

# Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Service of Ladies*

Translated by  
J.W. Thomas

## Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Service of Ladies*



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# Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Service of Ladies*

TRANSLATED BY J. W. THOMAS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY KELLY DEVRIES

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## THE *REAL* ULRICH VON LIECHTENSTEIN<sup>1</sup>

In the recent popular movie *A Knight's Tale* (Columbia Tristar Pictures, 2001), when Geoffrey Chaucer (Paul Bettany) heralds the tournament appearance of poor-squire-turned-tournament-champion William Thatcher (Heath Ledger) as Ulrich von Liechtenstein, a new cinematic hero was born. In the movie, Ulrich's tournament victories pile up and pile up until he wins the world championship against the great and extremely malevolent French champion, Count Adhemar (Rufus Sewell) . . . and, of course, he wins the noble girl, Jocelyn (Shannyn Sossamon). However, this was not the first Ulrich von Liechtenstein in history, nor could it ever be said that *A Knight's Tale's* Ulrich von Liechtenstein was more cinematic than the medieval one!

The real, the medieval Ulrich von Liechtenstein was born around 1200 however in Styria, in what today is southern Austria. He was the son of noble parents, hence the *von* in his name, but there is no record of his being the eldest son or heir to his father's nobility. Still, Ulrich's nobility meant that he would be well educated. This education consisted of all the arts and letters popular during his time, perhaps even the seven liberal arts. He certainly learned to read and write, in his own vernacular dialect if not also in Latin, and perhaps also in Medieval French and Italian. His own later writings were written in what is now called Middle High German, but show signs of a knowledge of these other Romance languages. Yet Ulrich von Liechtenstein would be schooled in other arts befitting his class and status. He would have learned martial arts: how to fight with different arms and armor, on horseback and on foot. Unlike many of his noble counterparts, Ulrich would combine all of this education together, providing the twenty-first century medieval enthusiast with an example of one of the most celebrated jousting poets or, perhaps, poetic jousters the world has ever known.

The early thirteenth century of Ulrich von Liechtenstein's youth was one of relative peace. The Crusades were still being fought, but after the fall of Constantinople to the Latin soldiers of the Fourth Crusade, later crusading endeavors became less European-wide and more individual. Crusades would still be waged, but by separate kings and princes, such as Emperor Frederick II and King Louis IX, and sometimes even without the permission of the papacy. This meant that the general call for western European Christian warriors to fight in the Holy Land which had always been sent previously from Rome was quieted. Noble soldiers were still required; no one who wished to participate on Crusade would be turned away. But there was certainly less pressure for



men like Ulrich von Liechtenstein to travel to the Holy Land for much of their youth. Like other young warriors of his time and region, Ulrich appears to have promised to go on Crusade, but, also like these other young warriors, he never went.

There was also no warfare in Austria, Italy, Switzerland, or any of the southern German principalities during the early thirteenth century. This was a good thing, of course, and quite rare for the Middle Ages. But it also meant that young would-be warriors had difficulty in practicing their martial arts. It also meant that many of them had few ways of acquiring knighthood, their most sought after goal. Most, it is true, would have served their fathers, uncles, cousins, or, perhaps, non-relatives as pages and squires. But they would usually have needed to show some type of valor during combat to earn their knightly spurs. At times a special occasion might suffice to allow young men unable to prove themselves in warfare to become a knight. So it was for Ulrich von Liechtenstein. As a young boy he served as a page, and as a young man as a squire, the latter between 1215 and 1219 to the Markgraf (or Marquis) Heinrich von Istria. And in 1222, at the occasion of his daughter's marriage, Duke Leopold of Austria, granted Ulrich von Liechtenstein's greatest wish when he made him, and 199 other young warriors, a knight.

Where young thirteenth-century knights and squires practiced their skills during times of peace, and sometimes also during times of war, was the tournament. A tournament might be held for any reason, sometimes to celebrate a special event and sometimes only to hold a sporting event. Actually, there was not a single "tournament" at this time, but a number of different types of tournament. One of these types was the *mélée*. This really was the tournament proper, where two "armies" vied against each other in a mock battle fought on a tournament plain. These armies would consist of both cavalry and infantry soldiers; even archers might take part. All weapons could be permitted in this mock battle, although of course they would be blunted. A cavalry charge would initiate the *mélée*, with further warfare between all of the forces continuing until one "army" was declared the victor.

A second type of tournament was the joust or tilt. This was a one-on-one combat fought on horseback. It also generally took part on a tournament field, although this field would of necessity be narrowed until there was but a double lane divided by a barrier. The jousts would approach each other on opposite sides of this barrier, dropping their lances at the last moment in an effort to break them against their opponent's armor. Points would be given for whether and where these lances struck, and special effects — lances breaking in a "cinematic" way — might bring extra points. Unfortunately, no thirteenth-century lance has survived, but it is known that they were blunted. Some historians also wonder if sometimes these weapons were not cut or trimmed by their users in order to increase the effect.

Although single jousts were known, in a tournament situation several jousts would be held during which the participants might be decreased as they lost. Ultimately, only the final two jousters would face off against each other in one final match to decide the tournament championship. Every rider would therefore need to fight several jousts before he could win the top prize, which was generally given by the tournament sponsors, although often awards were given by the participants to their victors in the form of ransom for their “lost” horses and armor. In some tournaments the more professional jousters might be “seeded”, meaning that they would be able to skip some of the preliminary rounds of the meet.

Of course, each tournament participant would wear their finest armor, in this case a full coat of chain armor covering all extremities, with chain-mail mittens and boots to cover the hands and feet, and a mail coif to cover the neck and head. Atop this would sit the warrior’s helmet, likely a Great Helm. He would also carry a shield; on this and on his horse’s barding would be his heraldic decoration, identifying the rider’s nobility and lineage. This can be seen in Ulrich von Liechtenstein’s portrait painted as a manuscript illumination during the early fourteenth century by an anonymous illustrator (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Cod. pal. Germ 848, f.237; see cover illustration) which, although painted later, fairly correctly portrays the arms, armor, and even possibly the heraldry of the previous century.

Ulrich von Liechtenstein was a champion joust. How do we know? Because he told us. This should not be seen as egotistical, however. Chroniclers might be interested enough to record the holding of a tournament and the event which prompted it, but they rarely report the participants or even the winners. Instead, most of the great jousters of the day are mentioned in chivalric tales, poems and prose romances, which almost as a matter of course included at least one tournament. Ulrich von Liechtenstein not only appears in one of these, but in fact he wrote it. And it was quite good, and seemingly quite popular. Its title is *Frauendienst*, or in English translation, *The Service of Women*.

Ulrich von Liechtenstein is the hero of *Frauendienst*. In it he tells his story, as a knight and a joust. As a boy of twelve Ulrich fell in love, or at least he realized that the greatest happiness and honor for a knight came in the service of a woman, so Ulrich chose one. She was a beautiful noble woman, older and more noble than he was, and she was married, but in the tales of love and chivalry that hardly mattered. What did matter was that she initially spurned his advances. Of course, Ulrich von Liechtenstein was still a child at the time so this did not come as a surprise to him, but he also used this rejection, in the way so many other authors had done and would continue to do, to recognize that his goal, the winning of his lady’s heart, would come only after a life full of obstacles, frustrations, and adventures. He would have to earn her love.

From age twelve to age seventeen, as he grew into manhood, Ulrich von Liechtenstein adored this lady from afar. He managed to stay close by her, however, by becoming a page in her court. As such, he was able to touch what she touched and cherish the things that were hers. He writes that sometimes he stole into her chamber after she had bathed so that he could wash his hands in her water; on some of these occasions he would even drink from her bath.

Once he learned to joust he found that he had a new means of expressing his love for his lady. He would enter tournaments wearing her colors. It is hard to know at this stage if his unnamed love interest was aware of Ulrich's advances. Certainly she must have seen Ulrich von Liechtenstein, once her page, wearing her colors and participating in tournaments. She may even have seen him stealing out of her chamber after her baths. If so, she did nothing to encourage his continuing interests, but little also to stop them. That was until, after he had gained a few tournament victories, Ulrich asked his niece to approach the lady as a mouthpiece for his affection. His lady would not listen to Ulrich's love appeals. She told his niece that she was repulsed by her uncle's appearance, that he had a harelip, and that he was lower-born than she.

Such a rejection still did not stop Ulrich von Liechtenstein's pursuit of the lady. He had his harelip removed by surgery, recuperated — for six weeks — and wrote a love song for her. This softened her a little, and she allowed Ulrich to attend a riding party in which she was present, indicating to him that should he ride close to her they might have a chance to talk. He joined the party but when he rode close to his beloved he became so nervous that he could not say a word to her. Again she spurned him, this time tearing a lock from his hair to emphasize her rejection of him.

Ulrich von Liechtenstein returned to the tournament circuit, all the time fighting not only for victories in the *mélée* and joust but also fighting for the love of this beautiful woman. But for three years she would not even allow him to fight in her name nor to carry her colors. He constantly sent her letters and poems, but these were ridiculed and rejected by her. In one letter he claimed that he had wounded a finger in a joust fought that day; she derided him, saying that he exaggerated the severity of his wound. In response, Ulrich cut off one of his fingers and sent it to her. With this gesture, his lady finally gave in, writing back that she would look at his severed digit every day and remember the sacrifice he had made for her.

Having won some affection from her, Ulrich von Liechtenstein determined that an even larger display would win her over entirely. He decided that he would fight a series of jousts from Venice to the borders of Bohemia. This he called the *Venusfahrt* (Venus Journey), in honor of that goddess of love and of all women. To further spotlight this trek, Ulrich would dress as "Lady Venus" both in the joust and when not fighting. He does not record how he pulled off such a stunt, although he does insist that no one saw through his feminine

disguise. However unlikely this was, and Ulrich does write that his appearance as Venus at times aroused quite a bit of laughter, the chance to fight a joust interested many nobles along his path. During the five week period of the *Venusfahrt* Ulrich claims to have broken 307 lances with opponents, fighting sometimes eight jousts in a day. Should an opponent be successful in breaking his lance on Ulrich, in other words actually hitting Ulrich's armor, he would be presented with a ring. 271 of these rings were awarded during his journey.

At the end of his *Venusfahrt* Ulrich von Liechtenstein returned to his lady, hoping that his spectacle would have appealed to her. She knew that he had undertaken the *Venusfahrt*, and she had sent word to Ulrich that she wished to speak with him. However, she instructed the love-smitten knight to come to her dressed as a leper and to sit with the other lepers begging outside her door. When he was so attired she passed by Ulrich but did not greet him, instead making him sleep outside in the rain. The next morning she sent a message to this "beggar" that he could climb the rope to her bedroom window, but, after he had further fulfilled her instructions by wading across a lake, as he ascended the rope his lady unhooked it and Ulrich fell into the foul moat below. Ultimately, it was only after Ulrich von Liechtenstein promised his lady that he would go on Crusade in her name and began to prepare for such a venture that she called it off and offered him her love.

What symbols, tokens, or acts these were is not indicated by Ulrich in *Frauendienst*. One hopes that it was worth it in the end, for the poor knight, it seems, had been made to perform the most difficult of tasks to earn this woman's favors. However, it was not as if he was without female companionship. It appears that Ulrich von Liechtenstein was married throughout most of these chivalric displays. On one occasion during the *Venusfahrt* he stopped off for three days to be with his wife. He also reports that she was quite good at managing his estate and raising his children. So there must have been something more. His lady had become a symbol for the great jouster. She was a symbol of the honor and love for women that he held as such a principle for his and seemingly every other young nobleman's life.

Then there was the tournament. His lady became a means for Ulrich von Liechtenstein to participate in tournaments. This was a sporting pastime that not only displayed chivalric valor and fighting skill, but it was fun, too! It appears that young knights of Ulrich's ilk wanted to fight *mêlées* and jousts whenever and wherever they could. So enthusiastic were they, Ulrich writes, that when, gathered together for negotiations between the lords of Istria and Neustria, the opportunity arose to joust at Freisach in May 1224, at Ulrich's urging, the peace conference was held up until a full-scale tournament could be organized.

By the *Venusfahrt*, Ulrich von Liechtenstein had given up the *mêlée*. He was too good and too well known to participate in that form of tournament any

longer. Although well armored, tournament injuries could still happen, and it is clear that as a well-known jousting Ulrich may have been singled out for particular attention by any number of younger men willing to gain their own renown at the expense of his own. This may also have been the reason why he fought the *Venusfahrt* in disguise. Still, it is difficult to know how anyone could miss the great jousting knight's style of fighting on the tiltyard. Nor does it seem that they could miss the participation of his entourage in the processions leading up to the jousts which he was to fight in. In these processions large heraldic banners would be flown, musicians would play, squires would bear lances, and knights would parade through town to the tournament field. At Neunkirchen during the *Venusfahrt*, Ulrich reports, more than one hundred knights, their squires and banners, marched and rode to the tournament. At times the procession was not large, such as at Korneuburg, also during his *Venusfahrt*, only a single bugler and one banner paraded before him onto the field, although then, perhaps in order to make this procession longer, Ulrich had his pieces of armor also carried in piece by piece.

In later life Ulrich von Liechtenstein continued to joust. In 1240 he organized another large series of jousts which he called the *Artusfahrt* (Journey for Arthur) in which he would again joust against all comers. The jousters would naturally not fight under their own names but instead would carry the names of Arthur's greatest knights, Gawain, Lancelot, etc. Should an opponent break three lances against him, he would have a right to join Ulrich's "Round Table," a special chivalric circle the joining of which would bring the honor that later in the Middle Ages would be reserved for members of Chivalric Orders such as the Golden Fleece or the Garter. Again Ulrich von Liechtenstein traveled throughout the lands near to his home, jousting to his and his opponents' hearts' content; on one occasion, at Neustadt, after the *Artusfahrt* joust was set up for a fortnight's time, the intervening time was spent by Ulrich and his fellow knights, of course, in jousting. Unfortunately, the final joust of the *Artusfahrt* was delayed and then banned altogether by Duke Frederick of Austria. His reasoning: political events meant a need for cautious sobriety rather than celebratory sport.

In later life, when he had retired from jousting, Ulrich von Liechtenstein played several minor political roles in Styria and Austria. As an administrative official, a *ministerialis*, Ulrich had some power to wield, although not enough to strike out on his own. Instead, he submitted to those whom he wisely thought could benefit and protect him. In 1250 this was the archbishop of Salzburg, with whom Ulrich made a military treaty to provide soldiers and castles for the archbishop; in return, Ulrich gained the archbishop's blessing of the marriage between two of Ulrich's children and two of the archbishop's richest ministeriales' children. In one of these marriages, Ulrich von Liechtenstein's son and heir, Ulrich, married Cunegunde of Goldegg, the daughter of the rich

and powerful Conrad of Goldegg, thereby ensuring his father's name and legacy. Liechtenstein today remains as free and independent as its jousting namesake so many years before.

Was this all true? Did Ulrich von Liechtenstein really take part in all of the tournaments he said he did, sometimes dressed as Venus and sometime calling himself Arthur? Do we really care? After all, half the fun of having a cinematic hero, in this case the real Ulrich von Liechtenstein, is not knowing if all his adventures are real or fiction.

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<sup>1</sup>This article originally appeared in *Medieval History Magazine*, 1 (Sept 2003), 34–39. Because of the medium, no footnotes appeared with the article originally; nor was there a bibliography with the article, except in the Middle High German edition of *Frauendienst* (ed. Franz Viktor Spechtler [Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1987]), and a modern German translation of it by same Middle High German editor (Klagenfurt: Wieser Verlag, 2000). This is because, despite the interesting character that Ulrich von Liechtenstein was historically and literally, despite the existence of the famous manuscript illumination depiction of him, portrayed with his rather exaggerated female headpiece (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. Cod. pal. Germ. 848, f.327), and despite the fact that nearly every historian of chivalry refers to Ulrich and his role in the history of tournaments and jousting, not much more is known about him than he writes about himself. Of course, this, as every historian knows, means that the credibility of the source is somewhat suspect. Or does it just add to the playfulness of a medieval tale understood in the atmosphere of merriment and celebration, as all historical, literary, and artistic sources suggest the tournaments were supposed to be?

For a recent collection of studies on Ulrich von Liechtenstein's literary corpus see *Idi, Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Literatur und Politik im Mittelalter: Akten der Akademie Friesach "Stadt und Kultur im Mittelalter," Friesach (Kärnten), 2–6, September 1996*, ed. Franz Viktor Spechtler and Barbara Maier (Klagenfurt: Wieser, 1999). On the history of chivalry and tournaments see Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1975); Richard Barber, *The Reign of Chivalry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980); Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989); and *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums*, ed. Josef Fleckenstein (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985).



## SERVICE OF LADIES





- 1 I greet the ladies, one and all,  
though my reward was ever small  
for serving them, I must confess.  
What wealth of virtue they possess!  
They're all the world can have of bliss,  
for God made nothing else like this:  
a noble woman. That is why  
my praise of them must be so high.
- 2 You must admit it, for it's true,  
none give the honor that is due  
to woman's goodness, though their praise  
outstrips the light of summer days.  
Where does the sunlight start and end?  
If one on whom I can depend  
can tell me that, then I'll declare  
that he has travelled everywhere.
- 3 Their splendor lights up every land;  
I do not know what distant strand  
may mark the limit of their splendor!  
Each word must change and be more tender,  
each passing year must leave the earth  
more fair before a woman's worth  
and goodness can be rightly heard,  
completely told in song and word.
- 4 How can the story be completed  
and all their virtues fully treated?  
There is no end of what to say.  
And when the world shall pass away  
the praise of women shall suffice  
for poets up in paradise.  
I fear, although I wish to speak  
their praise, my thoughts are all too weak.
- 5 Women are pure, refined are they,  
women are beautiful and gay,  
women can still love's deepest pain,  
women are never cruel and vain,  
women make kind and noble men.  
Well for him who deserves it when  
the women greet him as a friend!  
His sorrow and distress will end.

- 6           Women are rich in charm and grace.  
          To match their lovely form and face  
          is more than angels hope to do.  
          A woman, virtuous and true,  
          who has no faults of any kind,  
          must have an angel's heart and mind  
          and like an angel seems to glow.  
          You have my word that this is so.
- 7           My praise is finished. Now I plan  
          to tell a tale as best I can  
          and pray to God as I begin  
          that I may interest you therein,  
          that all will listen as one should,  
          and all of you will think it good.  
          My labors then will satisfy.  
          I swear the story is no lie.
- 8           When I was still a little child  
          my fancy often was beguiled  
          by what the poets sang and read  
          and what the wise men always said:  
          that none win fame who do not serve  
          good women as they all deserve,  
          but he who serves them with his sword  
          and heart receives a rich reward.
- 9           This I heard the wise men say:  
          none can be happy, none can stay  
          contented in this world but he  
          who loves and with such loyalty  
          a noble woman that he'd die  
          if it would save her from a sigh.  
          For thus all men have loved who gain  
          the honor others can't obtain.
- 10          I was a child when they spoke so  
          and knew no more than children know,  
          a hobbyhorse was still my steed;  
          I was so simple then indeed,  
          I thought, "Since lovely women raise  
          a man to such esteem and praise,  
          I'll serve the ladies faithfully  
          however it may go with me.

- 11            “I’ll give my body, all my mind,  
                 and life itself to womankind  
                 and serve them all the best I can.  
                 And when I grow to be a man  
                 I’ll always be their loyal thane;  
                 though I succeed or serve in vain  
                 I’ll not despair and never part  
                 from them,” thus spoke my childish heart.
- 12            While lost in thoughts like these I grew  
                 to twelve—I swear it all is true.  
                 I pondered everywhere I went  
                 just as my youthful fancy bent,  
                 and, asking questions, rode around  
                 wherever ladies could be found.  
                 Their ways, the customs they enjoy  
                 I learned while I was still a boy.
- 13            Whoever spoke of women’s praise  
                 I followed, just to hear each phrase,  
                 for it would make my heart so light  
                 and fill me with a true delight.  
                 I heard from many a learned tongue  
                 their excellence and honor sung;  
                 they praised one here and praised one there,  
                 they praised the ladies everywhere.
- 14            I heard the virtues of them all  
                 but there is one whom I recall  
                 whose fame was spread on every hand.  
                 The best of singers in the land  
                 commended her and her alone.  
                 To whom her excellence was known,  
                 who knew her virtue and good name,  
                 would have to join in her acclaim.
- 16            She was extolled by knight and sage.  
                 I later was the lady’s page  
                 and served her gladly four years through—  
                 what I am telling you is true.  
                 My youthful eyes could never see  
                 a thing in her which should not be,  
                 for she was always kind and good,  
                 the very flower of womanhood.

