the description of the enchantress in 'Libeaus Desconus', (11. 429 ff):

"Whan he seygh her face,
 Hym thought he was
 In Paradys alyue;
 With fantasme, and fayrye,
 Thus sche blerede hys yye;"

11. 739-40, omitted in Percy. Cp. Auch.:

"That al his herte and his thout
 Hire to loue was ibrowt."

Cp. also, 'Emare' (E.E.T.S.E.S. p. 8, 11. 223-4)

"That alle hys hert and alle hys pou³th,
 Her to loue was yn browght."

See also, Ellis p. 529, in which Eglamour is sick for love of Crystabell.

11. 747-8, omitted in Percy.

Vpon the stayre they them nome,¹
 And sone into the chamber he come. 750
 The lady that was so fayre and bright,
 Vpon her bed she sate downe ryght.
 She harped notes swete and fine,
 (Another broughte spices and wine)
 And Syr Degore¹ sate him downe,
 For to heare the harpes sowne,²
 That thorowe³ the notes of the harpe shyll,⁴
 He layd hym downe and slept his fyll.
 This fayre lady that ylke nyghte,
 She bad go couer that gentyll knyght, 760
 (And rich clothes on him they cast):
 And the ladye went to another bed at the laste.

1. took their way; 2. sound; 3. because of; 4. shrill.

1. 754, evidently omitted in MS.; reading above supplied from Auch. MS. Cp. Percy MS.: "Her mayds ffyled a peece of wine."

1. 757, according to Wimberly, music had power both as a soporific spell and as a countercharm. In 'Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight', the elfin's love for the mortal maiden is furthered by the notes of the fairy horn. In the 'B' version of the same, the Otherworld knight woos by the sleep-binding strains of the harp so that all succumb but his lady. Cp. ll. 67-70 in 'Degore', in which all succumb to sleep excepting the princess with the "song of the smale foules".

1. 761, evidently omitted in MS. reading above supplied from Percy MS.; cp. Auch.:

"So he slepe al that niȝt
 The leuedi wreiz him warm aplizt
 And a pilewe under his heued dede
 And zede to bedde in that stede.

1. 762, scansion shows this line corrupt; Cp. Auch. line above.

So on the morowe, when it was daye,
 The lady rose, the sothe to say,
 And into the chambre the waye gan take;
 She sayde, "Syr Knyght, aryse and wake!"
 The lady sayde, all in game,
 "Ye be well worthy to haue blame,
 For as a beest all nyght thou dyd slepe,
 And of my maydens thou tokest no kepe¹."
 And then answered the knyght, so fre,
 "Mercy! madame, and forgyue it me;
 The notes of thine harpe it made²,
 Or els, the good wyne that I had.
 But, tel me now, my lady hend³,
 Or⁴ I out of this chambre wende,
 Who hath this castel in his hande,
 And who is lorde of this lande?

770

1. heed; 2. caused; 3. courteous; 4. before.

ll. 767 ff, see in note on l. 655 the reference to the Fairy Mistress in the Bower of Bliss in 'Libeaus Desconus'. An interesting note on love-making is found in the 'Voyage of Bran', II, p. 291: "Unlimited love-making is one of the main constitutents in all the early Irish accounts of Otherworld happiness. At a later stage of national development the stress laid upon this feature puzzled and shocked. The author of 'Teigue, Son of Cian', is at pains to put a Platonic gloss upon Connla's passion. Probably the first and most distinctive mark of heaven that would occur to a modern is that there shall be neither marrying or giving in marriage there (see l. 991). But it would be a mistake to regard this feeling as wholly due to Christianity. the absence from Heaven of all that concerns the physical manifestation of love is, like so much else in Christianity, of Greek origin."

Whether that ye be mayden or wyfe,
 And in what maner ye lede your lyfe, 780
 And why you haue so many women,
 Alone withoute any men?"
 "Syr, fayne¹ I wolde the tell,
 And² thou coulde it amende well;
 My father was a bolde barowne
 And holden³ a lorde of towre and towne;
 He had neuer a chylde but me,
 I am heyre in this countré.

1. gladly; 2. if; 3. esteemed.

11. 780 ff., cp. 'Libeaus Desconus' (Ritson):
 Then seyde Lybeaus, "Gentyll dame, 652
 Tell me what ys thy name,
 And wher thou wer y-bore?"
 Sche seyde, "Be seynt Jame,
 My fader ys of ryche name,
 Woneth her before.
 An erl, an hold hore knyght,
 That hath be a man of myght,
 Hys name ys syr Autore;
 Men clepeth my Vyolette,
 For me these geauntes besette
 Our castell full yore." 663

Howe Syr Degore fought for a lady with a gyaunt
and slewe hym.

