# SIR EGLAMOUR: A MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCE

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## A MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCE

EDITED BY

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

The object of this book is to provide a convenient edition for college use. The text is taken, by the kind permission of Professor Schleich, from his edition of the poem in *Palæstra* No. 58 (Berlin, 1906), to which the student is referred for fuller information; but I have dealt freely with capitals and punctuation.

An especially difficult line is sometimes translated or paraphrased at the foot of the page.

YALE UNIVERSITY, June, 1911.

# INTRODUCTION.

## 1. THE POEM.

*Sir Eglamour* was written between 1350 and 1400. It has many Northern peculiarities, and is believed to belong to the border region between Northern and Midland. Among these peculiarities are the frequent (though not exclusive) use of *a* for Southern English *o* (OE. *a*, *ā*), the present participle in *-ande*, etc. The verb normally has the 3 sing. in *-s*, the plural without ending (but *walkes*, 286), the past participle in *-n(e)*, and the infinitive without ending. Note such forms as *es* (for *am*), 1204; the infinitives *ma*, *ta* (but *take*, 83; cf. *gane*, 372, 1021, 1227; *sene*, 1092; *sayne*, 338); *gyff* (for *give*); *qu-* for *hw-*; *at*, *conj.*, 540 (Scand. for *that*; cf. 626); *thir* (= *these*); *garte* (Scand.); *ilk*, etc.

The poem has 113 stanzas, which normally are of 12 lines each. This would make 1356 lines, but the romance in this version has only 1335 (Percy, 1291; Thornton, 1341), so that 21 lines are lacking. Of these, 6 lines are wanting in stanza 21; 3 each in stanzas 67, 70, and 84; and 6, again, in stanza 107.

## 2. MANUSCRIPTS AND EARLY PRINTED BOOKS.

### Manuscripts.

#### L.

Lincoln Cathedral A. i. 17. About 1440. Extracts printed by Halliwell in the notes to F (*The Thornton Romances*, pp. 278—287).

*The text of the present edition.*

### F.

Camb. Univ. Lib. Ff. ii. 38.  Before 1461.  The poorest of the manuscripts (according to Schleich).  Printed by Halliwell in *The Thornton Romances* (London, Camden Society, 1844), pp. 121—176.  This (and C) divides the poem into cantos (*fyttes*) after stanzas 29, 58, 74.

### C.

Brit. Mus. Cott. Caligula A. ii.  Fifteenth century.  A few readings given in Haliwell's notes.

### S.

Duke of Sutherland's library.  The oldest manuscript; end of fourteenth century.  One leaf, containing lines 1—160.

### Early Printed Books.

### p.

Percy Folio Manuscript.  About 1650.  Printed by Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript* (London, 1868) 2. 341—389.  This is a manuscript copy of an early printed book.

### e.

Advocates' Library, Edinburgh.  Printed by Chepman and Myllar, Edinburgh, 1508.  Reprinted by Laing in *The Knightly Tale of Golagrus and Gawane* (Edinburgh, 1827).

### b.

Fragments of a book published at London by Richard Bankes about 1530, and owned (1895) by Francis Jenkinson, Librarian of Cambridge University Library.  Printed by J. Hall in *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen* 95. 308—311.

### w.

Brit. Mus. Printed by John Walley about 1540. Certain extracts are printed by Laing (see under e). A version in modern prose, with extracts from this edition, is given by Ellis, *Specimens of Early English Romances.*

### a.

Brit. Mus. Printed by William Copland between 1548 and 1561.

### d.

Brit. Mus. Douce 261. Copy of a book printed in 1564.

## 3. ANALOGUES.

The poem has more or less close analogies with Chaucer's Man of Law's Tale (also told by Gower, both being dependent upon the French of Nicholas Trivet, or Trevet, who died in 1328), with the romances of Torrent of Portugal, Emare, Octavian, Sir Isumbras and Guillaume d'Angleterre, and more remotely, with the legend of St. Eustache. The story of the Man of Law's Tale is so familiar that it need not be rehearsed here. The others follow in the order named.

### Torrent of Portugal.

Calamond, King of Portugal, has an only daughter, Desonelle, with whom Torrent, son of a Portuguese count, falls in love. After various adventures, in which he slays several giants, he obtains possession of Desonelle, but without a formal marriage. Torrent sets off on new adventures, and his wife, having been delivered of twin boys, is set adrift with them by her father, and lands on the coast of Palestine. A griffin carries off one son, and a leopard another; the mother dwells under the protection

of the King of Nazareth. Torrent, returning to Portugal,
vanquishes Calamond, sends him to his death in a leaky
boat, and is made king in his stead. He then departs for
the Holy Land, where he spends fifteen years, and event-
ually is vanquished in single combat by one of his sons.
Finally, at a grand tournament, Torrent, Desonelle, and
their two sons, are reunited, whereupon they return to
Portugal.

### Emare.

Emare (pronounced Emaré) is the daughter of an Em-
peror; her father clothes her in a rich cloth of gold, with
love-scenes worked on it in jewels, and obtains the Pope's
dispensation to marry her; she refuses, and is turned adrift
upon the sea; is driven to the shore of 'Galys,' where the
king loves and marries her; she is delivered of a boy,
named Segramour, during the absence of her husband in
France, whose mother sends him word that the child is a
monster; the king sends back an order to keep her till
his return, but his mother turns her adrift, once more,
with her mantle and her child; she is driven back to Rome,
and adopted by a merchant; the King of 'Galys' comes
to do penance at Rome, and lodges at the merchant's
house, his son bears wine to him; the Emperor, too, ar-
rives at Rome, to do penance also; and they all meet to-
gether.[1]

### Octavian.

The Emperor 'Octavian' marries the French princess
Florence, and she bears twin boys, named Florent and
'Octouyan.' The emperor's mother persuades him that

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[1] Ward, *Catalogue of Romances* I. 418.