- 17           My heart then spoke to me and said,  
              "Dearest friend, if you are led  
              to yield yourself to woman's spell  
              and only live to serve her well,  
              then she alone will ever do.  
              This counsel I must give to you:  
              since she's the one whom all prefer  
              we ought to go and live with her."
- 18           "I'll do, my heart, as you advise,  
              but do you think it would be wise  
              for us to labor for the pay  
              that lovely women give away?  
              This woman whom I am to serve  
              is far beyond what we deserve.  
              She is too high for us, we'll gain  
              but little for our work and pain.
- 20           "Heart, I'll swear an oath to this:  
              as I may gain eternal bliss,  
              I love her more than all the rest  
              and more than self. At your request  
              and in the hope that I may win  
              her affection, I'll begin  
              to serve my love this very day  
              and ever after, come what may."
- 21           My heart and body then conspired  
              to win the prize which both desired.  
              I went to her with longing sighs  
              and looked at her with loving eyes.  
              I thought with joy, "Can this be she  
              to whom I give my loyalty,  
              with whom I'll stay while I have breath,  
              who'll bring me happiness or death!"
- 22           I thought, "What can I do for her  
              that will induce her to prefer  
              me to the other noble boys  
              whom she presently employs?  
              If one should serve her better here  
              than I would be despised, I fear.  
              I just don't know what else to do  
              but serve her late, and early too."

- 24           Many times in summer hours  
I would gather pretty flowers  
in fields and meadows, everywhere,  
and bring them to my lady fair.  
If she should take them in her hand  
my joy was all that I could stand.  
I thought, "Your fingers hold each stem  
just where I was holding them."
- 25           Great was my happiness when I  
could be with others standing by  
at meals and see the water poured  
on those white hands which I adored.  
I took the water secretly  
with which she washed away with me  
and, filled with love, I drank it all;  
because of this my grief was small.
- 26           I served her as a child, but well  
and more than I can ever tell.  
Whate'er a child can do or may  
I did for her until the day  
my father took me home again.  
I learned of longing sadness then  
and knew the pain within my heart  
that lovers feel when they must part.
- 27           I had to leave but, unresigned,  
my stubborn heart remained behind  
and would not go with me from there.  
That surely was a strange affair,  
that I should rule my body so  
but could not force my heart to go.  
It stayed with her both night and day  
and had no rest from sad dismay.
- 28           Wherever I might walk or ride  
my heart was always by her side,  
and through the day and all night long  
my love for her remained so strong  
that I beheld her constantly.  
Such was the love she won from me.  
No matter what the time or place,  
within my heart I saw her face.

- 29 I'll speak no more of this. It brought  
me misery with every thought.  
While thus my heart and body warred  
I went to serve the noble lord  
of Istria, a knight whose worth  
was not surpassed in all the earth.  
Margrave Henry was his name;  
his virtue well deserved its fame.
- 31 He lived for honor; none has heard  
him ever speak an evil word.  
He was merry, he was bold,  
his knightly traits were manifold.  
He was loyal, he was true,  
and he was honest, through and through.  
He worshipped God and helped his friend;  
so lived the prince until the end.
- 33 He helped me, still a simple lad,  
to gain the knowledge which he had:  
to talk with ladies and, of course,  
to ride with skill on any horse,  
to write sweet phrases in a letter—  
he said, "I know of nothing better;  
it shows a young man is refined  
when he speaks well of womankind.
- 34 "Sweet words when joined to noble deeds  
are what a noble lady needs.  
I speak the truth and nothing less,  
that you can never have success  
with high-born ladies if you try  
to flatter with an empty lie.  
You'll gain no more than disbelief  
and all your hopes will come to grief."
- 35 Had I been able to fulfil  
such noble deeds as was his will,  
I'd surely be a better man.  
The years passed by as they began—  
four years I longed for her and sighed.  
While I was there my father died  
and I went home, as those must do  
whom parents leave possessions to.

36           My lord then gave me leave, and sent  
me forth so well equipped I went  
as proud as he, and looked as fine.  
I travelled then to Liechtenstein,  
my childhood home in Steierland.  
I found there many a youthful band  
which jousted. This was custom still;  
so young men learned this knightly skill.

37           When I found them jousting there  
I knew how I might win the fair  
and charming one whose love I sought.  
“If I’m to serve her,” so I thought,  
“I’ll do it as an errant knight.  
With sword and lance I’ll boldly fight  
for her each day and never waver.  
God grant that I may win her favor.”

39           I rode to many a tournament  
and tilted everywhere I went.  
Three years I wandered with my steed  
and then became a knight indeed.  
It happened in Vienna where  
a feast was held beyond compare,  
a wedding festival so grand  
that thousands came from every land.

40           Prince Leopold of Austria gave  
his lovely daughter to a brave  
and noble Saxon who desired  
her for his wife whom all admired.  
The festival would suit a queen;  
the like of it I’ve never seen  
at any wedding anywhere.  
It’s nothing but the truth, I swear.

41           Those whom the worthy prince invited—  
two hundred fifty squires— were knighted  
with all due honor at the feast.  
He gave a thousand knights, at least:  
vassals, barons, even counts,  
gold and silver, clothes and mounts.  
The prince did this, and all could see  
therein his noble majesty.



- 42           Five thousand knights and maybe more  
          ate from the goodly prince's store.  
          After melees dances came  
          and many another knightly game.  
          The duchess and her retinue  
          were there, her charming daughter, too.  
          The host of lovely ladies' eyes  
          upon us made our spirits rise.
- 43           The light of all my joy was there,  
          my sweet and faultless lady fair.  
          I saw her whom my heart preferred  
          but still I could not say a word  
          to her throughout the feast we had;  
          because of this I long was sad.  
          The watchers would not let it be;  
          their spying quite discouraged me.
- 44           But when the sweet and lovely charmer  
          saw me mounted, clad in armor,  
          she addressed a friend of mine,  
          "I think that it is really fine  
          that yon Sir Ulrich was among  
          those knighted. While still very young  
          he was my page, some years ago—  
          the Knight of Liechtenstein, you know."
- 45           Later, when my friend told me  
          and I found out how greatly she  
          was pleased, then I was happy, too,  
          and wondered thus, "Would she have you  
          to serve her as a faithful knight?"  
          The thought itself was true delight;  
          it was sweet and it was good—  
          I felt as proud as a young knight could.
- 46           Then came the festival's last day  
          and each one went his separate way  
          merrily from land to land.  
          Tournaments on every hand  
          to honor ladies were begun.  
          I could not miss a single one  
          but splintered lances everywhere  
          because I loved my lady fair.

47 I rode about and could attend  
twelve tourneys ere the summer's end,  
and there was many a cavalier  
of note with whom I broke a spear.  
'T was then I grew to man's full strength  
and learned the nightly skills at length  
so I was never overthrown.  
For this I thank my love alone.

48 The joys of summer disappeared  
as soon as icy winter neared.  
Then I was forced, although so ill  
with love, to cease my warlike drill—  
I'd suffered little pain thereby.  
I now was sad and knew not why.  
A longing sorrow came to me  
and seldom let my heart be free.

49 I felt the pangs of love in vain  
and could not tell her of my pain,  
which often filled my heart with woe.  
My ladylove was guarded so  
that never did I have a chance  
to tell her with a word or glance  
that I had always loved her best,  
more than myself and all the rest.

50 They would not let me see her ever,  
and so it was that I could never  
disclose to her what I would say.  
This made me sadder, day by day,  
like any other lovesick man.  
I had no messenger or plan  
to tell her what my wishes were  
and of the love I had for her.

51 Shall I reveal my suffering  
and not conceal a single thing:  
she didn't even know that I  
was serving her with deed and sigh.  
I often went to bed in sorrow  
and nursed my pain until the morrow,  
arose still burdened down with care  
and took it with me everywhere.

- 52 I was the gloomiest of men,  
but only hear what happened when  
I stopped once at a citadel.  
The master there received me well  
with all the honor that was due.  
His wife, my aunt, was friendly, too.  
“My dearest nephew,” she spoke thus,  
“you are most welcome here with us.”
- 53 My aunt soon took me by the hand.  
I followed at her soft command  
to where no one could hear a word.  
Now listen, this is what I heard:  
“I’m pleased to see you once again;  
now won’t you tell me how you’ve been?  
Have you been feeling good, or bad?  
If you’ve been happy, I am glad.”
- 54 She smiled and said, “You make me laugh;  
what women say on your behalf  
I’ll tell you, though you shouldn’t know.  
I travelled several days ago  
to see a friend, a lady who,  
while we were talking, mentioned you.  
She asked how you and I were kin  
and I explained the truth therein.
- 55 “She then continued, ‘It’s been said,  
. . . . . [*line missing*] . . . . .  
that this young knight speaks always good  
of women, as a noble should.  
He’d like to serve, the rumor goes,  
a certain lady whom he knows.  
His service, should it prove a fact,  
will surely be a knightly act.’
- 56 “ I spoke, ‘ ’T was also said to me  
that he admires a lady. She  
is more to him than all the rest,  
more than the life within his breast.  
But who she is, I cannot say,  
although he praises her each day  
and tells that she is good and kind  
and has a pure and noble mind.’

- 57           “Suddenly she begged that I  
              should speak at once with you and try  
              to learn her name whom you prefer.  
              I ask because I promised her  
              and said, I’d quickly let her know  
              and would not wait or let it go.  
              Now save me, nephew, from her blame  
              and tell me, what’s the lady’s name?”
- 58           “But, auntie, you should know full well,  
              the lady’s name I’ll never tell—  
              at least I won’t till I have heard  
              you promise not to breathe a word  
              to anyone of this affair.  
              And also I must hear you swear  
              that you will be my messenger  
              and make my service known to her.”
- 59           “I’ll bear no messages for you  
              but I will swear, whate’er I do,  
              by God and all my hopes of bliss,  
              I’ll never say a word amiss;  
              for you deserve as much, I’m sure.  
              With me her name will be secure.  
              If I can help in any way  
              all you need to do is say.”
- 60           “I must tell you, I’m afraid,  
              for I can really use your aid.  
              It’s this lady friend of yours  
              whom indeed my heart adores,  
              who’s my delight and my desire,  
              she who asked you to inquire  
              what my lady’s name might be;  
              that best of women, it is she.”
- 61           “I can’t believe what you have said—  
              dear friend, you’ve truly been misled.  
              For you she’s much too highly born;  
              you’ll only gain her wrath and scorn.  
              You cannot be successful there,  
              so hear my counsel and forbear.  
              It’s best that you give up this thought  
              of serving her. ’T will come to naught.”

- 62           “Whether joys or cares come thronging,  
I’m so overcome with longing  
and love that I shall have to try  
to serve her, even though I die  
while in her service. You will find  
that you can never change my mind.  
I’ll serve my lady with each breath  
and faithfully until my death.
- 63           “If you won’t come to my support  
or render aid of any sort  
then all my joy will turn to pain  
and life itself will be in vain.  
Would you prevent such misery,  
then you must tell her this from me:  
It’s she I love. Without design  
I offer her this heart of mine.”
- 64           “Nephew, what more is there to say?  
God grant that you will get your way  
and that the lady will be kind.  
I’ll tell her what is on your mind  
and not withhold a single thing.  
In several hours I can bring  
your message and can tell her of  
your wish to serve her and your love.”
- 65           “In reverence at your feet I kneel.  
Lady, I shall always feel  
thankful if your lips will tell  
my lady I shall serve her well,  
that I shall be her own true knight,  
and that my heart and soul and might  
belong to her. I’ll freely give  
them all as long as I shall live.
- 66           “I’ve sung a new and pretty song  
of her, which you must take along  
with you and bring it to her ear  
and, on returning, let me hear  
if she believes the song is good.  
I praise her always, as I should  
and as I’ve done since I was young.  
Her virtues can’t be fully sung.

"God bless you, aunt, for what you do."  
 "I hope He does the same for you."  
 "Now you must do your best for me."  
 "Trust only in my loyalty."  
 "By your leave, I now must go."  
 "May God protect you, friend." And so  
 I parted from my aunt, but sent  
 this song with her before I went.

### THIS IS THE FIRST DANCE TUNE

No one can tell all about  
 a woman's goodness. Days ago  
 my heart began to blossom out.  
 She frees me from the cares I know  
 when, dressed in all her finery,  
 she walks along in front of me.  
 No angel is more fair than she.

By storm a woman seized my heart  
 and I must always be her knight.  
 Her form is lovely, every part;  
 her greeting fills me with delight.  
 All one could wish in her I find;  
 she leaves the others far behind  
 or I'm no judge of womankind.

You have shown more friendliness  
 to me than ever I deserve  
 You alone, I now confess,  
 are she whom I shall ever serve.  
 I'm always happy on the day  
 I see you, more than I can say.  
 My heart is joyful then and gay.

All the cheer that now is mine  
 I owe to no one else but you.  
 You are dear, without design,  
 and I would serve you and be true.  
 If you'll permit I'll show you how  
 I'll give away my freedom now.  
 I'll serve you faithfully, I vow.

- 68 I journeyed on with spirits high  
and reasoned thus, "As long as I  
have found a messenger to go  
for me and let my lady know  
about my wishes and my vow,  
why, I can be lighthearted now  
and need not sorrow anymore  
and be much gayer than before.
- 69 And so I travelled unconcerned—  
it wasn't long till I returned.  
Five weeks I visited about  
and in this time, as I found out,  
my aunt had kept her word to me,  
had made the trip and gone to see  
my lady and was back again.  
I soon received a message then.
- 70 It pleased me much, without delay  
I rode to learn what she would say.  
My aunt was kind to me and good,  
receiving me as all friends should.  
"I did what you insisted on,"  
she said, "but wish I hadn't gone.  
For, though I did what I could do,  
I've been no help at all to you.
- 71 "Now just sit down beside me here;  
I'll tell you very soon, my dear,  
every single thing we said  
so you can never be misled,  
what she to me and I to her.  
I was a faithful messenger  
and told her that you loved her best,  
more than yourself and all the rest.
- 74 "I said much more; before I closed  
I read the song which you composed.  
Then spoke your charming lady fair,  
'It really is a pretty air,  
but one he might as well have kept;  
his service I cannot accept  
and want to hear no more of this.  
The topic we shall now dismiss.

- 75           “ ‘Your nephew may be a worthy man;  
I’ll grant him this and all I can.  
I know him; at an early age  
he came and lived here as a page,  
and to his credit I can tell  
he served me loyally and well.  
But I insist he keep his peace.  
Requests like that will have to cease.’
- 77           “ ‘But, lady, they should not provoke  
your anger,’ thus I quickly spoke,  
‘for young men often want and love  
an object they’re not worthy of.  
They show their honor by their goal:  
the high desire, the lofty soul,  
and say a knight should prove his worth  
by wooing one of noble birth.’
- 80           “ ‘That he excels I’ll take your word  
(although it’s more than I have heard)  
in every virtue, every skill,  
yet for a woman it must still  
prevent a close relationship  
to see his most unsightly lip.  
You must forgive my saying so:  
it isn’t pretty, as you know.’
- 81           “She wouldn’t listen anymore.  
I counsel you as once before,  
let her wishes be your guide;  
since she has such exalted pride  
let her remain of service free  
however dear your honor be.  
Forget about her and display  
a lofty soul another way.”
- 82           “ ‘I cannot follow your advice,  
dear aunt, for I would sacrifice  
such fervent hopes that she’ll be kind;  
no words will ever change my mind.  
This counsel you should never give  
to me; I’ll serve her while I live  
and only bitter death shall part  
me from the one who holds my heart.’”



- 83           “Well I’ll not help, make no mistake.”  
              “No, auntie dear, for Heaven’s sake  
              you mustn’t give me up this way.  
              Now listen to what I’ve got to say:  
              I’ll have a doctor operate  
              upon my mouth. I shall not wait  
              and do not fear the consequence  
              since it’s the cause of such offense.”
- 85           “‘This I beg you not to do;  
              why it could be the death of you!  
              Live as God wanted you to live  
              and take whatever He may give  
              as being best for you and right;  
              this is the spirit of a knight.  
              To want what God does not ordain  
              reveals a spirit much too vain.”
- 86           “God bless you, aunt, but I’m afraid  
              that my decision has been made.  
              Be sure, no matter how things go,  
              I’ll not neglect to let you know.  
              I’ll send you quickly any news  
              and only ask that you will lose  
              no time in giving it to her,  
              yourself, or by a messenger.”
- 87           “‘I’ll do it, nephew, this I swear,  
              but how I wish that you’d forbear  
              and not go on with this you’ve planned.”  
              I rode away to Steierland  
              and into Graz, a city blessed  
              by many doctors; one was best.  
              I went to see him and inquired  
              if he would do what I desired.
- 88           He spoke, “Next spring come back again,  
              sometime in May, I’ll cut you then  
              but not before. Return to me  
              and on my honor you will see  
              I’ll make your mouth to such a fit  
              that you’ll be really pleased with it.  
              I’m quite a master at this art  
              and, what is more, I’m pretty smart.”

- 89           I spent the winter visiting  
              the ladies all around. When spring  
              and brighter days were coming on  
              and winter's ice and snow were gone  
              and birds were singing on every bough,  
              I thought, "I must be going now  
              to Graz and to the doctor's knife.  
              May God in mercy spare my life!"
- 90           In Heavens's care I left that day.  
              I soon encountered on the way  
              my lady's page, a youth I knew,  
              who saw and recognized me too.  
              He said, "Hello," and asked where I  
              was travelling, then asked me why.  
              "I'll tell you all about it friend;  
              it's rather strange what I intend.
- 91           "You see how well I am and strong,  
              yet I'll be sick enough ere long  
              and badly wounded in the head."  
              The fellow crossed himself and said,  
              "But, sir, what for, this thing is queer."  
              I spoke, "My friend, see here, and here.  
              It looks like three lips, when they're done  
              with cutting, I'll be missing one."
- 92           "God help you if it's true," he spoke,  
              "I quite agree, and do not joke,  
              it's most surprising, every bit.  
              My lady hasn't heard of it,  
              I fancy, and I'll let her know.  
              You must be mad in acting so,  
              to take such chances with no need;  
              why it could cost your life, indeed."
- 94           He rode his way and I rode mine,  
              to get to Graz was my design.  
              I sought and found the doctor there,  
              at once he took me in his care.  
              'T was Monday morning, not yet late,  
              when he began to operate.  
              He wished me bound but I would not.  
              He said, "You know, this hurts a lot.

95            “And if you move by just a hair  
                 you’ll come to harm, so best take care.”  
                 I spoke, “You needn’t be concerned  
                 for I came freely when I learned  
                 that you could fix this mouth for me.  
                 No matter what the pain may be  
                 no one will ever see me flinch,  
                 not by a fraction of an inch.”

96            My fear was not so great at that.  
                 Before him on a bench I sat.  
                 He took the blade and with a slash  
                 he cut into my face a gash.  
                 Down to the teeth his razor went,  
                 which I endured without lament  
                 and, with the surgery complete,  
                 had yet to tremble on my seat.

105           But now I think enough’s been said  
                 of how my mouth was cut and bled  
                 to suit my lady. Now I’ll tell  
                 you all about what then befell.  
                 My stay at Graz was long extended—  
                 until my face was fully mended.  
                 Then on my way I quickly rode  
                 until I came to my aunt’s abode.

106           While she was still far off she spied  
                 my mouth. Now hark to what she cried,  
                 “No one will e’er again decline  
                 you for your mouth. It looks just fine.  
                 I’m really very pleased about  
                 the way your suit is turning out.  
                 The tale already has been told  
                 to me of how you were so bold.

107           “The story will not go to waste.  
                 I wrote the whole thing up in haste  
                 and soon shall send it to the place  
                 where you so bravely seek for grace;  
                 I mean your charming lady fair.  
                 I’ll tell her what you did and swear  
                 on all my hope of Heaven’s bliss  
                 that she’s responsible for this.”

109           “May God send rich rewards to you,  
my messenger so sweet and true!  
Oh aunt, you make me feel so good  
and I’d repay you if I could  
but you have done so much, I know,  
I’ll never pay the debt I owe.  
I always knew I could rely  
on you. But here’s a song that I

110           “composed. Please write it carefully  
and send it on to her from me.  
In Graz while I so long was ill  
I worked on it with all my skill.  
Her praises turn my grief aside,  
her praises fill my heart with pride,  
her praises always make me gay,  
but hear! The song has this to say:”

#### THIS IS THE SECOND DANCE TUNE

What shall I sing  
about the night? I have no pleasure then.  
The day must bring  
fulfillment of my hopes—I see again.  
Besides, its light  
recalls the sight  
of her I love, and is a true delight.

Well may he praise  
the night who lies with love and shares its bliss,  
but it dismays  
my lonely heart. I hate the night for this  
and praise the day  
for then I may  
see her who drives my sorrows all away.

I celebrate  
the day when first I saw my lady fair.  
Since then I wait  
for dawn with more and more of grief and care.  
The night’s to blame  
that I became  
so sad. But, Day, most blessed be thy name.

I am possessed  
at night by grief and hosts of anxious fears.  
They're put to rest  
at once as soon as day's first light appears.  
For then I know  
that I must go  
and watch in secret her whom I love so.

Oh gladly would  
I praise the night if it were not in vain,  
or if I could  
lie beside the one who brings me pain.  
If it might be,  
what ecstasy!  
Alas, she will not grant this joy to me.