There hath me wowed many a kynght,
And many a squyre well dyght;¹ 790
But then, there wonned² here besyde,
A stout gyaunt, full of pryde.
He hath me desyred long and yore³,
And hym to loue may I neuer more.
He is about⁴ with his mastery⁵,
To do me shame and vilanye,
And he hath slayne my men, eche one,

1. arrayed; 2. dwelt; 3. for a long time; 4. on hand;
5. oppression.

ll. 782 ff., giants are preternatural beings and figure largely in romance. Here, however, the giant is undoubtedly a rationalized Otherworld guardian of this Otherworld of women. Cp. 'Ywain and Gawain' (Ritson, p. 130 ff.), in which Ywain slays the 'Guardian of the Fountain', in reality the guardian of the Otherworld, and is subsequently chosen as husband for the guardian's widow with the duty of protecting the fountain and her lands "Ogayns king Arthur and his knyghtes." In this same romance, ll. 2417-85, Ywain slays a giant who would have slain four youths, and again, ll. 2961-3358, he liberates from their two guardians, the maidens poorly fed and poorly clothed. Cp. also, 'Eger and Grim', in which Sir Graysteel is likewise a rationalized Otherworld guardian, and Lillias, the counterpart of the lady whom Degore is about to rescue. In 'Peredur, the Son of Evrawc', the maiden tells Peredur of a hostile earl who has besieged her castle since her father's death because he desires her as his wife; so long as there is food and drink in the castle the earl can be resisted (Maninogion p. 188). In Percy's 'Libius Desconus', ll. 1336 ff., Libius frees the lovely lady kept on the Ile d'Ore by the giant Mangys. In Percy's 'Claramonde', ll. 132 ff., Claramonde is guarded in a castle by two giants, and ll. 158 ff., Vrsin and Valentine free their mother from her prison guarded by a giant.
ll. 795-6, omitted in Percy.

Saue my sorie¹ dwarfe alone.

Ryght as she stode, she fell to the grounde,

And sowned² there in that stounde. 800

All her damoselles to her come,

To comfort her, and her vp nome³.

The ladye loked on Syr Degore⁴.

"Lyefe⁵ dame", then sayde he,

Be not adrad⁶ while I am here;

I wyll the helpe, to my power⁶."

"Syr", she sayde, "All my lande

I wyll cease⁷ it into thy hande,

And all my good I wyll the geue,

And all my bodye, whyle I lyue⁸, 810

For to be at your (owne) wyll

Earlye and late, loude and styll⁹,

And thy leman¹⁰ for to bee,

To wreke me nowe on myne enemye."

Than was Syr Degore fayne¹¹ to fyght,

For to defend the ladyes ryght,

And to slaye that other knyght

1. miserable; 2. swooned; 3. took; 4. dear; 5. afraid;
6. as much as I can; 7. legally give into possession;
8. live; 9. awake and asleep; 10. mistress; 11. glad.

1. 800, swooning is a common practice for both knights and ladies in medieval romance.

1. 811, MS. reads "For to be at your wyll"; the line is a trimiter here as it is in the Percy MS. The 'owne' supplied in the Percy has been included here.

And wyne that ladye that was so bryght,
 And as they stode both in feare¹,
 Her maydens came ridinge with heauye chere². 820
 She bade, "Drawe the brydge hastelye,
 For here cometh youre enemye,
 Or els, he wyll sle vs eche one."
 Syr Degore³ starte vp anone;
 Out at a wyndowe she hym see.
 He was sone armed on horse hye³:
 So stout a man as he was one,
 In armes sawe she neuer none.
 Syr Degore armed hym belive⁴,
 And out of the castel he gan dryue⁵, 830
 And rode euen the gyaunt agane⁵.
 They smote together with muche maine,
 That theyr good speares all to-braste⁶;
 Degore was stronge, and sate faste,
 But his stedes backe braste a two⁷.
 Syr Degore fell to the grounde tho,
 And then he stert vp and lough⁸,

1. both together; 2. downcast countenances; 3. tall;;4. quickly; 5. toward; 6. broke to pieces; 7. broke in two; 8. laughed.

