TALES FROM TENNYSON; PP. 1-153

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Tales from Tennyson; pp. 1-153 by Molly K. Bellew

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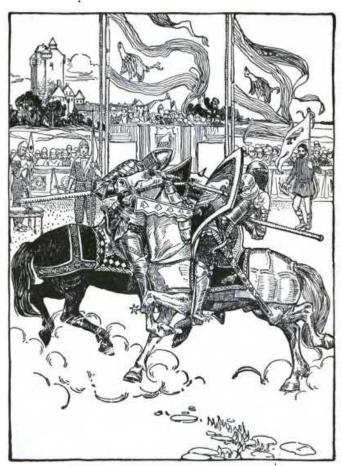
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MOLLY K. BELLEW

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THREE TIMES THEY BROKE SPEARS

FALES FROM TENNYSON

BY

MOLLY K. BELLEW

EDITOR OF

"TALES FROM LONGFELLOW"

"DICKENS' CHRISTMAS STORIES FOR CHILDREN"

ETC., ETC.

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To my Young Readers.

Alfred Lord Tennyson was the typically English poet, and none, perhaps not even Shakespeare, has appealed so keenly to the human heart. No other man's poems have caused as many readers to shed tears of sympathy nor have awakened higher sentiments in the human heart. The critics agree in pronouncing him the ideal poet laureate. In his "Idylls from the King" are found the loftiest and proudest deeds of English history and even in the retelling of these in prose the high spirit that is an inspiration to the noblest deeds cannot fail to be preserved.

MOLLY K. BELLEW.

THE COMING OF KING ARTHUR.

OVER a thousand years ago everybody was talking about the wonderful King Arthur and his brilliant Knights of the Round Table, who everywhere were pursuing bold quests, putting to rout the band of outlaws and robbers which in those days infested every highway and by-way of the country, going to war with tyrannical nobles, establishing law and order among the rich, redressing the wrongs of women, the poor and the oppressed, and winning glorious renown for their valor and their successes.

That was in England which at that time was not England as it is today, all one kingdom under a single ruler, but was divided into many bits of kingdoms each with its own king and all warring against each other. Arthur's kingdom was the most unpeaceful of all. This was because for twenty years or more, ever since the death of old King Uther, the country had been without a ruler. Old King Uther had died about a score of years before without leaving an heir to the throne, and all the nobles of the realm had immediately gone to war with one another each trying to get the most land and each trying to get the throne for himself.

Suddenly, however, old Merlin, the wizard who had been King Uther's magician, appeared one day in the royal council hall with a handsome young man, Arthur, and declared him to be the king of the realm. Arthur was crowned and for a time the nobles were quiet, for he ruled with a strong hand of iron, put down all the evils in his kingdom and everywhere gave it peace and order. People in every part of the island sent for him and his knights, begging him to come to help them out of their difficulties. But presently the nobles became troublesome again; they said that Arthur was not the true king,



OLD MERLIN APPEARS.

that he was not the son of Uther and that, therefore, he had no right to reign over them. So there was fighting and unrest again, and in the midst of it Leodogran, the king of the Land of Cameliard, asked Arthur to come with his knights and drive away the enemies be setting him on every side. The country of Cameliard had gone to waste and ruin, because of the continual

warfare that was waged with the kings that lived in the little neighboring countries and a mass of wild-eyed foreign heathen peoples who invaded the land. And so it happened that Cameliard was ravaged with battles, its strong men were cut down with the sword and wild dogs, wolves, and bears from the tangled weeds came rooting up the green fields and wallowing into the palace gardens. Sometimes the wolves stole little children from the villages and nursed them like their own cubs, until finally these children grew up into a race of wolf-men who molested the land worse than the wolves themselves. Then another king fought Leodogran, and at last the heathen hordes came swarming from over the seas

and made all the earth red with his soldiers' blood, and they made the sun red with the smoke of the burning homes of his people.

Leodogran simply did not know which way to turn for help until at last he thought of young Arthur of the Round Table

who recently had been crowned king. So Leodogran sent for Arthur beseeching him to come and help him, for between the men and the beasts his country was dying.

King Arthur and his men welcomed the chance and went at once into the Land of Cameliard to drive away the heathen marauders. As he marched with his men past the castle walls, pretty Princess Guinevere stood outside to watch the glittering soldiers go by. Among so many richly dressed knights she did not particularly no-

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PRINCESS GUINEVERE.

tice Arthur, for he wore nothing to show that he was king, although his kingly bearing and brave forehead might suggest leadership. But no royal arms were engraved upon his helmet