111            “The song and letter I shall send  
and to the words already penned  
shall add the other things I've learned.  
I'll tell her that you've just returned  
and see it's clearly understood  
that now your mouth looks just as good  
as any other man's. Thereby  
I'll not be telling her a lie.

112            “The answer which I get from her  
I'll send to you, if you prefer,  
so you will know what's on her mind.”  
“Do, aunt, your messenger will find  
me at the castle on the Mur.”  
With this I left her; feeling sure  
and happy with this suit of mine,  
I took the road to Liechtenstein.

113            My aunt, as soon as I had gone,  
took song and note and sent them on  
directly to the castle where  
her servant found my lady fair.  
He didn't have to wait for long;  
as soon as she had read the song  
and note, she penned a letter such  
that, when I got it, pleased me much.

114           The letter reached my aunt and she  
                dispatched it quickly on to me.  
                The servant didn't spare his horse;  
                I've her to thank for this, of course.  
                The letter made my heart so light  
                and filled my soul with proud delight.  
                No message ever brought such cheer  
                to me. But only listen here:

“My best wishes and my devotion I gladly extend to you and inform you that next Monday I shall leave the castle where I am still residing and shall journey to the castle which you well know, and shall stay overnight at the market which lies near you. Now I beg that you will not fail to visit me there. Then I shall respond to everything which you spoke of in your message. If your nephew wishes to come too I shall be glad to see him—to find out how his mouth looks and for no other reason.”

#### The Adventure of How Sir Ulrich First Spoke With His Lady

115           I started when the contents were  
                made known to me and rode to her,  
                and I was very happy then  
                in thoughts of seeing her again.  
                I came with spirits high, but oh,  
                the lovely one was guarded so  
                that evening that I never had  
                a glimpse of her, which made me sad.

116           I didn't sleep at all that night  
                and with the early morning light  
                got up and went to where I knew  
                were staying all her retinue.  
                Knights and many a page were there.  
                When greeted with a friendly air  
                at once they answered with respect  
                and manners cordial and correct.

117           How quickly did the hour pass!  
                My lady's chaplain sang a mass  
                which filled my heart with joy for I  
                could watch the lady on the sly.  
                I'd gone with fear to where she met  
                her guests and I was trembling yet.  
                She'd bowed to me when she had heard  
                my greeting, but had said no word.

- 119           The mass was over. Speedily  
              they told the other men and me  
              to leave the chamber. It was plain  
              they wouldn't let a man remain.  
              My lady ate and rode away.  
              I went to see what aunt would say.  
              She laughed and tenderly began,  
              "You surely are a lucky man.
- 120           "My lady says that she'll permit  
              you now to come and talk a bit  
              and say whatever's on your mind;  
              she's rather favorably inclined.  
              You'll follow when she starts to ride  
              and chance to come up by her side;  
              then you may tell what's on your heart,  
              but tell it quickly and depart."
- 121           This made me happy and, of course,  
              I very soon was on my horse.  
              When I beheld her up ahead  
              my heart spoke out with joy and said,  
              "Now there! Now you at last will speak  
              with her and tell her what you seek.  
              She rides before you all alone.  
              Go up and make your wishes known!"
- 122           Without delay I hurried there,  
              but when the lady was aware  
              of me she turned away her face,  
              which made me feel quite out of place  
              and I became so shy therefrom  
              that tongue and lips at once were dumb.  
              My head sank down irresolute  
              and I was silent as a mute.
- 123           There rode up then another knight  
              and I dropped back, still dumb with fright.  
              I rode behind subdued by fear.  
              This time my heart was more severe,  
              "You coward, why should you retreat  
              before a lady who's so sweet,  
              who wouldn't do you any harm?  
              Why lose your voice in such alarm?"

- 130           Again I rode up to her side,  
              quite pale with fear I could not hide,  
              my dread of speaking plagued me so.  
              My heart then gave me many a blow  
              and leaped within me ever higher,  
              to talk right out was its desire.  
              It spoke, "Now speak, now speak, now speak!  
              She's all alone, don't be so weak!"
- 131           I opened my mouth ten times at least  
              to talk. Each time my fear increased.  
              My tongue was still so tightly bound  
              I couldn't utter a word or sound.  
              I'll not discuss this any more;  
              I left her as I'd done before  
              and didn't say a single word.  
              Five times that day the same occurred.
- 132           There came at last the journey's end.  
              The lady stopped where she would spend  
              the night; they'd saved for her a room.  
              The parting filled my heart with gloom.  
              I took the stirrup which one needs  
              to lift the ladies from their steeds  
              and helped them down with this device.  
              (Some of them were really nice.)
- 133           She waited there, the kind and good,  
              upon her steed. Around her stood  
              many a knight and page. With these  
              my lady liked to joke and tease.  
              I took the stirrup to where she sat;  
              she spoke, "You've not the strength for that.  
              You cannot lift me down, for you  
              are frail and weak, and tired too."
- 134           Loud was the laughter of the men.  
              She stepped upon the stirrup then  
              and from the saddle down she slipped,  
              but, as I lowered her, she gripped  
              my hair and, so that none could see,  
              she quickly tore a lock from me.  
              "That's what you get for being shy!  
              What I've been told of you's a lie."



- 135 She joined her friends when this was said.  
I stayed behind with lowered head  
and thought, "What happened to me indeed!  
I must in honesty concede  
no one was ever such a dunce;  
she must have thought that more than once!  
She'll surely never let me serve  
her now. I got what I deserve."
- 136 I lingered on in dark despair.  
A knight said I should go from there:  
't was time the ladies got some rest.  
I rode downtown where I could best  
secure myself a lodging place.  
I prayed to God that by His grace  
He'd take this life which was so sad  
and all the other things I had.
- 142 Why should I tell the night's sad tale,  
of each lament and every wail  
until the coming of the day?  
Sometimes I sat, sometimes I lay,  
sometimes got up and walked about,  
now in the room and now without.  
I often wrung my hands with woe;  
a cousin came and found me so.
- 143 'T was early yet. Without ado  
he spoke to me, "What's wrong with you?"  
I said, "I've got a frightful ache,  
my heart feels like it soon would break,  
the pain increases more and more,  
and that's what I'm so troubled for.  
I cannot lie nor stand nor sit  
but walking helps a little bit."
- 144 "They've got a doctor here," he said.  
"Bring him to me." Away he sped  
to find out where the man might be.  
I had them get a horse for me,  
a servant too. We then took flight  
from the hostel where I'd spent the night  
and raced like a crazy man might run  
to where I'd left the lovely one.

- 145           As I approached at breakneck speed  
              I saw her mounted on her steed  
              and riding toward me down the street.  
              'T was just like I had hoped we'd meet.  
              In handsome dress along she rode  
              with hooded cape as is the mode.  
              When she looked up, she made a bow.  
              I was no longer silent now.
- 146           I spoke, "My lady, let me find  
              for love of God that you are kind  
              to me, and through the nobleness  
              that God permits you to possess.  
              Be kind, O lady, full of grace,  
              may I see favor in your face.  
              In you do all my joys unite;  
              you are my feast of pure delight.
- 147           "You must believe what now you hear,  
              that I have served you every year  
              since that sweet hour I'll ne'er forget,  
              so long ago when first we met.  
              I'm in your service as your man,  
              I'll serve you just the best I can  
              and never anyone but you.  
              You can be sure that I'll be true.
- 150           "For you, my lady kind and good,  
              I'd risk my life whene'er I could  
              in any knightly deed or game  
              and always do it in your name.  
              Whatever way a knight can serve  
              I'll serve you well, as you deserve.  
              I should, I will, indeed I must  
              remain your knight till I am dust."
- 151           "Silence, you're nothing but a youth,  
              for these high things still too uncouth.  
              You'll stop such childish chattering  
              if my regard is worth a thing  
              and ride away from me at once.  
              You still are something of a dunce!  
              This talk can bring you grief and care  
              and will not get you anywhere."

- 152            “It’s true, dear lady, I am still  
                 too simple, for I lack the skill  
                 to speak to you the way I ought  
                 or tell my feelings as I sought.  
                 In some respects I’m much more wise  
                 and win from other knights the prize.  
                 I’ll serve you thus and shall not fail;  
                 for things like this I’m not too frail.”
- 153            “Just leave me now is my advice,  
                 I shouldn’t have to tell you twice.  
                 I don’t like talking secretly;  
                 you ought to know they’re watching me.  
                 If any knight or lady guessed  
                 what you have said I’d be distressed.  
                 You must be still at once and go!  
                 You’re very troublesome, you know.”
- 156            There wasn’t any more to say  
                 so I took leave and rode away,  
                 quite pleased. As far as I could tell,  
                 my suit was going rather well.  
                 At least I’d told my ladylove  
                 in part what I’d been thinking of.  
                 My spirits mounted more and more;  
                 I’d never felt such joy before.
- 157            At once I joined a knightly band.  
                 Where’er they gathered in the land  
                 there I was always seen, and none  
                 could fail to know that I was one.  
                 That summer I had so much luck  
                 that one time in a joust I struck  
                 a worthy knight clear off his steed.  
                 (She thanked me later for this deed.)
- 158            Of my achievements I’d reveal  
                 much more but think that some might feel  
                 I praised myself a bit too much;  
                 so I’ll be still for fear of such.  
                 All summer I was filled with pride,  
                 and as a lady’s knight should ride  
                 I rode. If I had some success  
                 ’t was quite deserved, I must confess.

- 313           With happy heart I journeyed then  
                  to see my gracious aunt again,  
                  just as a man in love would do.  
                  I got a kindly welcome too.  
                  I said, "I pray that God will grant  
                  rewards, my messenger and aunt,  
                  to you whose friendship cannot fade.  
                  My joy depends upon your aid."
- 314           "If I can help with your request,  
                  nephew, I'll gladly do my best.  
                  Once more to meet your wish I'll send  
                  a message to your lady friend  
                  and tell her, if this be your will,  
                  at Friesach no one showed more skill  
                  or bravery than you. And I  
                  am sure that this will be no lie."
- 315           "Dear aunt, you always do me good,  
                  I'll always thank you, as I should.  
                  Please send along this poem here;  
                  I do not have the slightest fear  
                  that she'll not like the words or air  
                  for she's so kindly and so fair  
                  and ever generous with praises.  
                  The song describes her with these phrases:"

#### THE FOURTH DANCE TUNE

Little birds in forest bowers  
sing as one their sweetest lay.  
On the meadow pretty flowers  
bloom against the light of May.  
So now blooms my self-esteem  
in the thought of her devotion  
which enriches my emotion  
as a beggar by a dream.

High the hopes I hold and nourish  
in the presence of her charms  
that my fortune still may flourish  
till I hold her in my arms.  
Such desire is all my joy.  
Now may God in fullest measure  
grant that these, the hopes I treasure,  
she I love will not destroy.

May the gentle one I cherish  
free of fault or broken vow  
never cause this dream to perish  
which is all I have for now.  
May my pleasure never wane,  
may I not in tears awaken,  
may I laugh, with courage taken  
from the solace I shall gain.

Pleasant thoughts and fond desires,  
these are all the joys I sing.  
But my love for her requires  
little more if I may bring  
both into her company  
that she willingly may tender  
something of her charm and splendor  
and be ever kind to me.

Blessed May, your gentle weather  
warms the whole world with its kiss.  
You and all the world together  
bring me not a mite of bliss.  
For what pleasure could you give  
were the lovely one not near me?  
She alone has power to cheer me,  
from her solace I must live.

318

I left my aunt ere very long.  
She sent the letter and the song  
to where the charming lady stayed  
and answered thus my plea for aid.  
When the messenger appeared  
the one whom all so much revered  
said, "You are welcome. Tell me how  
is your dear lady doing now?"

- 319           He then replied, "Her health is good  
and she conveys, as well she should,  
her great devotion here to you,  
but she has sent a letter too.  
Please read it now and let me go  
and God will bless you, this I know.  
My lady told me to bestir  
myself—the letter came from her."
- 321           She read the letter, laid it by,  
and wrote another in reply.  
She gave it to the page: "Now tell  
your mistress I am glad she's well,  
and give her my regards, and let  
her have this message. Don't forget  
to tell her frankly that I doubt  
the contents of her note throughout."
- 322           The messenger quite soon returned  
and sought his mistress. When she learned  
he had a note she sent him on  
to Leibnitz; that's where I had gone  
to take part in a tournament.  
Three hundred knights at this event  
strove for honor and for gain;  
to some came wealth, to others pain.
- 323           I warmly greeted him who brought  
the message and at once we sought  
a private place. He gave me then  
the note—so kind my aunt has been!  
I thought the letter would impart  
that which would please my longing heart;  
it took away my joy instead.  
Now listen here to what it said:
- "This nephew the loftiest praise you give,  
perhaps since he's a relative.  
But other folks never praised him at all,  
which makes your praise seem rather small.  
When you're so lavish in your praises  
I censure you for empty phrases."

- 324 I never in my life felt worse  
than when he read to me this verse;  
the message covered me with shame.  
I thought, "I'll have to win the fame  
that knightly deeds alone can bring  
or I shall soon lose everything:  
the life, the goods for which I've striven,  
and all besides that God has given."
- 325 I journeyed far to foreign ground  
wherever knightly games were found,  
be they in earnest or in fun,  
I could be seen at any one.  
My body and my wealth I spent  
quite willingly, 't was my intent.  
To show my lady great respect  
my steed and I were richly decked.
- 327 But now the winter's cold came on,  
the forest greenery was gone  
and silent was the cheerful chant  
of birds. I went to see my aunt  
and told her of my grief and pain.  
She spoke, "I need to make it plain  
that you can't send my page once more  
to take your message as before.
- 328 "She has forbidden me, in truth,  
to send her e'er again this youth.  
She fears the evil talk of some  
and won't permit that he should come.  
I'd be so foolish were I still  
to act contrary to her will  
and send him there, and quite in vain;  
for this I'd have to be insane."
- 332 "Auntie, since your messenger  
can ne'er again be sent to her  
I'll have to find another who  
will go. She shan't forbid me to.  
For whether joy or pain prevail  
my loyalty will never fail.  
My heart has thought the whole thing out;  
of this there'll never be a doubt.

"Aunt, for what you've done for me  
 I'm just as thankful as can be.  
 I'll always feel a debt to you;  
 you may be sure that this is true."  
 I said goodbye and went along  
 and, while I rode, composed a song,  
 quite as my loving heart advised,  
 about the lady whom I prized.

### THE FIFTH DANCE TUNE

Summer now is gone away,  
 the birds will sing no more this year.  
 I am left forlorn today:  
 my heart's sad song alone I hear.  
 Winter and another grief  
 together give my heart much pain:  
 the two conspire against my heart's relief.

Summer's joys do well prepare  
 the lover's spirit (this I know)  
 for the service of the fair—  
 Oh blest be summer's lovely glow!  
 Hateful winter I despise,  
 but summer's bliss I love, for then  
 can one serve well the lady he does prize.

What does winter mean to me,  
 what good are long, cold winter nights?  
 Indifferent to this is she  
 who could grant me such delights.  
 Would that my distress might end  
 in the same sweet repose as his  
 who lies within the arms of his sweet friend.

Sorrow follows love fulfilled:  
 so should rejoicing follow pain.  
 Since my sorrow is not stilled,  
 therefore my hopes all green remain.  
 Lady, you could change my state  
 from sadness into greatest joy.  
 While others dance, my woe does not abate.



Lady dear, oh lady mine,  
why do you hate and wound me so?  
Service is my sole design,  
as you (and God as well) do know.  
Never have I gone astray  
or let my heart to others turn  
since narrow path I knew from crooked way.

334 I rode that winter up and down  
to visit ladies near the town  
by which she dwelt. I was, I own,  
more constant than a precious stone.  
My faithful heart considered much  
how I might find a servant such  
that I could send her, just to tell  
how I desired to serve her well.

335 Unhappily the proper kind  
of messenger I could not find.  
I searched the country end to end  
and found not one whom I could send.  
This caused my longing heart to grieve  
with sorrow nothing could relieve;  
my life was nearly empty of  
all joy because of thwarted love.

336 Delight was almost gone, but then  
the merry summer came again  
and brought its charm, as is its way,  
and many a beautiful summer day.  
I thought, "I'll serve my lady dear  
most gladly through another year  
and better than I have before,  
and so perhaps I'll please her more."

337 No time was wasted, I confess,  
till I had steeds and battle dress.  
I'd soon forsaken my abode,  
to Carinthia and Krain I rode  
and down to Istria. 'T was there  
that Meinhart von Gorze bade them prepare  
Triest for many a knightly game,  
which served to further spread his fame.

338            Before the knightly sport was done  
                 a name for many a man was won  
                 who so excelled in knightly arts  
                 that he subdued the ladies' hearts.  
                 Count Meinhart jousted very well,  
                 as oft before and since befell.  
                 I know at least a hundred spears  
                 were broken there by cavaliers.

339            I used up fifteen spears with skill  
                 and bravery. I stayed until  
                 the games were over. Then I went  
                 to Brixen to a tournament.  
                 My dress was courtly as can be,  
                 my only thought was chivalry.  
                 I wished to serve my lady sweet  
                 with many a bold and daring feat.

#### The Adventure of How Sir Ulrich Lost His Finger

340            When I arrived there many a knight  
                 received me warmly, as was right;  
                 their courtly manners were the best.  
                 They knew how one receives a guest  
                 and greeted me with such display  
                 that I felt welcome right away,  
                 for one could tell they wished to please.  
                 I thanked them all and felt at ease.

341            The sides were chosen for the game  
                 and with the morning light we came  
                 onto the Merre, a nearby field;  
                 we hurried there with spear and shield.  
                 It soon began; so I was told,  
                 a hundred valiant knights and bold  
                 strove with each other up and down  
                 the field that day and won renown.

- 342           At last it was empty of steeds and men  
              but only hear what happened then.  
              Sir Ulschalk von Bozen challenged me  
              to show my lady constancy  
              and break with him a spear or two;  
              this I was very glad to do.  
              Before another word was said  
              each tied his helmet on his head.
- 343           With heavy lances poised in air  
              we charged upon each other there;  
              the joust was finely executed.  
              Sir Ulschalk, who is well reputed,  
              struck my hand while passing by  
              and knocked a finger off, so I  
              had to remove my helmet then  
              to show I couldn't joust again.
- 345           We rode at once to town to find  
              a doctor who would come and bind  
              my hand. Soon one was at my side.  
              He saw the wound was deep and wide  
              but thought the hand could be restored  
              (the finger hung by a single cord)  
              He said, "If treated right, I feel  
              that hand and finger both will heal."
- 346           These tidings filled my heart with cheer.  
              I told the doctor, "Listen here,  
              if what you say to me is true  
              I'll willingly present to you  
              more wealth than you will ever need,  
              enough to make you glad indeed.  
              Just save the finger and you'll get  
              a thousand pounds to pay my debt."
- 347           At once the doctor took command.  
              He carefully tied up my hand  
              and in the bandages it lay  
              right up to the seventh day.  
              But, when the doctor then unbound  
              the hand to see the wound, he found  
              that it was swollen and so black  
              that even he was taken aback.

- 350 My heart was filled with deep dismay.  
A worthy doctor, I'd heard say,  
was near, at Bozen, so I spurred  
my horse and left for I had heard,  
if I should come before too late,  
the doctor's learning was so great  
that he would surely save my finger.  
I rode to him and did not linger.
- 352 I entered Bozen then in haste.  
The doctor also did not waste  
much time but came to do my will;  
I'd sent him word that I was ill.  
He saw my wound, examined it,  
and said, "You need not fret a bit.  
It won't take long for me to cure  
your hand and finger, I am sure."
- 373 I sought a messenger whom I  
could send. I'll tell you, it's no lie,  
there simply wasn't one to find,  
which quite disturbed my peace of mind.  
I couldn't even let her know  
that all for her I suffered so.  
This worried me; the truth to tell,  
I didn't like it very well.
- 374 My thoughts were troubled, but in vain;  
my finger also caused me pain.  
The wound was often bound for me  
which made it bleed quite heavily.  
Twice daily I endured this curse  
but still my spirit pained me worse.  
To find no person to employ  
as messenger killed every joy.
- 375 A messenger at any cost  
I had to have or all was lost;  
with great concern my heart was stirred.  
But listen now to what occurred:  
Not far away there lived a youth,  
my friend, and one who spoke the truth.  
He came to see me and express  
his sympathy in my distress.