1. 823, marks end of Part IV in Percy and beginning of part V.
 1. 826, cp. Eger's horse in 'Eger and Grim', and also that of the Guardian of the Fountain in 'Ewain and Gawain'.
 ll. 829-30, omitted in Percy.
 ll. 833-4, omitted in Percy.
 1. 835, a phenomenom common in romance; cp. 'Eger and Grim'.
 1. 836-40, omitted in Percy; l. 836, reads in MS. "Then Syr Degore, etc."

And his swerde he cut drough¹
 Then sayd the gyaunt to hym anone,
 "On fote we wyll togyther gone." 840
 "Thou hast", sayd Degore, "Slayne my good stede;
 I hope to quite the thy mede²
 To sle thy stede nought I wyll,
 But to fyght with the my fyll."
 And tho they fought on fote in fere,
 With stronge strokes (on) helme clere³.
 The gyaunt gaue Syr Degore
 Huge strokes, great plente;
 And Syr Degore did him also,
 Tyll helme and basynet⁴ braste in two. 850
 The gyaunte was agreued sore,
 Because he had his bloud forlore⁵.
 He stroke upon Syr Degore so,
 Than to the grounde he made him go;
 Syr Degore recouered (anon-right),
 And such a stroke he gaue that knyght,
 And on the crowne so it sette,
 That through his helme and basynette,

1. drew; 2. give thee thy reward in return; 3. sounding clearly on the helmet; 4. steel cap worn under the helmet; 5. lost.

1. 841, the 'sayd Degore' makes the line hypermetrical; it was probably inserted by the scribes.
 1. 846, MS. reads: 'With stronge strokes and helme clere ; cp. Percy: 'With hard strokes vpon helmetts Cleere.'
 1. 855, MS. reads 'sone anone' which does not rhyme with knyght in the following line; reading supplied from Percy.

He made his swerde go thorowe his heed,
 And anone the gyaunt fel downe deed. 860
 The lady sat in her castel,
 And sawe al the batayle;
 Howe the gyaunt was sleyne,
 That wolde her haue forlaine.
 She was as glad of that syght
 As euer was byrde¹ of the daylyghte.
 Syr Degore came to the castel
 And against hym came that damesel;
 She thanked hym of his good deede,
 And to her chamber she dyd hym leade: 870
 She set hym on her bedde anone,
 And vnarmed hym full sone.
 She toke hym in her arme two,

1. maiden, lady; 2. toward.

1. 860, cp. the story of Florent (Hibbard, p. 270), in which the boy Florent proves his knightly worth despite the handicap of wretched armour, by overthrowing the great giant champion of the heathen Sultan beseiging Paris. Torrent in 'Torrent of Portingale' (Hibbard, p. 280), slays a giant as a task. Eglamour also, in the romance of that name slays a giant. (Hibbard, p. 275). Triamour in 'Sir Triamour' (Ellis, pp. 502 ff.) slays Marradas and his three giant brothers. Libeaus in 'Libeaus Desconus' (Ritson, ll. 573-648), encounters and slays two giants, one clad in red armour and the other in black. See also notes to ll. 782 ff.

ll. 863-4, omitted in Percy.

1. 871, omitted in Percy.

1. 872, one of the tasks of the young women of a medieval castle was to divest the knights of their armour.

1. 873, omitted in Percy.

And kyssed hym a hundred tymes and mo,
And sayd: "All my good I wyll the geue
And my bodye while I lyue."

"Grammercie, damosell", then sayde he,

"Of that ye haue graunted me;

But I must into farre contré,

My auentures for to see,

880

Vnto these twelue monethes be ago¹,

And then I shall come you to."

He betoke² her to the Heauen-kyng;

The lady wept at his departyng.

Syr Degore rode vpon his waye,

Many a longe ioarney³;

And euermore he rode weste,

Tyll a land he founde in a foreste.

To hym came prickyng a knyght

1. gone; 2. commended, entrusted; 3. day's ride.

1. 874, since these are otherworld beings, the lady's kisses may be a form of enchantment; it is more probable, however, since Degore partakes of the nature of Other-world beings by virtue of his birth, that no such meaning is contingent here either in rationalized or unrationalized form. For enchantment caused by physical contact, see Wimberly, pp. 275, 282-285. For instances of the situation reversed, see Wimberly pp. 285, 338 and Kittredge, 'Gawain and the Green Knight', pp. 205 f and 216 f.

1. 881, postponement of the acceptance of the reward of combat is relatively popular in romance, with one year being the usual length of postponement. Cp. Triamour who wins a princess at his first tournament, but because he is wounded rides away and leaves his prize unclaimed for a year and a day (Ellis p. 505).