- 376           “God knows I wouldn’t say to you,”  
he spoke, “a thing that wasn’t true;  
I pledge my hope of Heaven’s bliss  
that I am worried over this.  
If I could have my way, I know  
I’d gladly take on me your woe  
and every pain I’d gladly bear.  
I’d do it, on my word I swear.”
- 377           I spoke, “I do not doubt you would  
and I believe you, as I should;  
you’ve been a friend. My heart will break  
with sorrow more than it can take  
in thinking of a lady sweet  
whom I have served with many a feat.  
Could I but find a messenger  
to say I got this wound for her!”
- 378           “Sir Friend, hear this I have to say:  
it’s not two weeks ago today  
since I have seen your lady fair.  
If I may do so, I declare  
that I have known her just the same  
although you never spoke her name.  
I know her well enough to state  
that you’re no object of her hate.”
- 386           I spoke, “It’s well that you’re my friend.  
That I’ve done nothing to offend  
you, I am very glad to hear,  
especially since you are dear  
to her. That you can tell her what  
you wish, this cheers my heart a lot.  
For you, my friend, will have to be  
the messenger to her from me.”
- 387           “I’ll be the messenger you need  
and carry any news indeed  
which you may want her to receive.  
That I’ll do this you must believe.  
I’ll quickly tell her what you will  
and bring the answer, good or ill,  
to you at once. I’ll not suppress  
a thing, though it be ‘No’ or ‘Yes.’ ”

- 388           “Friend, I pray that God requite  
                your help to me in this sad plight.  
                Now tell the lady from us both  
                and swear to her a solemn oath  
                that I have always loved her best,  
                more than myself and all the rest,  
                and also more than any thing.  
                I serve her with no wavering.
- 389           “‘You ought to let the lady know  
                that only several days ago  
                I lost a finger which was born  
                to serve her. This I’ve often sworn.  
                ’T was in a joust. I’ll not complain  
                but gladly suffer loss or gain  
                for her, and never seek relief  
                from either happiness or grief.
- 390           “‘Now ask the lady if she’ll let  
                me be her knight, and don’t forget  
                to beg her by the charm in which  
                God in his kindness made her rich  
                that she will send me cheerful news  
                to end the sorrow that subdues  
                my heart. You ought to talk about  
                these things with her. Leave nothing out.”
- 392           He said goodbye and then he rode  
                until he came to her abode.  
                When he arrived my lady fair  
                at once bade him be welcome there.  
                She said, “Friend, you must tell me how  
                your mistress is; what’s she doing now?  
                Be sure you tell me just the truth  
                and only that, well-mannered youth.”
- 393           The page’s answer was refined:  
                “Gracious lady fair and kind,  
                since it’s the truth that you prefer,  
                well then, I haven’t come from her.  
                A knight has sent me here, I own,  
                whose sore distress I long have known.  
                He sends you, lady good and pure,  
                a loyalty which will endure.

- 394            “He bade me tell you his distress  
and hopes you’ll grant his suit success.  
Quite recently he was so true  
that he was wounded serving you.  
I ought to tell you what it cost:  
a finger from his hand was lost.  
He used it just to serve you right  
and lost it as a gallant knight.
- 395            “He’s chosen you, is what he swore,  
to be his lady evermore,  
and with such constant loyalty  
that he will ne’er be sorrow free  
unless you’re favorably inclined  
to him, my lady good and kind.  
You’re more than all the world to him,  
than riches, ladies, life and limb.”
- 396            “Tell me who has been so bold  
and sent the message you have told.  
God knows that I don’t care for it.  
What man could have so little wit  
to send you here with such a claim?  
Speak up! I’d like to learn his name.  
And you should know that you don’t please  
me when you bring me words like these.”
- 397            “Lady, the name I’ll gladly tell  
for he has always kept it well.  
He’s called The Knight of Liechtenstein,  
Sir Ulrich; he’s a friend of mine  
whom you can trust, and I am sure  
that his devotion will endure;  
he’s never won so great a prize  
as you, dear lady fair and wise.
- 398            “My lady sweet, if you would yield  
and let him be a while concealed  
alone with you ’t would be such bliss.  
He’d not exchange the Grail for this  
which valiant Parzifal did gain  
with knightly deeds and bitter pain.  
His heaven and his paradise  
is you, so lovely and so nice.”

- 399           “Tell him from me, you courtly boy,  
I’ll not permit him to destroy  
my peace this way. He must console  
himself and find another goal  
more suitable to him, for I  
shall certainly grow old and die  
and all the while learn nothing of  
that which is known as secret love.
- 405           “Here’s the message you’re to bring  
(take care and don’t forget a thing):  
he’ll quit the service he’s begun  
or lose the honor he has won.  
If he believes my mind will change  
he’ll quickly find that I’ll arrange  
that he shall suffer such disgrace  
he’ll never want to show his face.”
- 407           “I’ll tell him, lady, as I should,  
though it will surely do no good.  
His mind is fixed, dear lady, so  
that he’ll not let his service go.  
He can’t be stopped by pain or need  
or even fear of death, indeed,  
and will not leave your service now  
no matter what may come, I vow.”
- 408           He said goodbye and then returned  
to where I waited, quite concerned.  
I saw the messenger come near  
and what I said you now shall hear,  
“Be welcomed by both God and me,  
you page, so skilled in courtesy.  
Tell me, were you successful there?  
How did you leave my lady fair?”
- 409           “She is healthy, she is gay.  
She instructed me to say.  
you’ll leave her service without ado  
if life and honor are dear to you.  
Should you not heed the words she sends,  
through other means she’ll gain her ends  
and bring such mischief on your head  
that you’ll be overcome with dread.”



- 411            “My friend, no matter what may come,  
                 no matter what I suffer from,  
                 my service shall continue on  
                 until my life itself is gone.  
                 Though things go well, though things go ill,  
                 ’t is she I’ll serve, such is my will,  
                 and while I live no joy shall stir  
                 my heart but that which comes from her.”
- 419            I spent the summer in Steierland  
                 and often tied my helmet band.  
                 To earn my lady’s love I meant  
                 to joust with knights where’er I went,  
                 and very eagerly I fought.  
                 With constant faithfulness I sought  
                 to serve her as a suitor should  
                 who hopes that his reward is good.
- 420            The summer and every summer joy  
                 were gone. Once more I urged the boy  
                 (I mean the messenger) that he  
                 would see the lady fair for me.  
                 He spoke, “To her I’ll gladly ride  
                 and tell whatever you confide,  
                 of how you sorrow and you pine,  
                 and speak as if the thoughts were mine.”
- 421            I told to him without delay  
                 just what I wanted him to say  
                 and sent to her a song again.  
                 With joy he parted from me then.  
                 When he had reached her dwelling place  
                 she welcomed him with friendly grace.  
                 “Pardon,” he said, “if I intrude,  
                 I hope you’re in a better mood
- 422            “than you were in when last we met.”  
                 The lady answered with regret,  
                 “What have I done to cause offense?  
                 Now tell me that without pretense.  
                 You know, you always have been dear  
                 to me. You can be happy here,  
                 and though I may not always please  
                 you never need feel ill at ease.”

- 423           “God pay you from his boundless store!  
I come as messenger once more  
to bring a message from a knight  
who seeks for favor in your sight  
and offers, lady dear, to you  
a greeting and his service too,  
esteem and loyalty and love,  
and all a man is master of.”
- 430           “You’re both quite good at flattering  
but I shall tell you this one thing:  
you said (it really makes me mad),  
in serving me Sir Ulrich had  
lost a finger. I deny  
the boast and think it just a lie.  
I’m told, he has the finger still.  
I wish you wouldn’t do his will.”
- 431           “Lady, he has it, I’ll admit,  
and yet, so badly bent is it,  
it cannot do him any good  
and doesn’t help him as it should  
for he can’t move it very well.  
But one thing I’ll be glad to tell:  
it firmly holds, so it appears,  
in serving you some heavy spears.”
- 432           “I’m glad his finger’s on his hand  
but lies as this I cannot stand.  
He has it still, and you have told  
a lie in part; that’s why I scold.  
Now I shall talk with you no more,  
so go back where you were before  
and, courtly boy, you’d better see  
you bring no messages to me.”
- 433           My messenger departed then  
and soon was back with me again.  
When I caught sight of him I cried,  
“Dear messenger, come right inside  
and tell what happened right away.  
What did the lovely lady say?  
If I should hear good news at last  
my heart will never be downcast.”

- 434            “She didn’t send a word to you  
but she told me a thing or two.  
I’m not to be your messenger;  
she said, it greatly vexes her  
and gives her cause to be irate  
that I should come to her and state,  
you lost a finger and were maimed  
for her. It was a lie, she claimed.
- 435            “She heard the finger was all right  
and she believes the wound was slight;  
what I have told of you is lies  
and I’ve deceived her, she implies.  
She’s peeved at me and quite upset  
but glad you have the finger yet.  
She wouldn’t have the wound be bad,  
it’s just the lie that makes her mad.”
- 436            I thought, “Because my lady dear  
is vexed about this finger here,  
that I still have it, ’t would be best  
(since it’s less useful than the rest)  
to cut it off and have him leave  
the thing with her. For she’ll believe  
it’s really lost when she looks at  
it then. It goes, and that is that.”
- 437            I left him and at once began  
to seek a certain honest man,  
von Hasendorf, so he was named,  
Sir Ulrich, who was widely famed  
for courage and a level head.  
He wished to serve me, so he said.  
I bade him show his loyalty  
and cut a finger off for me.
- 440            “I’ll do your will, you may depend  
on me for truly I’m your friend,  
and vassal too. I wish to serve  
you always, as you well deserve.”  
I took his knife and unafraid  
across my finger set the blade.  
I spoke, “Now strike, good man, and well!”  
He struck, and from my hand it fell.

- 441           While still the blood was running strong  
              my well-bred courier came along  
              and quickly whispered in my ear,  
              “What now? What are you doing here?  
              Did you cut off your finger? Oh,  
              for this my heart condemns me so  
              because of what I’ve seen and heard  
              and that I told you a single word.”
- 442           “My friend, you needn’t start a row,  
              just take to her my finger now  
              and tell her that she can depend  
              on this: I’ll serve her to the end  
              with loyalty that’s never swayed.  
              And if this service is not paid—  
              that, of all women everywhere,  
              I’ve chosen her—it won’t be fair.”
- 443           “‘It grieves me so to see you bleed  
              but now that you have done the deed  
              you should compose a note of praise  
              with many a pretty word and phrase  
              to send, whatever else you do.  
              Of course I’ll take the finger too.  
              I’m pleased to help in your distress;  
              God grant my trip complete success.”
- 444           “‘I’ll gladly do it since I can.”  
              At once I started and began  
              a very nice and clever lay.  
              With it my finger rode away  
              to where the lady dear was seen.  
              In velvet, soft and grassy green,  
              they wound the verses speedily.  
              I had a goldsmith make for me
- 445           without delay two bands of gold.  
              In these the lay was put. To hold  
              it firm was made a little clasp  
              in shape like tiny hands that grasp  
              each other—all was formed with care.  
              The finger now was put in there.  
              When everything would satisfy  
              the messenger then said goodbye.

- 446 I spoke, "God care for you, I pray,  
while there as well as on the way!"  
With this, I watched the page depart  
and stayed behind with heavy heart.  
The verse was hidden in his coat  
when he arrived, so none took note.  
He went to her with fear and dread;  
the lady looked at him and said,
- 447 "I welcome you again, young squire,  
although you really stirred my ire.  
If you have something new to tell  
I'll let you speak. What now befell?"  
"Dear lady," quickly spoke the boy,  
"my lord has chosen to employ  
me once again, and to entrust  
me with the finger we discussed."
- 448 He showed her then the little book  
which the lovely lady took,  
and you'll believe her great surprise  
when the finger met her eyes.  
"Alas," she said, "what have you brought?  
I'm sure I never would have thought  
that any person sound of mind  
could be so foolish or so blind."
- 450 She read my verses to the end  
and spoke at once, "My youthful friend,  
what can I tell you? I'll not hide  
my sorrow that the finger died  
but that's not fondness for the knight.  
I'm sad because you may be right  
in saying that it thus was slain  
because of me. This gives me pain."
- 451 "Lady, I'll tell you how it went.  
Not long ago when I was sent  
away from here he then received  
the news that you were very peeved  
at me for saying, lady grand,  
he'd lost a finger from his hand  
in knightly service, and that you  
were mad because it wasn't true.

- 452            “He left me quickly when he heard  
the story. Lady, take my word  
that almost on the very spot  
he found a vassal whom he got  
to cut his finger off and maim  
him thus. Right after that I came  
and when I saw him bleeding still,  
I must confess, it made me ill.”
- 453            “Go back and tell him my regret;  
he’d serve the ladies better yet,  
were it not that his hand is shy  
a finger. Tell him too that I  
shall always keep the finger near,  
buried in my dresser here,  
that I shall see it every day,  
and that I mean just what I say.
- 454            “Tell him from me now, courtly youth:  
I’ll keep the finger—not, in truth,  
because my heart at last is moved  
so that his prospects are improved  
by a single hair. Make sure he hears  
this: should he serve a thousand years,  
the service I would always scorn.  
By my constancy I’ve sworn.”
- 455            With this the messenger returned.  
When he recounted all he’d learned  
I was pleased with the whole affair;  
that she had kept the finger there  
was enough to fill my heart with joy  
and so I said this to the boy,  
“I’m very glad to hear that she  
will keep the finger there for me.
- 456            “Whene’er she sees it, this is plain,  
she cannot possibly refrain  
from thinking that I serve her well.  
She has it and her mind will dwell  
on me. The prospect does me good.  
I’ll serve her always as I should,  
on her my pleasures all depend,  
she is my May and winter’s end.

- 458            “My service must be God’s command.  
Now let me tell you what I’ve planned.  
I’ll take on woman’s dress and name  
and thus disguised will strive for fame.  
Sweet God protect me and sustain!  
I’ll travel with a knightly train  
up to Bohemia from the sea.  
A host of knights shall fight with me.
- 459            “This very winter I shall steal  
out of the land and shall conceal  
my goal from everyone but you.  
I’ll travel as a pilgrim who  
to honor God is bound for Rome  
(no one will question this at home).  
I’ll stop in Venice and shall stay  
in hiding till the first of May.
- 460            “I’ll carefully remain unseen  
but deck myself out like a queen;  
it should be easy to acquire  
some lovely feminine attire  
which I’ll put on—now hear this last—  
and when St. George’s day is past,  
the morning afterwards, I’ll ride  
(I pray that God is on my side)
- 461            “from the sea to Mestre, near  
by Venice. He who breaks a spear  
with me to serve, by tourneying,  
his lady fair will get a ring  
of gold and it will be quite nice.  
I’ll give it to him with this advice,  
that he present it to his love,  
the one he’s in the service of.
- 463            “Messenger, I’ll make the trip  
so there will never be a slip  
and no one possibly can guess  
whose form is hid beneath the dress.  
For I’ll be clad from head to toe  
in woman’s garb where’er I go,  
fully concealed from people’s eyes.  
They’ll see me only in disguise.

- 465            “If you would please me, messenger,  
                 then travel once again to her.  
                 Just tell her what I have in mind  
                 and ask if she will be so kind  
                 as to permit that I should fight  
                 throughout this journey as her knight.  
                 It’s something she will not repent  
                 and I’ll be glad of her assent.”
- 466            He rode at once to tell her this  
                 and swore upon his hope of bliss  
                 my loyalty would never falter,  
                 that I was true and would not alter.  
                 He told my plan in full detail  
                 and said, “My lady, should you fail  
                 to let him serve and show your trust  
                 in him, it wouldn’t seem quite just.”
- 467            “Messenger,” she spoke, “just let  
                 him have this message, don’t forget.  
                 This trip, if I have understood  
                 you right, will surely do him good  
                 and he will win a rich reward  
                 in praise from many a lady and lord.  
                 Whether it helps with me or not,  
                 from others he will gain a lot.”
- 468            The messenger was pleased and sure.  
                 He found me by the river Mur  
                 at Liechtenstein where I was then.  
                 ’T was nice to have him there again.  
                 I spoke, “O courtly youth, now tell  
                 me if the lady’s feeling well.  
                 For, if my darling’s doing fine,  
                 then shall rejoice this heart of mine.”
- 469            He spoke, “She’s fair and happy too;  
                 she bade me bring this word to you  
                 about your journey. If you should  
                 go through with it ’t will do you good  
                 and, whether it helps with her or not,  
                 from others you will gain a lot.  
                 She certainly supports your aim  
                 and says that you’ll be rich in fame.



The Adventure of How Sir Ulrich, Dressed as a Queen, Rode Tourneying  
Through the Lands

- 470           I listened to the news he had,  
                  and heart and body both were glad.  
                  It was a joy for me to know  
                  my undertaking pleased her so.  
                  I didn't linger but began  
                  at once to carry out my plan  
                  and was quite happy, I admit,  
                  that he also approved of it.
- 471           I soon was ready, I assure  
                  you, to begin my knightly tour.  
                  I started out as pilgrim dressed  
                  and left the land. I thought it best  
                  to take a staff and pouch at least,  
                  for looks (I got them from a priest);  
                  one would have thought me bound for Rome.  
                  I prayed God bring me safely home.
- 472           I got to Venice without delay  
                  and found a house in which to stay,  
                  right on the edge of town, a place  
                  where none would ever see my face  
                  who might have recognized me there.  
                  I was as cautious everywhere  
                  and all the winter long I hid.  
                  But let me tell you what I did:
- 473           I had some woman's clothing made  
                  to wear throughout the masquerade.  
                  They cut and sewed for me twelve skirts  
                  and thirty fancy lady's shirts.  
                  I bought two braids for my disguise,  
                  the prettiest they could devise,  
                  and wound them with some pearls I got  
                  which didn't cost an awful lot.

- 474 I bade the tailors then prepare  
three velvet cloaks for me to wear,  
all white. The saddles too on which  
the master labored, stitch by stitch,  
were silver white. As for a king  
was made the saddle covering,  
long and broad and gleaming white.  
The bridles all were rich and bright.
- 475 The tailors sewed for every squire  
(there were a dozen) white attire.  
A hundred spears were made for me  
and all as white as they could be.  
But I need not continue so,  
for all I wore was white as snow  
and everything the squires had on  
was just as white as any swan.
- 476 My shield was white, the helmet too.  
I had them make ere they were through  
a velvet cover for each steed  
as armor. These were white, indeed,  
as was the battle cape which I  
should wear for jousting by and by,  
the cloth of which was very fine.  
I was quite pleased to call it mine.
- 477 At last I had my horses sent  
to me (none knew just where they went)  
and got some servants, as I'd planned,  
each native to a foreign land.  
They carefully did not let slip  
a thing about my coming trip  
and I took heed that those who came  
to serve me never learned my name.
- 478 Soon we were all prepared to go;  
how pleased was I that this was so.  
I sent a letter on apace  
by messenger to every place  
where I had planned to stop awhile  
and urged upon him craft and guile  
that none might ever guess or hear  
my name. He said I needn't fear.

In the message I composed  
 my journey was in full disclosed:  
 each hostel where I would alight  
 to eat and drink and spend the night,  
 and all that one might wish to learn.  
 Before the messenger's return  
 indeed a month at least had sped.  
 Now this is what the letter said:

“The noble Queen Venus, Goddess of Love, sends to all of the knights who reside in Lombardy, Friuli, Carinthia, Styria, Austria, and Bohemia her good wishes and her greeting and announces that, because of her love, she will journey to them and will teach them with what sort of things they should earn or win the love of noble ladies. She announces to them that the day after Saint George's Day she will rise from the sea at Mestre and will travel as far as Bohemia on this mission. Whichever knight comes against her and breaks a spear in two against her she will reward with a golden ring which he is to send to the lady whom he loves most. The ring has the power to make the lady to whom it is sent all the more beautiful and to cause her to love faithfully him who sent it to her. If my Lady Venus unhorses a knight, he is to bow toward the four ends of the world in honor of a woman. If she however, is unhorsed by a knight, he is to have all of the horses which she brings with her. She will ride the first day to Treviso, the next day to the Piave River, the third day to Sacile, the fourth day to St. Odorico, the fifth day to Gemona, the sixth day to Chiusa Pass, the seventh day to Tarvisio, the eighth day to Villach. She will spend the ninth day there quietly. The tenth day to Feldkirchen, the eleventh day to St. Veith, the twelfth day to Friesach, the thirteenth day to Scheifling, the fourteenth day to Judenburg, the fifteenth day to Knittelfeld, the sixteenth day to Leoben, the seventeenth day to Kapfenberg, the eighteenth day to Mürzzuschlag, the nineteenth day to Gloggnitz. She will remain there for the twentieth day. On the twenty-first day she will be in Neunkirchen, on the twenty-second day she will be at Neustadt, on the twenty-third day she will be at Traiskirchen, on the twenty-fourth day she will be at Vienna where she will remain over the twenty-fifth day, on the twenty-sixth day she will be at Korneuburg, on the twenty-seventh day she will be at Mistelbach, on the twenty-eighth day she will be at Feldsberg, on the twenty-ninth day she will be beyond the Thaya River in Bohemia; there her journey will end. On the journey she will let no one see either her face or her hands; she will also not say a word to anyone. She decrees that on the eighth day after the end of her journey there shall be a tournament at Korneuburg. Whichever knight hears of her journey and does not come against her she places under the ban of love and of all good women. She has listed all of her stopping places that each knight may know where or when he may come against her, so that it may be most convenient for him.”

- 480           Where'er this document was shown  
              or read to make my journey known  
              it made a lot of happy men.  
              In German lands the custom then  
              was such that none had honored names  
              who did not strive in knightly games  
              or win through ladies joy and pride.  
              I wish this custom had not died.
- 481           Each knight prepared with joyful heart  
              to welcome me. 'T was time to start;  
              now that Saint Georges's Day was past  
              my journey could begin at last.  
              'T was early when I started out  
              but soon the people thronged about  
              and many walked along behind.  
              Great feats of valor filled my mind.
- 482           My marshal and my cook, with three  
              to help them, led the company;  
              they cared for food and bed and more.  
              Behind them came a man who bore  
              a banner, white as any swan;  
              two rode beside him, playing on  
              their horns. They made so loud a sound  
              that Mestre echoed round and round.
- 483           My three pack horses then were led  
              along, a groom at each one's head—  
              good lads and fit for any deeds.  
              There followed them three battle steeds,  
              each with its groom that it not lack  
              for care, and on each horse's back  
              was fixed a saddle, silver white.  
              The saddler knew his trade all right.
- 484           Beside a battle steed was born  
              my shield of white. I would have sworn  
              a finer one I'd never seen  
              nor one as suited for a queen.  
              My helmet too was carried there;  
              none shone like this one anywhere.  
              On top of it a crown was wrought  
              which was quite splendid, so I thought.

- 485           A flutist was the next to come  
              who beat with skill upon a drum.  
              Four squires were riding after him  
              in uniforms of modish trim  
              and each had brought three spears along,  
              well-made and large, which with a thong  
              were bound together. One could praise  
              these bearers for their courtly ways.
- 486           Two maidens rode behind the squires  
              and every bit of their attires  
              was gleaming white from head to toe.  
              They both looked very pretty so.  
              A fiddler rode behind each maid;  
              my heart was happy when they played,  
              and when the two would fiddle high  
              a marching tune most pleased was I.
- 487           I followed after all the rest,  
              in shining raiment richly dressed.  
              My cloak was velvet and was white  
              as was my hat, but this was bright  
              with many pearls on every side.  
              My loving heart was filled with pride  
              that I should serve my lady now  
              with knightly deeds and keep my vow.
- 488           The braids I had were thick and brown  
              and were so long that they hung down  
              below my sash, just like a girl's.  
              They too were richly decked with pearls  
              and in a most artistic way.  
              My heart has seldom been so gay.  
              Nobody ever owned before  
              a fairer skirt than that I wore.
- 489           I had a white and glossy shirt  
              which was as long as was the skirt  
              with woman's sleeves of quality  
              that made me proud as I could be.  
              My gloves were silk and finely made.  
              Attired like this and unafraid  
              I left the sea as I had vowed,  
              and soon collected quite a crowd.

- 490           They'd only come to look at us.  
I had a servant question thus,  
"Are there no jousters hereabout?"  
They answered, "Lady, yes. No doubt  
there are at least a thousand here  
who would most gladly break a spear  
with you but jousting in this state  
is outlawed by the magistrate.
- 491           "The Lord of Treviso has decreed  
that anyone who doesn't heed  
and jousts with you upon these grounds  
must pay at least five thousand pounds.  
We're greatly troubled by this ban.  
He's such a grim, forbidding man  
and never stops to play awhile.  
One almost never sees him smile."
- 492           I journeyed forth without delay,  
dressed in a woman's fine array,  
on to Treviso merrily.  
A famous count rode up to me  
with fifty well-clad mounted men.  
We quickly recognized him then  
and he was greeted as he came.  
Count Meinhart von Gorze was his name.
- 493           The worthy noble was concerned  
when he found out what we had learned:  
that we could do no jousting there.  
He said, "How's that? Why, who would care?"  
"The magistrate," a squire replied.  
"It's wrong that this should be denied,"  
spoke he, "and knightly games be banned.  
Can't we have pleasure in this land?"
- 494           "I'll go and see why," said the count.  
At once he sprang upon his mount  
and with his fifty knights behind  
him quickly rode away to find  
the magistrate. When this was done  
he spoke, "Sir, we would have some fun  
and this with your permission too.  
I ask this favor now of you,"

- 495           He said, "I gladly shall permit  
such fun as brings no harm with it;  
of joy I'm really not a foe.  
But here is something you must know.  
I certainly shall not allow  
a knight into Treviso now  
with armor on and spear in hand.  
This is denied by my command.
- 496           "Too many strangers journey here;  
that's why I need to be severe  
and make each knight obey this rule.  
In truth, I'd really be a fool  
were I to let these people arm.  
It easily could bring us harm;  
so who would joust must travel thence.  
Of course, I mean you no offense."
- 497           With this he left the magistrate  
and in a rage he hurried straight  
to where he found the womenfolk  
and of his grievance quickly spoke,  
"You fair and noble ladies sweet,  
by all your virtues I entreat  
that you will hear as I complain.  
The magistrate bade us refrain
- 498           "from jousting further in this place.  
No knight has suffered such disgrace  
here in Treviso e'er before.  
He'll not allow it, so he swore,  
that anyone of us should arm.  
He fears the town will come to harm  
and says he has commanded thus  
since many strangers come to us."
- 499           The women spoke without delay,  
"He ought to take the ban away.  
We'll send and ask him to come by  
and do not think he'll then deny  
us women such a small request.  
When we present it in our best  
and sweetest manner he'll consent  
to what will make us all content."

- 500           A courier rode away to seek  
              him out and say they wished to speak  
              with him. 'T was then I came inside  
              the city. People watched me ride  
              with music playing as we passed  
              (I'd told them not to go too fast).  
              With happy heart I entered there,  
              greeted by many a lady fair.
- 501           I could not help my feeling proud  
              surrounded by so great a crowd,  
              but we got to the inn all right  
              in which I planned to spend the night.  
              The magistrate arrived meanwhile  
              among the ladies. With a smile  
              each warmly welcomed him and said  
              a greeting with her lips so red.
- 502           He bowed as does a courtly man.  
              The pretty ladies then began  
              to speak, "You ought to grant us, sire,  
              the favor which we all desire.  
              We hope you'll let the queen fulfill  
              her quest and tourney if she will;  
              we want to see some lances break.  
              You should permit it for our sake."
- 503           "I can't refuse you, it appears,  
              I'll let Count Meinhart break two spears,  
              since all you ladies so incline.  
              Sir Leutfried, Lord of Eppenstein,  
              at once stepped forward from his place  
              to ask of him with courtly grace  
              that he receive this favor too.  
              The women spoke, "Grant it, lord, do!"
- 504           "I shall," he said, "but only one.  
              There'll be no more when this is done."  
              The count meanwhile with joy had gone  
              to get his armor quickly on.  
              His trappings all were very nice  
              and must have cost the highest price;  
              his clothing was the very best.  
              I'll tell you how this knight was dressed.



- 505           His helmet shone with gold, and it  
              was hard as diamond, every bit.  
              A crest of feathers on the crown,  
              though thick, was almost weighted down  
              with wealth. The feathers' tops were trimmed  
              and all the crest was decked and rimmed  
              with silver leaflets which with skill  
              were tightly bound to every quill.
- 508           The cape worn over his cuirass  
              was velvet and as green as grass.  
              The saddle cover too was green  
              and everywhere on both were seen  
              the coat of arms which decked his shield.  
              The heavy spears that he could wield  
              so cleverly were like the clover,  
              his cape, and saddle—green all over.
- 509           He had a buckle and a sash  
              and both would brightly gleam and flash;  
              his collar and his hose were good  
              and sparkled just as iron should  
              whenever it's been rightly wrought.  
              The gallant noble feared for nought.  
              He wore two spurs of shining gold.  
              Thus was attired this knight so bold.
- 510           The noble Meinhart rode along  
              upon a charger, swift and strong,  
              that leaped and bounded as it came.  
              I heard a lot of folks exclaim  
              with anxious cries, "Get back, watch out!"  
              The rider, though, was brave and stout  
              and had a very knightly air.  
              The ladies begged him to beware.
- 511           I too was ready and was bright  
              in my battle dress of white.  
              The helmet which I wore was crowned  
              and sent a glitter all around.  
              My braids were very long and hung  
              down to the saddle where they swung.  
              A net of pearls enclosed each tress,  
              but one could see them none the less.

- 514 I thus came riding like a queen  
with woman's clothes and knightly mien.  
So many folks were in the street  
my horse could hardly move his feet.  
Whate'er Treviso's ruler said,  
although he ordered and he pled  
that they would clear for us a ring,  
his scolding didn't change a thing.
- 515 I tell the truth when I declare  
so many folks were gathered there  
there wasn't any open space  
in all Treviso, not a place  
where we could joust or that allowed  
our steeds to gallop through the crowd.  
We met upon a bridge at last  
but even there were people massed.
- 516 Beneath the bridge a river ran.  
The magistrate at once began  
to drive the people off. He gained  
his object; only few remained  
and we prepared to joust right here.  
The pretty ladies who were near  
said prayers that there would be no slips.  
These came from many rose-red lips.
- 517 When I beheld him start his course  
without delay I spurred my horse.  
He did the same, and so we two  
were hurled together, this is true,  
as if our horses now could fly.  
Each hand was steady, and each eye;  
the spears both struck with practiced art  
right where the shield and helmet part.
- 518 The lances made a crashing sound  
and splinters flew for yards around;  
his shield struck mine, we came so near.  
At once each got another spear.  
Again we jousting, hard and well,  
and so that neither of us fell.  
I and this nobleman so bold  
broke skilfully six spears, all told.

- 519            This done, Count Meinhart, good and brave,  
                 untied his helmet. Then I gave  
                 to him a little golden ring,  
                 a gift he was supposed to bring  
                 the lady whom he loved the best  
                 and in so doing manifest  
                 his loyalty and constant mind.  
                 No better token could one find.
- 520            Sir Leutfried, Lord of Eppenstein,  
                 prepared to joust. His clothes were fine  
                 and all his trappings, every stitch.  
                 The sturdy man was very rich  
                 and known throughout the Mur's high land.  
                 The spear he carried in his hand  
                 was heavy and was painted red,  
                 to show his valor, it was said.
- 521            I thought, "He's heavy and robust  
                 and certainly knows how to joust."  
                 I took a long approach, for speed;  
                 his spear dropped down too low indeed  
                 and struck my horse's neck. My spear  
                 was shattered on his chest. In fear  
                 and pain my wounded horse sprang high  
                 and quickly on the ground was I.
- 522            By then the day was almost past.  
                 The jousting had to end at last,  
                 and so I hastened to the inn.  
                 The knights would all have liked to win  
                 a better chance to look at me  
                 but I could never let this be.  
                 I hid from everybody's eyes  
                 throughout the trip, save in disguise.
- 524            The morning after, when the day  
                 was well advanced (though I still lay  
                 upon my bed) outside the door  
                 two hundred women, maybe more,  
                 had gathered and they wished to know  
                 at what time I had planned to go  
                 to church; and, while they waited, some  
                 began to ask when I would come.

- 526           As soon as I became aware  
              that all these women waited there,  
              I dressed myself in clothes so good  
              that any noblewomen would  
              be glad to wear, and this is true.  
              What they were like I'll tell to you:  
              I put a shirt on, gleaming white  
              and rather long, just as was right,
- 527           and after that a pair of sleeves;  
              no one who's looked at them believes  
              that he's seen others just as nice  
              or prettier at any price.  
              A lovely skirt I then put on  
              which was as white as any swan.  
              I'm sure no lady ever had  
              a better one, and that's not bad.
- 530           A heavy veil concealed my face  
              for I took care that not a trace  
              of me should show and none should spy  
              more than the glimmer of an eye.  
              Thus like a woman I was dressed  
              and all I had was of the best.  
              The peacock feathers on my hat  
              were rather dear, I'll tell you that.
- 531           I had a glove on either hand,  
              the best that money could command.  
              I left the room lightheartedly  
              and rosy lips then greeted me  
              of one accord when I was seen  
              with "Welcome Venus, welcome queen!"  
              Many were held in high repute  
              and some of them were really cute.
- 532           Before we'd gotten on our way  
              Count Meinhart started in to play  
              at knightly games. A tournament  
              began and knightly riders went  
              careering past us on their steeds  
              to show us ladies valiant deeds.  
              The struggle moved from place to place,  
              now here, now there, at furious pacc.

- 533           You must believe that this is so:  
          At least five hundred knights, I know,  
          were tourneying upon the field.  
          One heard the clash of many a shield  
          and heard the breaking lances' crash  
          and saw there many a rider dash  
          into the middle of the strife  
          for a ladylove to risk his life.
- 534           I asked the knights that they arrest  
          the game. They honored my request;  
          so we went on to church at last.  
          A countess held my mantle fast  
          and sometimes lifted up my skirt  
          that they not drabble in the dirt.  
          Like this she led me to the pew;  
          I took her service as my due.
- 536           A priest then sang a pretty mass.  
          The crowd was such I could not pass  
          to go and give my offering.  
          They asked the ladies not to cling  
          so close and let me out and in.  
          I tripped along so feminine  
          they laughed—the women and the men.  
          The kiss of peace was started then.
- 537           I got the peace kiss from a book  
          but through my veil, which didn't look  
          quite right. I wished to pass the kiss  
          on to the countess; she said this:  
          “You'll have to move the veil aside  
          for such a kiss I can't abide.”  
          When she spoke thus I did not quail  
          but from my lips drew back the veil.
- 538           The charming lady then began  
          to laugh and said, “Why you're a man!  
          I caught a glimpse of you just now.  
          What then? I'll kiss you anyhow.  
          From all good women everywhere  
          I'll give a kiss. Because you wear  
          a woman's dress and honor thus  
          us all, I'll kiss for all of us.”

- 539           When she spoke up so merrily  
              and took the kiss of peace from me  
              my heart and mind were filled with bliss  
              for joy is but a lady's kiss.  
              I'm sure that everybody who  
              has kissed a lady knows it's true,  
              that there's no pleasure so complete  
              as kissing ladies fair and sweet.
- 541           The mass was over soon and I  
              with many a pretty one close by  
              went from the church but then we found  
              a teeming throng was all around,  
              the streets were swarming with the crowd.  
              Before us ladies, long and loud,  
              a mighty trumpet blast rang out;  
              the throng was pleased without a doubt.
- 542           We came back to the inn again  
              and at the door I parted then  
              from all that lovely company,  
              I was as happy as can be.  
              That God would care for me they prayed  
              and from their hearts invoked His aid—  
              it's brought me luck in many a task.  
              God grants such ladies what they ask.
- 545           To the Piave rode our band  
              where, on a pretty meadowland,  
              I saw awaiting me a knight.  
              I recognized him at first sight—  
              Sir Reinprecht von Murecke, a name  
              that all fair ladies should acclaim  
              for he made all of them his own  
              and seldom ever slept alone.
- 546           The wealthy man was of this ilk.  
              His shirt was made from finest silk  
              and it was just as white as snow.  
              No other armor did he show  
              but only helmet, spear, and shield;  
              clad thus he galloped down the field.  
              His horse was seen enveloped in  
              rich velvet cloth and baldachin.

- 547           I had to change my clothes, of course;  
              he stopped and waited on his horse.  
              It was no time at all, I guess,  
              till I had on my battle dress.  
              I tied my helmet with a band  
              and took a goodly spear in hand  
              (of middle size and painted white).  
              The prospect filled me with delight.
- 548           His reins were hanging loose and low,  
              his spear gave off a golden glow,  
              beneath his arm he let it lie;  
              I held mine upright on my thigh.  
              His spear came through my shield and broke  
              to many pieces with the stroke;  
              I never lowered mine to thrust.  
              That's how we both performed the joust.
- 549           We did as well as any can.  
              I gave the very wealthy man  
              a little ring which was of gold;  
              he earned it well, as I have told,  
              and tendered me the thanks he owed.  
              Hermann von Plintenbach next rode  
              against me, three Italians then,  
              which made them happy-hearted men.
- 550           They all rode daringly and well  
              and since no rider missed or fell  
              to each was readily allowed  
              a ring, of which they seemed quite proud.  
              I broke a spear with every one  
              and just as soon as this was done  
              we hurried on so that I might  
              within Sacile spend the night.
- 551           No better welcome could one find  
              for all the balconies were lined  
              with ladies. I was well received  
              and didn't feel at all aggrieved.  
              I went to bed and rested from  
              the journey. When the day had come  
              I rose at once, made haste to don  
              my battle dress and travelled on.

- 552           Before a very pretty wood  
                already waited then the good  
                Meinhart von Gorze and a lot  
                of knights whose names I've long forgot.  
                Twelve were wearing helmets then;  
                as I saw this I told my men,  
                "Here are some knights who want to joust.  
                We'll give them what they like, I trust."
- 553           I changed my horses speedily,  
                they handed up my shield to me,  
                I quickly bound my helmet fast,  
                and took a spear in hand at last.  
                Meanwhile the knights had ridden near.  
                The count broke off a shining spear  
                when it upon my helmet smote—  
                I shattered mine against his throat.
- 554           Seven lances broke that day  
                on me and in as skilled a way  
                as any noble could desire.  
                With spirits rising ever higher  
                I broke eleven, quite a few,  
                and in a courtly manner too.  
                Five knights there were who failed to hit  
                me square and got no ring for it.
- 555           When I stopped jousting and unbound  
                my helmet, quickly all around  
                a lot of other jousts began.  
                The Count of Gorze struck a man  
                and knocked his helmet off. I know  
                I never saw a finer blow.  
                The fellow almost lost his seat  
                and fell beneath the horse's feet.
- 556           A hundred knights were on the field  
                to show their skilfulness and wield  
                their lances in the courtly game.  
                For love of ladies and of fame  
                some gallant men so bravely fought  
                that they served ladies as one ought.  
                This knight was glad, another one  
                had only grief when all was done.



- 557           I had to leave, for it was late.  
          The knights began to separate;  
          some were so kind and courteous  
          they rode to St. Odorico with us—  
          't was there I planned to spend the night.  
          The next day, when the morning light  
          drove off the darkness with its power,  
          we didn't tarry there an hour.
- 558           I quickly put my armor on  
          and shortly afterwards was gone.  
          I sought the field with spears of white  
          and wished to joust with any knight  
          who'd come to serve his lady fair.  
          One knight, of whom I'd heard, was there  
          who had with him his lady's veil.  
          He'd want to tourney without fail.
- 559           Sir Otte von Spengenberg was he,  
          a noble knight, who rode toward me  
          with gleaming armor, richly dressed  
          as fits a lady's suitor best.  
          His trappings glittered far and wide,  
          around his helmet there was tied  
          a veil of an expensive kind,  
          and thus came he of lofty mind.
- 560           We both would serve a lady dear;  
          each had a very heavy spear  
          and wished to ride a lengthy course.  
          He hoped to knock me from my horse  
          and I thought also, "When we meet  
          I'll see if he can hold his seat.  
          He will if he would keep his name  
          untouched by either scorn or shame."
- 561           Toward me the rider quickly swept—  
          his spear sank low the horse so leapt.  
          I turned a little from the man  
          (to knock him sprawling was my plan)  
          and swerved back onto him again;  
          I struck him in the collar then.  
          I turned and jousting with such skill  
          Sir Otte almost took a spill.

- 562            You can believe me that he broke  
                 a sturdy spear against my cloak  
                 and with the lances' crashing sound  
                 a lot of splinters flew around.  
                 His reins and stirrups at the blow  
                 were lost. He seized the saddlebow  
                 at once and with its help could rise.  
                 He would have fallen otherwise.
- 563            Five others followed, all did well.  
                 They broke their spears and no one fell,  
                 so I gave each of them a ring  
                 and then untied my helmet string  
                 for at Gemona we should stay.  
                 A knight was waiting on the way.  
                 He had a handsome tent pitched where  
                 it overlooked the thoroughfare.
- 564            Sir Mathie was the noble's name.  
                 He strove for honor and for fame  
                 and many virtues he displayed.  
                 He sent to me a lovely maid  
                 who met our company before  
                 we'd travelled far. A lance she bore  
                 in hand and rode a pretty steed.  
                 Her clothes were very fine indeed.
- 565            This pure and charming maiden said  
                 (on seeing me) with lips of red,  
                 "Queen Venus, let me welcome you!  
                 Sir Mathie sends me hither to  
                 announce from him that hereabout  
                 you're really welcome. There's no doubt  
                 he's glad to see you. Know that I  
                 tell what he said and not a lie.
- 566            "My lord has also sent me here  
                 to bring you, lady fair, this spear  
                 and, as his messenger, request  
                 that you would break it on his breast.  
                 This favor he commanded me  
                 to ask with every courtesy.  
                 So take it, lady, if you care  
                 to honor women everywhere."