1. 887-8, cp. ll. 56-7 and 647-8 and their notes.

Well armed, and on his horse dyght¹

890

In armes that wolde endure,

With fyne golde and ryche asure.²

Thre bores heades were therein

The whiche were of golde fyne.

As sone as euer he sawe that knyght,

He spake to hym anone ryght,

And sayd, "Vylaine, what doest thou here

In my forest to slee my dere?

Syr Degore sayd, with wordes meke,

"Syr, of thy dere I take no kepe³,

900

For I am an auenturous knight,

That goeth to seke warre, and fight."

His father answered, and sayd, sans fayle⁴,

"And thou be come to seke batayle,

Then make the redy in a stounde⁵

For thou hast thy felowe founde."

And then Syr Degore with^hout daunger⁶

Armed hym to fyght with his father.

1. equipped; 2. assure-stone; 3. heed; 4. without fail;
5. in a short space of time; 6. disdain.

ll. 890-4, see Wentz, 'Fairy Faith in Celtic countries'.

ll. 895-6, omitted in Percy.

ll. 897-902, for parallels of the defiant hunting and battle motif, see 'Guy of Warwick' (v. 6714); 'Sir Degrevant'; 'Triamore' Ellis, p. 501; Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'Historia' (I. c. 12). See also Nessler's, 'Geschichte der Ballade Chevy Chase', Berlin, 1911.

ll. 907-8, omitted in Percy.

Howe Syr Degore fought with his father, and
howe his father knew hym by the broken swerde.

His helme was good for the nones¹,
And well set with precious stones; 910
It might well be his owne, sans fayle,
For he wanne it onse in batayle.
He cast his shielde about his swere²,
Of ryall³ armes good and dere.
His good stede he began to stride,
He toke his speare and began to ryde,
And his man toke another speare,
And by his syde he gan it bere.
But loke what foly began that tyde,
The sonne against the father gan ride: 920
But neyther knewe other aryght,
And thus begane they to fyght.

1. for the occasion; 2. neck; 3. royal, rich.

ll. 909-10, omitted in Percy.

ll. 913-8, omitted in Percy.

ll. 920 ff., the Father-son combat motif of which there are many variants, seems to have been a popular motif in romance. For parallels, cp. Reinbrun's battle with his foster father (Hibbard 141); Degrebelle's encountered in tournament with his father Eglamour (Ellis, p. 537); Triamore jousts with his father Arradas (Percy p. 108); Torrent in 'Torrent of Partyngeale' jousts with his two sons in one battle and two tournaments (Hibbard p. 281). Milun and his son in Marie's 'Milun', engage in single combat (Ellis p. 63); Deitlint battles with his father Biterolf in 'Biterolf and Dietlieb', at King Attila's court (Spence, p. 36); Cuculin and his son Conan meet in arms, Cuculin mortally wounding his son ('Cuculin, Myths and Folklore of Ireland', p. 3). Mr. Potter in 'Sorab and Rustem', p. 207 has enumerated 27 instances of father and son combat and as many as 27 instances of combats

Syr Degore had the greater shafte,
 And wonder well he could his craft;
 To dashe hym downe then he went,
 And in his shyeld set suche a dent,¹
 That his good speare all to-braste;
 But his father was strong and sat faste.
 Another course then haue they take,
 The father for the sonnes sake. 930
 So harde they smote together, in sothe,
 That theyr horses backes brake both.
 And then they fought on fote in fere,²
 With hard stroke (on) helme clere.³

1. blow; 2. together; 3. sounding clearly.

between brothers. Hartland in 'Primitive Paternity'
 I, pp. 271-2, has an interesting comment on Mr. Potter's
 interpretation of these cases: "The learned author
 (Mr. Potter) traces them with great probability to the
 customs involved in the reckoning of matrilineal descent.
 In most cases, it is true, the antagonists engage one
 another in ignorance of their relationship. This is
 natural since the tales have usually received their
 form in which they are now told, among peoples no longer
 in the stage of motherright. To such peoples a combat
 between father and son would seem unnatural, and must
 be explained away. An archaic custom to be considered
 more fully hereafter, by which women received transitory
 lovers, has favored the prevalent type of explanation.
 Many of the examples of combat brought forward in Mr.
 Potter's work, exhibit the combatants as champions on
 opposite sides in a war between two peoples, and may
 be referred to customs of the kind just illustrated.
 ll. 923-30, omitted in Percy; l. 925 in MS. reads 'had he'.
 l. 932, see note to l. 835
 l. 934, MS. reads 'and'. see l. 846.