- 567           I took the spear which she had brought  
              and thanked her warmly, as one ought,  
              for bringing me these words. I bade  
              a servant say that I'd be glad  
              to grant the favor she did ask  
              and willingly perform the task.  
              The maiden thanked me much for this  
              and then departed, filled with bliss.
- 568           I armed myself when she was gone.  
              I tied my helmet firmly on  
              and quickly seized a spear and shield.  
              Then he came riding o'er the field.  
              'T was thus that I first came to know  
              this knight who longed for honor so.  
              His dress was costly at our meeting;  
              he well deserved a lady's greeting.
- 570           We soon were not so far apart  
              and it was time for us to start  
              a charge or it would be too late.  
              Both his concern and mine were great  
              that his should be a pretty joust  
              and that he'd not fall in the dust.  
              We spurred together for the stroke  
              and neither spear remained unbroke.
- 571           The joust was splendid, I declare.  
              I knocked his helmet through the air.  
              The veil he'd fastened to his lance  
              was hanging from my shield, by chance;  
              a broad and gaping hole now marred  
              the shield where it was meant to guard  
              the shoulder bone on my left side.  
              It was a joust to suit his pride.
- 572           He got his helmet back again.  
              I noticed others riding then  
              toward me, a half-a-dozen strong.  
              The spears were neither thick nor long  
              which each one carried in his hand.  
              In turn I jousting with the band  
              and did not miss a single one.  
              Four had struck me when all was done.

- 574           That eve while resting at an inn  
I saw knights coming to begin  
a combat, which was very good.  
They rode as well as any could  
and tourneyed right in front of me.  
No knightly game could ever be  
more lively or reveal more skill.  
I watched it from my window sill.
- 576           And when at last the game was o'er  
at my command a servant bore  
the knights good wine, and quite a lot,  
for after labor men have got  
a thirst. I treated every soul  
in goblet, cup, and silver bowl.  
They bowed to me with courtly grace  
and went to find their resting place.
- 577           My steward took four dresses out  
to have them washed some place about.  
A lady learned to whom he went;  
at once the lovely lady sent  
the laundress who was there a dress  
and bade her by her happiness  
to hide it under those of mine.  
On it there was a buckle fine.
- 578           A jeweled band, a belt, a note  
were wrapped therein. Though she who wrote  
and sent the gifts was virtuous,  
without my will she acted thus.  
The clothing then was folded so  
my steward wasn't apt to know  
all that was there. And so he brought  
away more dresses than he thought.
- 579           He took the gifts with my attire,  
for which he later earned my ire.  
Night passed, the sun came into view.  
I went to church but no one knew.  
On my return I soon was clad  
in battle dress, the best I had.  
I never until then had worn  
such splendid things as on that morn.

- 580 My buglers played a melody,  
a pretty tune in a treble key,  
and thus they told all people near  
that I was shortly to appear.  
Then many a proud, high-minded man  
in battle dress at once began  
to leave the houses. They revealed  
themselves with helmet, spear, and shield.
- 583 Thirty knights or more soon came  
out of the town to start a game.  
In fine array and galloping  
they spurred their horses to the ring.  
The men fought well on either side  
and many noble riders tried  
to break their store of spears in haste.  
The tourney's object was this waste.
- 584 The knights were jousting all around  
till splinters almost hid the ground  
and several shields lay there as well  
which during fierce encounter fell.  
I charged eleven knights that day  
and broke a lance in each affray  
but two. I finally untied  
my helmet band and rode aside.
- 585 To seven knights could I accord  
a ring. 'T was thought a great reward  
and those who won the prizes then  
by jousting well were happy men,  
but those whose lances hadn't broke  
seemed angry every time they spoke.  
That they had missed me and thus had  
not won a present made them sad.
- 586 Gemona soon was left behind  
and many nobles I had wined  
took leave with knightly courtesy.  
The ones who came with us were three:  
Sir Heinrich of Lüenz rode along  
and two Italians, brave and strong,  
whose names I now cannot recall.  
Good men they were, respected all.

587           At Chiusa I passed the night  
              and just as soon as it was light  
              I tourneyed with Sir Heinrich, who  
              was praised by all, as well I knew.  
              So were his fellows; those who served  
              me gave them rings, which they deserved.  
              And so in company like this  
              six lances broke without a miss.

588           That day my heart could feel no woe.  
              We travelled to Tarvisio  
              but there I found no jousting since  
              Carinthia's most noble prince  
              had conquered in the selfsame night  
              with all the country's martial might  
              a Castle Goldberg. He employed  
              his men to have the place destroyed.

589           I went next morning with the dawn  
              before the city. Resting on  
              a pretty meadow, broad and green,  
              the vassals and the prince were seen.  
              They'd halted to have breakfast there;  
              he liked to eat in the open air.  
              At least a hundred knights, no less,  
              were with their ruler, I would guess.

591           The prince and vassals on the ground  
              then heard my bugles' piercing sound.  
              They asked, "Who's coming to us, who?"  
              One said, "The queen is passing through  
              just as her letter said she would."  
              Another spoke, "She's welcome! Good!  
              We'll receive her very well."  
              Their reception thus befell:

592           The prince and all his company  
              together warmly welcomed me  
              in Slavic, "Venus, may our God  
              receive you!" With a friendly nod  
              I returned the greeting of the men.  
              They had my servant ask me then  
              if I had come to them to joust.  
              I answered, "Yes, and soon, I trust."

- 593           Many a good and sturdy man  
              arose directly and began  
              to arm himself and soon were dressed  
              full fifty riders in their best.  
              All wished to tourney, it was clear;  
              each quickly got a shield and spear.  
              I too was now prepared to ride  
              and filled with confidence and pride.
- 594           The first to come was richly decked  
              in all the splendor you'd expect  
              of one of the prince's favorites.  
              Sir Hermann, Lord of Osterwitz,  
              thus was the kindly noble named.  
              For many virtues rightly famed,  
              a man of spirit and desire,  
              no one could value honor higher.
- 595           We charged as though we wished to slay  
              each other there. "Give way! Give way!"  
              I heard the knights around us shout.  
              It was a most successful bout:  
              they all could see the lances break  
              against our heads, and no mistake.  
              The sparks flew from our helmet so  
              the others thanked us for the show.
- 596           I got another weapon from  
              my squire at once. The next to come  
              at me was Kol von Finkenstein.  
              His joust was also very fine.  
              It certainly was not by chance  
              that he so deftly broke his lance  
              against my helmet; he could wield  
              a spear! I broke mine on his shield.
- 597           I'll tell you how it went in short  
              and yet shall give a true report.  
              On me broke fifteen spears before  
              the morning ended and no more.  
              The knights who held them jousted well;  
              if I the names of all should tell  
              to whom their ladies' thanks were due  
              my tale would be too long for you.

- 598           Eighteen lances for my part  
I broke and with a happy heart  
at last untied my helmet strings  
and quickly gave out fifteen rings  
to those who'd jousting well that day.  
This done, I started on the way  
to Villach and without a care.  
The folks were glad to see me there.
- 600           The rooms at Villach which we had  
were very nice, and I was glad.  
At dawn I left the inn to pass  
a morning hour hearing mass;  
in woman's clothing I was dressed  
and wore, of course, my very best.  
I tripped to church so merrily  
that many had to laugh at me.
- 601           When I returned from there I ate  
my breakfast. Since it wasn't late  
I looked to see what I should wear  
the next few days. Without a care,  
my heart was light, my spirit gay.  
I checked on all the skirts that lay  
in front of me, and all was fine  
till I found one that wasn't mine.
- 602           When I beheld it on the bed  
I called my steward in and said,  
"Now tell me who has dared to give  
me this, if you would like to live."  
He spoke, "My lady, I don't know.  
I think it most peculiar though.  
Who gave the skirt and who could bring  
it so you'd not observe a thing?"
- 603           Without delay I then unbound  
the skirt and this is what I found:  
a buckle, belt, and jeweled band;  
I've ne'er had finer in my hand.  
There was a German letter too  
which made my wrath break forth anew.  
I told the steward then, "You should  
believe, for you this means no good."



604

“My dearest lady,” he replied,  
“do let your anger now subside.  
I do not know (and hope to die  
if this is false) who brought them by.”  
I took the letter, opened it,  
and had him read what there was writ.  
He read the message, which explained  
the presents. Hear what it contained:

“Noble Venus, I extend  
a greeting and would like to lend  
to you my service faithfully.  
All ladies everywhere should be  
grateful that you in friendliness  
have put on you a woman’s dress  
and thereby honored womankind.  
May all our praises be assigned  
to you. I hope that you will prize  
these gifts of mine and not despise  
what I have sent for love of you.  
I must remain unknown, it’s true,  
because discretion counsels it.  
If you are honored, I admit  
that I am happy, very much,  
my thought regarding you is such.  
God guard your honor, stand beside you,  
and on your knightly journeys guide you,  
may nothing needful be denied you.”

605

Just as I heard the letter read  
a messenger appeared and said  
to me, “Most noble queen, I’d say  
you ought to arm without delay.  
And I must tell you anyhow,  
the knights are all quite ready now  
and riding to the field nearby.  
Their messenger to you am I.”

- 606 I spoke, "I'm glad that they are here."  
I put my armor on with cheer  
and soon was all prepared to go  
in battle dress as white as snow.  
I rode at once into the field  
and found with armor, lance, and shield  
some forty knights awaiting me.  
That they would joust was plain to see.
- 610 "Crash!" and "Crash!" It filled the air  
upon the common everywhere.  
The riders tourneyed fast and hard;  
the ground was covered with many a shard.  
I broke a spear at every run,  
fifteen in all; when this was done  
I went back to the inn again  
and sent twelve rings out to the men
- 611 who'd earned a prize from me that day.  
I put my armor all away  
and donned a woman's dress and hat  
and on the balcony I sat.  
But when they saw me—listen well  
and you shall know what then befell—  
a knightly game of war began,  
including every single man.
- 613 The evening now began to fade.  
From early morning they had stayed  
in armor which was hard and tight  
and many of them longed for night  
who suffered much from weariness.  
Yet others there felt no distress  
and wished to serve their ladies more,  
but darkness fell; the game was o'er.
- 614 The next day was the third, and I  
soon was ready to say goodbye  
and with my train to journey on.  
I was quite anxious to be gone  
and in a happy frame of mind  
when we left Villach far behind.  
Twenty good nobles with me rode  
to Feldkirchen, my next abode.

- 615           A lot of people were aware  
              of when I'd promised to be there.  
              They rode in from the countryside  
              to see me, came from far and wide  
              with shining armor and richly dressed.  
              I'll name you several of the best.  
              To joust with me came Sir Gottfried  
              von Havenerburg, a knight indeed.
- 616           His brother, Sir Arnold, also came.  
              It wasn't long till both could claim  
              a ring; 't was earned with a valiant thrust.  
              Sir Kol von Treven was there to joust  
              and Bernhart and Ulrich von Treven too.  
              Von Himmelberg, a noble who  
              (the bold Sir Zacheus was he)  
              was known for song and poetry,
- 617           had come there wearing on his back,  
              over his armor, cloth of black.  
              He wore a monk's cape; it was big  
              and on his helmet was a wig  
              in which a tonsure had been shorn.  
              With many oaths the knight had sworn  
              he'd knock Queen Venus from her horse,  
              and that was his intent, of course.
- 618           I faced eleven knights, and they  
              had skill and courage to display.  
              I broke a spear on each of ten,  
              and every one of these good men  
              broke off his lance on me. That's right.  
              I then beheld the monkish knight;  
              he rode toward me inside the ring  
              but that was quite a useless thing.
- 619           When I beheld him coming so  
              I took my helmet off to go  
              and sent a messenger to tell  
              him, since he liked such cloth so well  
              and seemed a monk and not a knight,  
              the queen did not believe it right  
              to joust with him. Chivalric sport  
              was not for people of his sort.

- 620 I rode back to the hostelry  
where food and ease awaited me.  
I went to bed when day was done,  
and in the morning as the sun  
shone brightly down I journeyed thence.  
The monk had caused me some offense  
and I took care my anger showed.  
Ere long into St. Veith we rode.
- 621 While we were still some distance out  
my coming was proclaimed about,  
and some decided not to wait  
but welcome me before the gate.  
Their joyful greeting I commend;  
they met me as one meets a friend,  
their words were courteous and good.  
I bowed as warmly as I could.
- 622 We rode to town with great delight.  
I asked a servant bid who might  
desire to joust with me begone  
and come back with his armor on.  
At this the nobles all were glad,  
and twenty-five of them soon had  
armor and spear, and would employ  
them both to seek renown and joy.
- 625 At once upon the field I came  
and found the ones who longed for fame  
awaiting me with shield and spear  
so they might do some jousting here.  
Without delay I took a lance  
and saw a worthy knight advance,  
Sir Reinher von Eichelsberg was he,  
a man of honor and honesty.
- 626 We both performed a pretty joust,  
and neither tumbled in the dust.  
We proved ourselves both sharp of eye—  
the splinters of our spears flew high.  
As soon as this fine joust was through  
Sir Konrad von Lebnach rode into  
the circle; brave and in the prime  
of life, he won much praise in time.

- 627           Then came Sir Kone von Friedberg, in might  
                  and skill with arms a noble knight  
                  but not with property or gold  
                  (that's what those who knew him told).  
                  Sir Jacob von Berg who spent his days  
                  in seeking for renown and praise  
                  tourneyed with me and won a prize.  
                  Sir Konrad von Teinach did likewise.
- 630           The monk appeared again at last  
                  inside the circle. He held fast  
                  a heavy weapon in his hand;  
                  to joust with me he took his stand.  
                  When I beheld the monkish cloak  
                  and recognized him, thus I spoke,  
                  "I shall not meet you, I declare  
                  and truly, here or anywhere."
- 631           I took my helmet off and went  
                  to the inn, where I could rest content  
                  from all my labors. There I lay  
                  until the breaking of the day.  
                  We packed to leave; but, nonetheless,  
                  I first put on my battle dress  
                  and asked a squire to find out how  
                  the knights would like to tourney now.
- 632           When my intentions were revealed  
                  they came with helmet, lance, and shield.  
                  Six were waiting and no more  
                  with spear in hand before the door,  
                  ready for jousting to begin.  
                  When I beheld them from the inn,  
                  each one as eager as a squire,  
                  I thought, "You'll get what you desire."
- 633           At once I took a spear in hand  
                  to joust the first one of the band;  
                  it was Sir Ortold von Osterwitz.  
                  His lance and mine were broke to bits  
                  and splinters scattered high and low  
                  we raced against each other so.  
                  The joust was good, both lances smote  
                  and shattered squarely on the throat.

- 634 Sir Wichard von Karlsberg took his place  
but rode at much too slow a pace  
and didn't break his spear on me.  
The next one galloped valiantly,  
Sir Engelram von Strassburg; I  
rode just as fast and that is why  
his joust soon brought him his reward.  
Then came Sir Engelbrecht, a Lord
- 635 of Strassburg and a worthy knight  
to whom high praises brought delight;  
his manners were refined indeed.  
The next to joust was Sir Siegfried,  
the Saxon, as the lord was named,  
who in Carinthia was famed  
and truly never did amiss;  
he won a lot of friends for this.
- 636 Once more the knight in monkish guise  
appeared. He hoped to win the prize  
from me of all the goods I had.  
My messenger did as I bade  
and quickly went to him to say  
that while he wore a monk's array  
I would not meet him, for it must  
offend my honor should we joust.
- 637 The monk addressed the messenger,  
"Then I shall follow after her  
to every place she may appear,  
none has the right to interfere.  
She's going to prove to me her skill;  
I am determined that she will,  
and only death can hinder it.  
No pain could change my mind a bit.
- 638 The knights were very courteous  
but came to me and all spoke thus,  
"Lady, we pray that you'll allow  
that we politely beg you now  
to grant the wish of this monk here  
and, jousting with him, break a spear;  
for, no matter how he's dressed,  
he seeks for honor as do the rest."

- 639 I said, "Since you have asked me to  
I'll grant him this, but just for you.  
I got a spear and rode my horse  
where it could run a lengthy course.  
You can believe me when I tell  
you that I did not like him well  
and was resolved that I'd take care  
to strike him on the head, and square.
- 640 I'll tell you quickly what transpired.  
He broke his lance as he desired,  
but I delivered such a blow  
he landed in the dirt below  
and lay unconscious from the fall,  
which didn't worry me at all.  
Many were glad of it; thereafter  
his fall provoked a lot of laughter.
- 641 I'd struck his helmet as I'd planned  
with all the strength at my command.  
To him and to the others I  
gave fourteen rings and said goodbye.  
I left the city and began  
my journey as a happy man.  
We came to Friesach—in the gown  
of Venus I rode into town.
- 645 The knights were riding with a will  
and wielding spears with knightly skill,  
a lot of shields were broke that day.  
The noble riders' courtly play  
continued till 't was almost night  
and all their steeds with foam were white.  
When day and evening both were past  
the knights gave up their sport at last.
- 646 But soon enough the night was gone  
and with the coming of the dawn  
once more they dressed them for a game  
in armor, and I did the same.  
Onto the field we hastened then;  
I was the happiest of men  
since I could serve my lady fair  
that day before the nobles there.

- 647            On the field before the gate  
I saw Sir Konrad von Nidecke wait,  
adorned as worthy knights should be.  
He made a gallant charge at me,  
his course was long and did not waver,  
he sought to earn a lady's favor  
and spurred his charger to great speed.  
Mine too was not so slow indeed.
- 648            I'll tell you how the tourney went.  
He broke his spear just as he meant  
and on my throat I felt it land.  
I wounded him in his right hand,  
which really caused me great distress  
because of his true nobleness.  
He was a valiant knight, it's true,  
fearless and manly through and through.
- 649            Sir Otto and Sir Dietrich, Lords  
of Buches, earned them no rewards  
and there were angry murmurings  
because they both had lost their rings.  
Their hearts were strongly set on gain;  
they wished for riches more, 't was plain,  
than lover's pay of any kinds.  
Broad fields and meadows filled their minds.
- 650            On seven knights I broke a spear  
and promptly journeyed forth from here.  
Five golden rings to them were sent.  
who'd jostled well before I went  
along toward Scheifling with my band  
in Styria, a lovely land.  
Nineteen nobles travelled down  
with us. Five waited in the town.
- 652            In Scheifling then I passed the night.  
When it was banished by the light  
of day I rose and soon was dressed  
in armor, as were all the rest  
who'd come to share our knightly sport.  
On all of them the richest sort  
of robes and armor were revealed.  
At once we hastened to the field.



- 653           Of such as these I'm glad to tell.  
The first had clothed him very well  
as any courtly noble must  
who knows good manners and can joust.  
Sir Ilsung von Scheiffing was his name;  
his heart has never ceased to claim  
those things which make one good and wise.  
He sought to win a worthy prize.
- 654           Five hundred bells and maybe more  
the lofty-minded noble wore.  
With little bounds his charger sprang  
and as he moved the metal rang  
until one couldn't hear a word.  
The gleaming gold and silver sherd  
was on a red and green brocade  
and all was very nicely made.
- 655           My countryman was decked so fine  
that not a knight along the Rhine  
was ever better dressed, and few  
as well; what I have said is true.  
The spear he carried in his hand  
was decorated with a band  
to which were fastened bells, but all  
of these were really very small.
- 656           So often and so well he strove  
that one might call him Waste-The-Grove.  
He spurred his horse into a race  
and then a pretty joust took place.  
My shield went flying with his stroke,  
for all the thongs which held it broke.  
Like thunder did the joust resound;  
the shield was lying on the ground.
- 657           My spear was snapped in two on him  
just as a dry and heavy limb  
bent down and broken from a tree.  
I do not think there'll ever be  
from jousting such a mighty crack  
as sounded forth from our attack.  
The bells flew all around like dust,  
the shields were shattered by the joust.

- 658           As soon as this fine course was run  
              four others followed, one by one,  
              and then I gave away five rings.  
              I heard them say, "Queen Venus brings  
              us on her journey sport and cheer.  
              God has preserved her well till here;  
              may He protect her from all foes  
              in tenderness where'er she goes."
- 659           Toward Judenburg at once I went  
              with spirits high and pleasure bent,  
              but still I wished that things were so  
              that my dear lady fair might know  
              how she had occupied my mind.  
              For I thought thus, "She is so kind,  
              if she discovered how I felt  
              toward her alone her heart would melt."
- 660           In Judenburg they greeted me  
              with eagerness; immediately  
              I thanked them with a friendly air.  
              They gave a hearty welcome there.  
              I had a quiet place to stay  
              that night and with the break of day  
              I donned my armor, bright and strong.  
              I didn't wish to tarry long.
- 661           Bedecked I rode onto the field  
              where nine good knights also revealed  
              their costly trappings, arms, and dress.  
              They were the soul of courtliness.  
              I broke nine spears on them, and this  
              was done without a single miss.  
              Three knights missed me, their aim was bad,  
              which didn't make them very glad.
- 662           I gave the six the rings I owed,  
              and then without delaying rode  
              toward Knittelfeld, with joy to tour  
              on down the valley of the Mur.  
              The morrow came and then I broke  
              two spears soon after I awoke  
              and gave two golden rings away.  
              My thoughts dwelt on a lover's pay.

- 663           To Leoben I travelled then  
                and found there twenty noblemen  
                awaiting me with spirits high.  
                When we rode in the city I  
                was well received by every knight  
                for all were friendly and polite.  
                The courtesies which there I viewed  
                deserved in truth my gratitude.
- 664           Dismounting at the inn at last,  
                I rested till the night was past.  
                That morning when the sun arose,  
                from every alley, I suppose,  
                I heard the flute's delightful sound  
                and saw the knights from all around  
                gayly to a meadow streaming  
                with rich apparel brightly gleaming.
- 666           I rode upon the meadow land  
                and took a shining spear in hand.  
                Sir Dietmar von Steier was to face  
                me first; he galloped to his place.  
                We came together at great speed;  
                you should have seen our spears indeed—  
                we both had struck so hard and well  
                in tiny bits to earth they fell.
- 667           Then came Sir Siegfried von Torsiol;  
                he had a brave and manly soul,  
                and all his limbs were tough and strong.  
                He never did one any wrong  
                and acted as a noble should.  
                His joust with me, of course, was good.  
                Both of our lances broke thereby;  
                all there could see the splinters fly.
- 668           I'll tell you all, but make it short;  
                while we pursued this knightly sport  
                were thirteen lances broke on me.  
                Since I'm to tell it truthfully,  
                I missed three times in tourneying.  
                At once I gave each knight a ring  
                who'd jousted well and so had won  
                a prize from me. When this was done

- 669           we journeyed on from Leoben's walls  
to where the Mürz's water falls  
into the Mur with rush and roar.  
They catch the fish there by the score.  
Now up the stream I rode until  
a castle towers on a hill—  
Kapfenberg—high and alone.  
In all of Styria it's known.
- 670           The master of it was a lord  
whose will was constantly set toward  
the things a noble ought to do  
to win acclaim; all these he knew.  
He was generous, his name  
was guarded carefully from shame;  
he was dauntless and well-bred.  
I haven't lied in what I've said.
- 671           He followed honor faithfully.  
Sir Wülfing von Stubenberg was he  
and rich in people and in lands;  
he had those things which wealth commands.  
Sir Wülfing, when he came to know  
of my arrival down below,  
declared, "As soon as I have seen  
her I shall greet the noble queen."
- 678           When he was ready to receive  
me thirty knights (so I believe)  
came with him. Down the hill they rode,  
well-clad and in the courtly mode.  
Before I travelled to this meeting  
I'd never had a warmer greeting  
than I was given by this knight  
at Kapfenberg. While it was light,
- 679           unarmed, but dressed in bright array  
I sought the place where I would stay  
and rest in comfort till the dawn.  
When day had come and night was gone  
I put my armor on again.  
My longing, loving heart was then  
filled with gladness and content,  
which made itself quite evident.

- 680           When I was clothed and at the last  
              had tied my helmet on me fast  
              I rode to the field with festive air.  
              The Knight of Stubenberg was there  
              and was in all so richly dressed  
              that I was very much impressed.  
              His splendid armor gleamed on him  
              and nearly made the sun look dim.
- 681           The proud and gallant noble rode  
              toward me, and all his trappings glowed  
              as if he came from heaven's door.  
              His skill had many times before  
              won highest praises, I'd been told.  
              His course was very swift and bold;  
              his horse so close to mine was guided  
              that he and I almost collided.
- 682           The points of both our spears were thrust  
              right through our bucklers with the joust  
              so that a noisy crash rang out  
              and bits of lances flew about  
              as well as parts of each man's shield.  
              His sleeve as well as mine concealed  
              a bruise; some rings of armor fell.  
              The joust was ridden hard and well.
- 684           A lot of spears were shattered then;  
              I broke a dozen on the men.  
              It went as I had wished it to  
              and I'd not missed when we were through.  
              The worthy nobles rode at me  
              twelve times and each so skilfully  
              that no one failed to break his spear.  
              Twelve golden rings I gave out here.
- 703           I had a place to spend the night.  
              As soon as all was clear and light  
              and sunbeams shone on everything  
              I climbed across the Semmering  
              to Gloggnitz on the other side.  
              I found six nobles there astride  
              their mounts who wished to try their skill  
              and I was quick to do their will.

704           They rode toward me with armor on;  
I had not waited long to don  
a rich and splendid battle dress.  
Von Ringenberg with full success  
broke off a spear on me. The one  
I jousting with when this was done  
I knocked down backwards off his horse,  
which made him feel ashamed, of course.

706           The spears I broke then numbered four.  
On the field had come no more  
with armor on and lance in hand  
and so I stopped. At my command  
the servants gave six rings away.  
I sought the inn where I should stay  
and found a pretty hostel there;  
I got some other things to wear.

707           I changed my clothing under guard,  
and then the hostel door was barred.  
I took with me a servant who  
would not say anything, I knew.  
We stole away without a sound  
and rode with joy to where I found  
my dearest wife whom I adore;  
I could not ever love her more.

708           She greeted me just as a good  
and loving woman always should  
receive a husband she holds dear.  
That I had come to see her here  
had made her really very pleased.  
My visit stilled her grief and eased  
her loneliness. We shared our bliss,  
my sweet and I, with many a kiss.

709           She was so glad to see her knight,  
and I had comfort and delight  
till finally the third day came;  
to give me joy was her sole aim.  
When dawn appeared it was the third.  
I dressed, an early mass was heard,  
I prayed God keep me from transgressing,  
and then received a friendly blessing.

- 710           Right after that I took my leave,  
                lovingly, you may believe,  
                and rode with joyful heart to where  
                I'd left my servants unaware.  
                I entered Gloggnitz hastily  
                and found them waiting there for me,  
                prepared to journey on again.  
                At once we left the city then.
- 711           We rode to Neunkirchen gaily decked  
                and were received as I'd expect  
                of those whose manners are refined.  
                Each knight was courteous and kind  
                who waited there with spear and shield.  
                When I came riding on the field  
                I found them all prepared, adorned  
                with trappings no one would have scorned.
- 712           Nine waited there, not more nor less,  
                to joust with me, in battle dress.  
                I saw them and it wasn't long  
                till I'd donned armor, bright and strong.  
                The first to come I'd heard much of;  
                his great desire was ladies' love.  
                It was Sir Ortold von Graz, a name  
                already widely known to fame.
- 713           All that he wore was of the best.  
                The good man cut me in the chest  
                so strong and skilful was his joust;  
                through shield and armor went the thrust.  
                When I beheld the wound indeed  
                and saw that it began to bleed  
                I hid it quickly with my coat  
                before the other knights took note.
- 715           I broke nine lances there in haste  
                and found my inn. I dared not waste  
                much time before I got in bed.  
                I sent nine rings of golden red  
                to each of them who with his spear  
                had earned from me a present here.  
                My injuries were deftly bound  
                by a doctor whom my servants found.

- 716 His presence there was soon found out;  
ere long the tale was spread about  
that Venus had been wounded sore  
and so that she could joust no more.  
The knights were sad to lose their sport,  
but when I heard the false report  
I said, "Tomorrow I shall stay  
a while ere going on my way.
- 717 "I'd like to let the people see  
the truth in what is said of me  
and know that I am well and strong.  
Although the tale is not all wrong  
this little wound will quickly heal  
and I can easily conceal  
it so that none will be aware  
that I've been injured by a hair."
- 718 There it was I spent the night,  
but when the second day was bright  
and when the sun shone in the skies  
I did what I considered wise  
and donned my woman's finery  
to look as pretty as could be  
in lady's dress as white as snow.  
I went to church so all would know.
- 719 Whoever saw me gaily walk  
to church that morning thus would talk,  
"It must be false what people tell;  
this queen is light of heart and well,  
her thoughts are gay, her step is strong."  
I left the church with such a throng  
around me when the mass was o'er  
that truly they knocked down the door.
- 720 To serve my love and lady then  
I would have liked to joust again  
but found that all the knights were gone,  
so joyfully we travelled on  
till Wiener Neustadt was in view.  
I'd often told my retinue,  
they need no gaiety suppress:  
"Good manners go with happiness."



- 727           And thus I entered with my train  
the town. I called my chamberlain  
and bade him have someone prepare  
a water bath for me somewhere  
outside of town and tell no one.  
I came as soon as this was done,  
got in the bath my man had hired  
and soon forgot that I was tired.
- 729           When I climbed in and sat me down  
my steward started back to town  
to go into the inn and find  
some clothing he had left behind.  
In truth you must believe me that  
without a servant there I sat  
which makes me think at any rate  
that what's to come will never wait.
- 730           And I believe without a doubt  
that what's to be will come about.  
I learned then some of what this meant  
and now I'll tell you how it went.  
As I was sitting there alone  
a page came up I'd never known—  
clever, courtly, and well-clad.  
I'll tell you what the fellow had.
- 731           This smart young man, without a sign  
or word, put down a carpet fine;  
before my bath the carpet lay.  
He placed thereon a woman's array:  
a skirt, a heavy veil were there  
(there were no better anywhere),  
a belt as nice as I have seen,  
a buckle which would suit a queen,
- 732           a head-band, bright and glittering,  
a ruby set into a ring,  
red as a lovely lady's lips  
which wound a heart the while it skips.  
He placed a letter on the stone,  
with pretty words it should make known  
the one who sent these gifts to me,  
so he informed me carefully.

- 733           When I beheld them by my bath  
my mouth spoke up with honest wrath,  
“Say, to whom were these things brought?  
I’ll tell you plainly. I’ve no thought,  
believe me, either clothes or gem,  
of taking even one of them.  
So take them out, whate’er you do,  
for I am really vexed with you.”
- 734           The page departed unconcerned  
but with two others soon returned  
who bore rose petals, gleaming red,  
and these, without a word being said,  
were scattered on me by the youth  
until they were so thick, in truth,  
that bath and I were covered o’er.  
He would not utter one word more.
- 735           Despite my pleading and my rage  
I got more petals from the page  
so that the floor around was soon  
quite lovely with the petals strewn.  
Thereon he bowed and, though he heard  
a lot from me, he said no word  
but only turned and went away.  
I’d never seen him till that day.
- 736           He left me angry and harassed.  
My chamberlain returned at last  
and brought a robe and towels to dry  
me with. He saw the gifts nearby  
and spoke, “My great and noble queen,  
what’s this? And what do these things mean?  
But you’re completely covered o’er  
and roses color all the floor!”
- 737           I told him, “You’re to blame. ’T was wrong  
to leave me all alone so long  
and it’s a fault I must condemn.  
Some pages brought these things with them:  
the roses, jewels, and the dress.  
The youth who led them, I confess,  
I do not know, neither his name  
nor the place from which he came.

- 738            "This makes me very angry still  
                  for every bit against my will  
                  he laid these things down by my side.  
                  Such deeds as this I can't abide  
                  and never saw before, I vow.  
                  But just give me my bathrobe now;  
                  there'll be no bath for me, and I  
                  shall leave these presents where they lie."
- 739            Then spoke my chamberlain to me,  
                  "Good lady, no, that must not be.  
                  It truly would be wrong, I fear,  
                  were you to leave these presents here.  
                  Those working in the place would claim  
                  them and would soon find out the name  
                  of her whose love has sent them. No,  
                  't would not be right to leave them so.
- 740            "Perhaps she has a lot of friends,  
                  then you might never make amends  
                  if you should cause her any pain  
                  by letting what she sent remain  
                  in here. So let me keep this prize,  
                  in truth I think that this is wise.  
                  And hear, it's also good for you  
                  to be most careful what you do,
- 741            "that you protect yourself and her  
                  for it may be a messenger  
                  will come and tell you who has sent  
                  the gifts which you so much resent  
                  and you can then return them still.  
                  Let me advise you if you will.  
                  She's fond of you, that one can tell,  
                  for this one ought to treat her well."
- 742            "I'll let you take the things away  
                  but take them only that I may,  
                  just as soon as it is known  
                  who sends me clothes and precious stone,  
                  return the presents I receive;  
                  and this you may as well believe.  
                  I can not keep a thing they've brought  
                  or else my constancy were naught.

743            “I’ve always heard that no one can  
                give to a woman or a man  
                a present quite against their will.  
                My mind would certainly be ill  
                should I accept what one bestows  
                who’s not the lady that I chose  
                to be the one for whom I live.  
                I want what she alone can give.”

744            I left the bath house then and rode  
                in secret to the town and strode  
                into the inn where I should stay.  
                I didn’t go outside that day  
                and wore a solemn face long after  
                for angry spirits bear no laughter.  
                This truth I easily could guess  
                in seeking that day’s happiness.

746            I thought, “I’ll get someone to read  
                the letter. It may be indeed  
                the lady’s name is written there.”  
                ’T was read to me and, I declare,  
                that note did credit to the sender.  
                It’s greeting, though it was quite tender,  
                did not affect me much when read,  
                but listen to what the letter said:

                “Lady, could I shape the phrases  
                to greet you well with sweetest praises,  
                I’d do it, on my word, serene  
                Venus, fair and noble queen.  
                Because of your nobility  
                true service you shall have from me.  
                For well do you indeed deserve  
                that noble women all should serve  
                you with praise unceasing,  
                your honor thus increasing.  
                To honor you have turned each thought  
                and so to you my gifts were brought  
                that both of us may gain  
                more honor. Lady, deign  
                to keep the presents I impart,  
                remembering your kindly heart.

They're sent to you for honor alone  
and I desire to be unknown  
because I must be circumspect;  
may you, dear lady, not object.  
If my wishes might come true  
and should my eyes soon gaze on you  
then I myself will let you know  
why I have sent these presents so  
to you, my dearest lady fair.  
I now commend you to the care  
of Him who came our ways to straighten  
and whose power conquered Satan,  
our adversary grim.  
May He take you to Him  
and give you many honors here;  
this is the hope sincere  
of my heart and mind.  
In my loyal heart I find  
a wish that you will reap the best  
on this honor-bringing quest."

748

What more is there for me to say?  
I felt sorrow and dismay,  
with anger I was quite distressed  
and got that night so little rest  
that I was rather ill and worn.  
But with the coming of the morn  
I heard an early mass and then  
festively set out again.

749

Toward Austria and down the plain  
I led a very courtly train.  
When we approached the Piesting Stream  
of shining shields I caught a gleam.  
Soon after there appeared in sight  
well-trimmed helmets and spears of white.  
The nobles riding toward this meeting  
received me with a friendly greeting.

751           The names of some of those I'll tell  
              who welcomed me that day so well.  
              There were some thirty men of horse,  
              and one was called Sir Wolfger von Gors.  
              So virtuous in deed and word  
              was he that I have never heard  
              a thing of him that one could blame.  
              He strove for honor and for fame.

752           The worthy man addressed me there,  
              “My noble queen and lady fair,  
              I come to bring you a request  
              and hope to find my suit is blessed.  
              I ask, dear queen, that you let me  
              become one of your company  
              and through your grace would I obtain  
              the office of a chamberlain.”

753           When I had heard this gallant man  
              Sir Gottfried von Dozenbach began  
              (a noble fit for any task),  
              “Now listen to the boon I ask.  
              I come here at my lord's command  
              to bid you welcome to this land  
              with God, and bring a greeting from  
              my lord, who's glad that you have come.

754           “Von Regensburg sends it by me.  
              The bishop's governor is he  
              and one who values honor too.  
              Whatever he can do for you  
              you may be sure he'll not be loath  
              to do; on this I'll take an oath.  
              He'll serve you faithfully and for  
              the ladies' favor, nothing more.

755           “He bids me say that he aspires  
              to serve you and that he desires,  
              most noble queen, that you allow  
              him to be your marshal now.  
              He's rich in property and thought,  
              and he will serve you as he ought.  
              Your worth is such he would persuade  
              you, lady, to accept his aid.”

- 756 I had a servant answer then  
that I'd be glad to have both men:  
"But he who seeks an office here  
will need to earn it with a spear  
and have such skill and temperament  
that he will never need lament  
because he didn't joust aright.  
My office is for such a knight."
- 758 Sir Wolfger von Gors spoke right away,  
"Lady, what more is there to say?  
Your court is stately, one can win  
great honor for himself therein.  
Should I become your chamberlain,  
I'll hold the post without a stain  
and shall receive it through my skill  
at jousting anytime you will."
- 759 ". . . . [two lines missing] . . . .  
. . . . .  
There at Traiskirchen we can joust.  
In virtue you have put your trust  
and are a noble of the sort  
I like to have about my court.  
You serve the ladies well, and my  
respect for you is very high."
- 760 The good man thanked me then and bowed  
with gratitude, for he was proud,  
and rode off quickly. He was bound  
for Traiskirchen; it was there he found  
his armor and his battle steed.  
Soon he was well attired indeed  
and like an angel to behold.  
He wasn't one to save his gold.
- 761 When he rode away from me,  
von Dozenbach spoke courteously,  
"My gracious queen, by all adored,  
what message shall I bring my lord  
from you? I pray that you will show  
your kindness and will let me know,  
for here I've nothing more to do.  
My lord will gladly joust with you."

- 762           “Tell the governor from me,  
          would he serve ladies faithfully,  
          then he may join my retinue.  
          But if he'd be my marshal too  
          then he must joust and break his lance;  
          his honor he may thus advance.  
          I'll gladly place him in this post  
          if honor's what he wants the most.”
- 763           The courtly noble didn't wait  
          but rode to Vienna to relate  
          to Regensburg without delay  
          the message given him to say.  
          His lord was pleased and spent the night  
          to see that everything was bright  
          which he and all his riders wore.  
          They were adorned as ne'er before.
- 764           But meanwhile I had ridden down  
          to Traiskirchen. Just before the town  
          I found awaiting me someone  
          who never in his life had done  
          unknightly deeds. It was, of course,  
          the good Sir Wolfger, Knight of Gors.  
          His armor gleamed from sunny skies  
          and threw their radiance in my eyes.
- 766           I saw him and made haste to don  
          my armor, tied my helmet on,  
          and soon was splendidly decked out.  
          “Give way, my lord!” I heard the shout  
          and cries of pleasure filled the air  
          from all the nobles gathered there.  
          We charged at once with leveled spear;  
          as soon as I had galloped near
- 767           to him I spurred to greater speed;  
          he also quickly urged his steed.  
          We rode so closely in the joust  
          and were so skillful in our thrust  
          that both his shield and mine were shattered  
          to pieces which were widely scattered.  
          Against the helmet each man broke  
          his lance in splinters with the stroke.



- 768           And so it was my chamberlain  
                received the post he wished to gain.  
                Some other knights opposed me then  
                in courtly manner; there were ten,  
                and seven of them soon were hailed  
                by those around, the others failed  
                to break a spear; their joy was small.  
                I broke eleven spears in all.
- 769           I had my servants quickly bring  
                to each of seven knights a ring;  
                Sir Wolfger also got his prize.  
                He was a courtly man and wise  
                who liked good men and, I've heard tell,  
                could also please the ladies well,  
                and with the world it was the same.  
                He was a man whom none could blame.
- 770           Such was this chamberlain of mine.  
                His servants all looked very fine  
                for they as well were richly clad,  
                and very courtly dress they had.  
                On foot the noble came to me  
                and took my armor so that he  
                could have a servant clean it right;  
                he ordered him to get it white.
- 771           On foot he led my horse around  
                to where my hostel was. I found  
                the ease I wanted and a bed.  
                The courtly nobleman then said,  
                “My lady, you must have repose.”  
                Whereon he ordered them to close  
                the hostelry, and this was done.  
                I wakened with the morning sun.
- 795           I wore the finest things I could  
                as I was feeling very good.  
                I took with me a heavy spear,  
                and soon a knight came riding near,  
                von Horschendorf, a sturdy man.  
                He challenged me and then began  
                his charge. He wanted to obtain  
                a ring and jousted only for gain.

- 796 I'll tell you briefly, it was so:  
I broke ten lances in a row  
on him, and all he did was miss;  
he got quite vexed because of this,  
and when we made the final course  
he missed once more but struck my horse  
right in the head. The wound was bad,  
which made the good man very sad.
- 798 I laid my armor all away  
and dressed in feminine array;  
I had some lovely clothes to don.  
Then to Vienna I rode on  
and eighty nobles, good and strong,  
in happy spirits went along  
with costly gear and richly dressed.  
I heard then many a courtly jest.
- 818 When it was known that I was there  
the ladies started to prepare  
themselves and many a costly gown  
was put on ladies of the town.  
They dressed themselves in rivalry  
and each was jealous as could be;  
who came in more elaborate state  
would win another's lasting hate.
- 819 So fashioned is a woman's mind:  
though she be young or old, I find,  
she likes to have a lot of dresses.  
It is enough if she possesses  
the things, they are not just to wear  
but rather so she can declare,  
"I could, you know, be better dressed  
than many who always wear their best."
- 821 Vienna ladies looked right well  
when I rode in, I'm glad to tell.  
The streets were filled, as I rode by,  
with women, and I won't deny  
I thought it really quite a treat.  
I saw there many a lady sweet,  
and all so warmly welcomed me  
that I was happy as can be.