And thus his father amaruayled¹ (wes)
 Of his swerde that was poyntles.
 And to hym sayd, anone ryght;
 "Abyde a whyle, thou gentyll Knyght,
 Where was thou borne, and in what land?"
 "Syr", he sayd, "In England: 940
 A kynges doughter is my mother,
 But I wot not who is my father.
 "What is thy name?", then sayd he.
 "Syr, my name is Degore¹."
 "Syr Degore, thou art welcome,
 For wel I wote thou arte my sonn^é,
 By this swerde I knowe the here,
 The poynt is in my pautenere².
 He toke the poynt and sette it to,
 And they accorded bothe two. 950
 So longe the¹ haue spoke togither,
 Both the sonne and the father,
 That they be ryght well at one³,
 The father and the sonne alone.
 Syr Degore, and his father dere,
 Into Englande they rode in fere;

1. astonished; 2. pouch, pocket; 3. accorded.

1. 935, MS. reads 'was'.

1. 947, for discussion of Recognition tokens, see l. 114.

1. 948, cp. 'Boy and the Mantle', Percy II, p. 305,

l. 21.

11. 954-6, omitted in Percy.

They were both armed, and wel dighte,¹
 As it behoueth euerye knight.
 They rode forth on theyr iourney,
 Many a myle of that countrey, 960
 And on theyr way they rode full fast,
 Into England they came at the laste.
 When they myght England se,
 They drewe thyther as they wold be;
 When they were to the palayes come,
 They were welcome, all and some;²
 And they were behelde ouer all,³
 The ladye them spyed ouer a wall,
 And when the ladye sawe that syght,
 She went to them with all her myght, 970
 And ryght well she them knewe,
 And then she chaunged all her hewe,
 And sayd, "My dere sonne Degore,
 Thou hast thy father brought with thee.
 Then sayd he, "Madame, trewly
 Full well I wote it is he."

1. prepared; 2. everybody (rhyme tag); 3. on all sides, everywhere.

ll. 957-62, omitted in Percy MS. which reads:

"Then went fforth Sir Degree
 With his own ffather trulye."

l. 967-8, MS. reads: "And they beheld etc."; 'were' supplied for sense; cp. Percy:

"And there they Ladye spyed them ouer a wall,
 And to them shee began to call."

ll. 969-72, omitted in Percy.

ll. 976-6, omitted in Percy. MS. reads: " 'Trewly, Madame', then sayd he."

"Nowe thanked be God", then sayd the kynge,
 "For nowe I knowe, without leasyng¹,
 Who is Degores father, in dede."
 The lady sowned² in that stede³,
 And soone after sykerlye⁴,
 The knyght wedded that lady.
 She and her sonne was departed atwin⁵
 For he and she were to nye kynne⁶.
 Forthe, then went Syr Degore,
 With the kynge and his meyne⁷,
 His father and his mother dere;
 Vnto the castell they went in feare⁸,
 Where-as dwelled that lady bright,
 That he had wonne in right,
 And wedded her with great solempnite,
 Before all the lordes of that countre.

980

990

1. certainly; 2. swooned; 3. place; 4. surely;
 5. parted asunder; 6. too near related; 7. household;
 8. in company.

11. 983-4, according to the church a marriage such as
 Degore's would be no marriage.

1. 990, cp. Percy: 'Which before he wan in ffight.'
 1. 991-2, MS. reads 'solepnite'. See Hartland, 'Science
 of Fairy Tales', pp. 288-9; "At an early period of
 civilization kinship is reckoned exclusively through the
 mother: even the father is in no way related to his
 children. This is a stage hardly ever found complete in
 all its consequences, but of which the traces remain in
 the customs and in the lore of many nations who have long
 since passed from it, becoming as we might expect, fainter
 and fewer as it recedes into the distance One of
 the consequences of reckoning descent only through females
 is that the children belong to the mother and the mother's
 family..... Another consequence is that in the organization
 of society, the wife still continues after marriage to

Thus came the knyght out of his care:
God geue us grace wel to fare,
And that we vpon domes' daye,
Come to the blysse that lasteth aye!

1. judgment.

reside with, and be a part of, the community to which she belongs by birth. The man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife. Hence it would be natural for him to seek her and dwell with her there.

ll. 994-6, the usual type of benediction with which the medieval romance ends; ll. 995-6, omitted in Percy.

Thus endeth the tretysse of Syr Degore.

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