- 822           We rode along, and when we neared  
my lodging place a knight appeared  
who strove for honor and for fame  
and I shall tell you now his name:  
Sir Hadmar von Kühnringe. With a band  
of errant knights from all the land  
he welcomed me before the inn.  
“Crash!” and “Crash!” They made a din.
- 823           The welcome soon was going strong;  
before the inn a surging throng  
of knights contested on a field.  
The mighty crash of shield on shield  
was heard from all about, it’s true.  
Sir Hadmar and his noisy crew  
received me with their knightly sport.  
I rode into the hostel’s court.
- 824           There was a balcony that faced  
them. Here in woman’s dress I placed  
myself. To see me was enough  
to make the sport get pretty rough.  
In groups the riders raced around,  
the field became a battle ground,  
and some collided rather hard.  
The young knights sought to win regard.
- 825           When I saw horses in the dirt  
and knew that someone would get hurt  
I bade my marshal through a squire  
to ask the riders to retire.  
When he told them of my request  
at once they let the jousting rest.  
They stopped because they wished to please  
and rode then to their hostelries.
- 826           Soon after came the end of day,  
and all the knights had gone away.  
I wished my courtly page and sent  
for him. When he had come we went  
aside from all the other folk  
and for an hour or two we spoke.  
I said, “My messenger so dear,  
I bid you hearty welcome here.

- 827           “Now you must tell me, courtly youth,  
and not attempt to hide the truth.  
How does my lovely lady feel?  
I wish to know (do not conceal  
a thing) if she is gay or sad  
for, if her mood is always glad,  
I know my plans will never miss.  
She’s all my joy, I’m sure of this.”
- 829           In answer quickly spoke the boy,  
“She’s feeling well and full of joy.  
I heard the lady once maintain,  
whatever happiness you gain  
will make her really glad at heart.  
The lady had this to impart,  
“Whatever honors him will be  
in every way a joy to me.”
- 838           “Dear messenger, I ask a boon  
which you must grant me very soon  
if it can possibly be done.  
Go see again my lovely one  
and ask her by the worthiness  
which God permits her to possess  
to send a gift and her consent  
to wear it in a tournament.”
- 840           “Lord and friend, I’ll hurry there.  
May God help me in this affair!  
I’ll do the best I can for you.  
If the lady fair is willing to  
bestow the present you desire,  
if I am able to acquire  
the gift from her, and if she’s kind,  
I’ll be right back again, you’ll find.”
- 841           “Then go! May God not let you slip.  
Both there and while you’re on the trip  
may blessings and good fortune lead;  
I pray this from my heart indeed.  
If she will send me, as her knight,  
a gift ’t will be a great delight.  
May God go with you now to her,  
my friend and faithful messenger.”

- 842           The page departed as he said  
              he would. I went to find my bed  
              and there remained until the day  
              had come to drive the night away.  
              I heard an early mass, committing  
              myself to God then, as was fitting.  
              Without Him honor will not last  
              until a half a day is past.
- 843           When I received a blessing there  
              I left the chapel to prepare  
              myself and see that all was good  
              which I put on, as jousters should  
              who want to guard their bodies well  
              and are determined to excel.  
              I hid the armor to the throat  
              then with a white and folded coat.
- 848           I left the hostel on my horse  
              and saw my chamberlain von Gors  
              with seven squires, all well arrayed.  
              No clothes could have been better made  
              than those of his and of his men.  
              He took my horse's bridle then  
              and, walking, led it festively.  
              Many a noble rode with me.
- 849           About me was a surging throng.  
              The balconies there all along  
              were filled with ladies, side by side;  
              their glances made me satisfied.  
              I saw then many a lovely form  
              which made my heart feel gay and warm.  
              To look at ladies is a pleasure,  
              their greetings every knight must treasure.
- 850           We travelled through the city thus.  
              A hundred nobles came with us,  
              with splendid gear and clothes they rode,  
              each knight a handsome steed betrote,  
              and every piece of metal gleamed.  
              With happy hearts the riders streamed  
              along, and singing as they went.  
              For all it was a gay event.

- 852           And so I rode upon the field.  
              There waited, all prepared to wield  
              a lance, the bishop's governor.  
              He needed now to wait no more  
              and, as I moved toward him, the knight  
              tied on his helmet, trimmed and bright;  
              his squire then handed him his spear.  
              He wished to serve his lady here.
- 856           Von Gors, my chamberlain, had seen  
              and spoke, "My lady, noble queen,  
              here comes the governor toward you.  
              Now take a spear; whate'er you do,  
              sit firmly or you'll come to ill,  
              for he has bravery and skill  
              and is a very sturdy man.  
              He'll surely do the best he can.
- 857           With care I followed his command;  
              he put a spear into my hand.  
              The governor began to dash  
              at me, another was so rash  
              that he raced out in front of him  
              (at this the governor was grim).  
              Sir Gundacker was the other's name,  
              von Stier, and not unknown to fame.
- 858           This knight rode at me very fast.  
              The governor, though he'd been passed,  
              continued on, and I could see  
              both riders rushing down on me.  
              Now was the time to spur my horse  
              to charge with all his speed and force.  
              I missed the first, as I designed,  
              and broke my spear on him behind.
- 859           Where the helmet meets the shield  
              and the collar is revealed,  
              right on the throat the man was hit  
              so violently the collar split.  
              The noble almost lost his seat  
              and fell down at the horse's feet.  
              We both, of course, regretted this  
              and wished my joust had been a miss.

- 860           That's how I rode my tourney then.  
              And was I missed by both the men?  
              No. The knights had jousted well  
              and each one broke his spear, they fell  
              in pieces, so it wasn't bad.  
              The Knight of Stier was very glad  
              to find that he had earned a ring  
              from Venus with his tourneying.
- 861           Soon on the field was such a press  
              that I was angry, I confess.  
              They crowded here, they crowded there  
              and crowded so that I nowhere  
              could find myself an open space.  
              'T was hard to joust in such a place.  
              The course I ran could not be long,  
              for this there was too great a throng.
- 862           All wished to break a lance on me  
              before they left and often three  
              would charge together, for so great  
              was their desire they couldn't wait.  
              You can believe, when I saw that,  
              I sat as firm as e'er I sat  
              and prayed that God increase my skill  
              and save me from a shameful spill.
- 863           I often had to dodge and dash  
              in order to avoid a crash;  
              it took some pretty skilful riding  
              to keep from frequently colliding.  
              The field was full of knightly folk.  
              A lot of lances there were broke  
              for ladies valiantly that day  
              and rings of mail were torn away.
- 902           Soon after to the inn we went  
              where five-and-thirty rings were sent,  
              a ring for every gallant knight  
              who'd earned one with his skill and might,  
              who'd broke a spear on me, that I  
              myself had seen the splinters fly.  
              To each of these a golden band  
              was gladly given from my hand.

- 904 I rested well when all had gone.  
I left the hostel with the dawn  
and rode to Mistelbach to joust  
and serve my lady sweet with lust.  
Many had come to share the sport  
of which I'll tell you now in short:  
they broke eleven lances then  
on me and I broke only ten.
- 905 Eleven knights with joy and pride  
received the rings which I supplied,  
for they were happy to have earned  
the prize for which they all had yearned.  
I stopped off at the inn at last  
and, just as soon as night was passed,  
from Mistelbach rode on again  
with many good and sturdy men.
- 906 Two hundred knights were in the crowd  
that rode with me, and most were proud;  
one saw it in the gear they had  
and in that they were richly clad.  
But I was just as proud as they  
as I rode gaily on the way  
to Feldsberg. At the journey's end  
the host received me as a friend.
- 907 Sir Kadolt von Feldsberg was his name;  
from all this man received acclaim,  
and rightly for his honesty.  
The worthy noble rode toward me  
with forty knights with trappings which  
looked very fine. Their clothes were rich,  
well-cut and masterfully made.  
It was a splendid cavalcade.
- 908 I was welcomed by him there  
much better than I've been elsewhere  
at times. He was a courteous knight  
and asked in language most polite  
that I should come and be his guest.  
"The queen must grant me this request  
and stay with me and eat my bread.  
No one could want her more," he said.



- 909           I sent word to the honest man  
              and asked that he give up the plan.  
              Were I to stay with anyone,  
              I said, I surely wouldn't shun  
              his house. He shouldn't take offense  
              but I must bear my own expense  
              and only take what I had bought  
              and not a single thing for nought.
- 910           He spoke, "Stay with us, lady, do.  
              I'd like to introduce to you  
              some noble ladies, fair and gay,  
              well-bred and nice in every way.  
              They want to see you, that I know,  
              and I intend to use them so  
              that to my suit you will give ear  
              and come, to please the ladies here."
- 911           I answered him, "I'd like to see  
              the ladies all if it might be  
              that I may do so and decline  
              to let you care for me and mine.  
              Please tell me what you think of this."  
              The knight was sad that I'd dismiss  
              the invitation he had sent.  
              Then to the hostelry we went.
- 917           At once I asked someone to call  
              the knights and to announce to all  
              that I would give each one a chance  
              to earn a lady's loving glance.  
              Many a good man thereupon  
              began to put his armor on.  
              I did so too and soon was decked  
              quite nobly, as one might expect.
- 918           The noise resounded all about  
              the town of people coming out.  
              At once we rode into a field  
              to serve the ladies with spear and shield.  
              The service there of some was brief  
              and only brought the knights to grief  
              but other men were glad with gain.  
              The service of ladies brings joy or pain.

- 919           Then on the field appeared a bold  
                and worthy man who, as was told,  
                with knightly deeds and knightly ways  
                had often won both prize and praise  
                wherever nobles came to serve.  
                He did so well as to deserve  
                from ladies thanks in any case;  
                from some he got a fond embrace.
- 920           Sir Siegfried Weise, so the knight  
                was called, was one who knew no fright  
                and never had a timid thought:  
                a good man, he, who feared for nought.  
                Where there was striving for a prize  
                he earned the thanks that none despise.  
                With knightly skill in many a test  
                he won the honor he possessed.
- 921           With gilded crest the noble came  
                onto the field to spread his fame.  
                The knight, renowned throughout the land,  
                then took a heavy spear in hand  
                with which he wished to joust. I tied  
                my helmet and was set to ride.  
                We spurred our horses and began  
                the course, I and this famous man.
- 922           The charge we ran was very long.  
                Sir Siegfried Weise, who was strong,  
                desired to knock me from my horse;  
                I had the same in mind, of course.  
                But still the joust was ridden well  
                and so that neither of us fell  
                although we brushed while riding fast  
                and broke our shields as we rushed past.
- 923           The joust was made so close that we  
                struck shield on shield and knee on knee  
                in riding by each other so.  
                Both knees were badly bruised, I know,  
                and both the shields were split in two.  
                The splinters from the lances flew  
                and in the collar of this lord  
                as well as mine wide holes were bored.

- 926           Thereafter I used up a score  
of spears with skill and then one more.  
The joust with which I broke this one,  
though it was beautifully done,  
brought pain and harm. I'll tell you how.  
It was a pretty joust, I vow,  
yet I'd been happy with a miss;  
now listen, what occurred was this.
- 927           I'd taken a heavy weapon from  
a youthful squire when I saw come  
Sir Ruprecht von Purstendorf, riding hard;  
he almost caught me off my guard.  
I charged him, and my spear tip smote  
right through his collar to his throat;  
it passed through shield and mail and all.  
The knight could not avoid a fall.
- 928           He landed far behind his steed.  
At once his wound began to bleed  
so that the grass about was red;  
they thought at first that he was dead.  
This issue caused me deepest woe.  
I sadly left the field to go  
into the hostel. I was filled  
with grief for him I'd nearly killed.
- 929           But he was strong and didn't die.  
The morning after, just as I  
was all prepared to ride away,  
a message asked that I would stay.  
It came from Sir Kadolt, the host  
of Feldsberg, who loved honor most.  
He asked that I would visit there  
his wife and many a lady fair.
- 930           I spoke, "This I shall gladly do  
for him and for the ladies too.  
I'll come to him to hear a mass  
and meet the ladies as we pass."  
The messenger was happy when  
I told him this; he hastened then  
to tell the host that I'd appear,  
which all the ladies were glad to hear.

- 931           At once the noble donned his best  
              for me and was with splendor dressed.  
              I also put some fine clothes on  
              and rode lightheartedly thereon  
              up to the castle where I got  
              a friendly welcome on the spot.  
              I thanked them warmly at our meeting  
              and gladly heard their cordial greeting.
- 932           The host received me as a friend.  
              His wife then started to descend  
              a stairway with the ladies all.  
              Their trains with every step would fall  
              down a stair before my gaze.  
              Their fair appearance, gentle ways,  
              and, more than these, each lovely glance  
              soon made my heart begin to dance.
- 933           I saw them coming toward me thus;  
              to wait would not be courteous  
              so I approached with manner mild  
              but gay, and all the ladies smiled  
              that I should walk so merrily  
              with pretty women's clothes on me  
              and lovely braids down to my hips.  
              I met a lot of laughing lips.
- 934           The wife spoke up with spritely mien,  
              "I welcome you, my Lady Queen."  
              I bowed politely as I heard;  
              the others came to add a word.  
              I offered one of them a kiss  
              and she turned rosy red at this;  
              I kissed another standing by  
              who blushed, for she was also shy.
- 935           When all the greetings had been said  
              the mistress of the castle led  
              me in a chapel, finely done;  
              at once a service was begun  
              and God was glorified in song.  
              Around me was a female throng  
              and I'll confess, the truth to tell,  
              that God was then not served so well.

- 936           I was almost bound by cords of love  
                  and by the tender glances of  
                  a pair of shining eyes I saw.  
                  That I escaped and could withdraw  
                  was due alone to faithfulness.  
                  If any woman could suppress  
                  my constant loyalty, I swear  
                  't would be a certain lady there.
- 937           Her beauty and her charm broke through  
                  my wondering eyes before I knew  
                  and fell into my heart. It skips  
                  whene'er I think of the rose-red lips  
                  which I saw laughing then at me  
                  and which had spoken so pleasantly.  
                  They would have stolen all my sense  
                  were constancy not my defense.
- 938           For while I looked with heart aglow  
                  my constancy addressed me so,  
                  "How can this be? What now? What now?  
                  For whom will you renounce your vow  
                  to the lady you have loved so long,  
                  who's never done you any wrong?  
                  Away with this! He who permits  
                  such feelings must have lost his wits."
- 943           I thus continued, lost in thought  
                  and unperceiving. So distraught  
                  can those become who fix their mind  
                  on women. I was deaf and blind,  
                  to all around as much as dead  
                  until I heard the Bible read.  
                  Another priest began it; then  
                  I came back to myself again.
- 944           The ladies stood. I wished to bring  
                  up to the front my offering  
                  and asked the wife to lead the way.  
                  She spoke, "Why, what would people say?  
                  My manners would be rather mean  
                  were I to go before a queen.  
                  It wouldn't do my honor good;  
                  you must not think I ever would."

- 945           So I went first at her request  
                and soon was followed by the rest.  
                I walked with such a happy air  
                that one heard laughter here and there.  
                To go and bow and turn around  
                and then come back took time, I found,  
                moving with a lady's stride,  
                no longer than a hand is wide.
- 948           Soon afterwards the mass was o'er  
                and I prepared to leave once more.  
                The host and also his lady sweet  
                invited me to stay and eat.  
                I spoke, "I'd gladly do your will,  
                since you seem to wish this still,  
                but constancy has sworn an oath  
                and so I must refuse you both.
- 949           "I've made this journey as I vowed,"  
                I said, "and never have allowed  
                a knight or lady yet to give  
                a thing but she for whom I live.  
                She gives me all my happiness  
                and is my comfort in distress,  
                it's she who keeps my spirits high;  
                and, if I serve her, that is why."
- 951           I rode back to my hostel then  
                and sent the rings to all the men  
                who'd driven spears against my shield  
                and left the splinters on the field.  
                I counted twenty, this is true,  
                but I myself broke twenty-two  
                good lances there as it befell.  
                It pleased me to have done so well.
- 952           While at the inn I quickly ate;  
                and, since I wished to leave in state,  
                I saw that all was in good shape,  
                then donned a new and pretty cape.  
                The dress I wore was also new.  
                At last I asked my retinue  
                to ride in splendor through the town,  
                so they paraded up and down.

- 953           We reached the Thaya soon and found  
              a crossing to Bohemian ground.  
              A lovely meadow was at hand  
              to which I led my festive band  
              and had some messengers proclaim:  
              who for his lady would win fame  
              should arm himself without delay.  
              I donned my armor right away.
- 956           A lot of nobles got the word  
              and came, a hundred, so I heard,  
              in splendid dress. They raised the shout,  
              “Give way, my lord, watch out! Watch out!  
              Let every gallant knight prepare  
              to honor now his lady fair!”  
              They rode toward me with battle lust;  
              I too was anxious for a joust.
- 957           I strained just as a falcon might.  
              Against me rode then many a knight;  
              my wish to serve my lady’s pride  
              was fairly soon well-satisfied.  
              Before me many knights were massed  
              who rode against me thick and fast  
              and, through bad manners, often three  
              at once would charge their steeds at me.
- 964           I’ll tell you, there was many a spear  
              and shield and helmet lying here.  
              For all about this meadow land  
              by many a knightly rider’s hand  
              shields and helmets were broken through;  
              and here and there one saw a few  
              brave and skillful nobles fall  
              who were not used to that at all.
- 966           Before the tourneying was o’er  
              up spoke the bishop’s governor,  
              “My noble queen, you need not stay  
              with us but can be on your way.  
              Your journey’s ended, well and good,  
              now you can travel where you would.  
              I’ll take your horses and your men  
              until you want them back again.”

- 967           As he advised I left the place  
                  and so as not to leave a trace.  
                  But first I gave out rings, nineteen,  
                  and went into a wood, unseen,  
                  and took my armor off in haste  
                  for I had little time to waste.  
                  I called my servants then to tell  
                  them every one a fond farewell.
- 968           With stealth, to carry out my plan  
                  I rode off with a single man;  
                  one of the governor's was he,  
                  the very soul of loyalty.  
                  Von Fronhoven he was, Sir Kol,  
                  and well could lead me to my goal,  
                  Vienna. Almost every stone  
                  and every street to him was known.
- 969           The journey there was quickly made;  
                  I found an inn in which I stayed  
                  three days and nights, but while I hid,  
                  just listen well to what I did.  
                  I had them make the battle dress  
                  for half-a-hundred steeds, no less;  
                  all these were masterfully done  
                  and quite expensive, every one.
- 970           But while I had these things prepared  
                  hear how my loyal servants fared.  
                  After I'd left them all behind  
                  my steward with his courtly mind  
                  took my three horses and my shirts,  
                  as well as cloaks and capes and skirts.  
                  Soon all the woman's clothes he found  
                  upon the horses' backs were bound.
- 971           From the meadow he took everything  
                  to where some knights were gathering.  
                  They hurried quickly toward him then  
                  and saw my retinue. But when  
                  they didn't see me anywhere  
                  and all the clothes that I'd left there  
                  upon the horses' backs were seen,  
                  they said at once, "Where is the queen?"



- 972           “Yes, tell us where! Where has she gone?”  
Some other knights rode up thereon.  
My steward answered them and spoke,  
“The queen has played an evil joke  
on me that will bring grief, I fear,  
for she has gone and left me here  
and where she is I do not know.  
This changes all my joy to woe.
- 973           “These many articles of dress,  
these horses add to my distress.  
She left them here, what shall I do  
with them? I’d like advice from you.  
'T were wrong to take all this away;  
should I just simply let it stay  
right here? Now tell me what is best.  
I’ll do whatever you suggest.”
- 974           The governor said gallantly,  
“Good youth, it seems the best to me  
to give the minstrels here with us  
these things, and not to worry thus;  
she can get new ones for the old.  
If she’s as rich as we’ve been told  
and as one judges by her thrift,  
she won’t be injured by the gift.”
- 975           My steward answered in this wise,  
“Lord, it shall be as you advise.”  
He gave the minstrels every bit,  
just as the governor saw fit.  
At once the latter undertook  
to care for those whom I forsook  
and, since I’d given my consent,  
he led them with him when he went.
- 976           Right after that the noblemen  
rode back to Austria again.  
They left the Thaya soon behind  
and came to Feldsberg, there to find  
a good and rightly famous host.  
If hospitality can boast  
that it bears honor one should praise  
Sir Kadolt von Feldsberg all his days.

- 977           The man just would not be denied.  
He brought the nobles all inside  
to spend the night with him and dine.  
He served good food, and mead and wine  
were brought as long as they remained;  
thus till his death he entertained.  
They were well treated by this knight  
and rode away with morning light.
- 986           Soon they were in Vienna too.  
I was delighted when I knew  
for there was nought I wanted more  
than to have my servants as before.  
I had the hostel decorated  
at once, for I was most elated  
that I should see the nobles there.  
We had a merry time, I swear.
- 987           I bade them bring around my horse.  
I wished the governor, of course,  
to see me in my altered state.  
The courtly noble didn't wait  
and, ere my horse was gotten out  
to me so I could ride about,  
before the inn the knight was seen.  
He spoke to me, "God greet you, queen.
- 988           "We see God's wonders," he began,  
"in you, that you are here a man  
and were but four short days ago  
a woman. You have altered so;  
I'll never understand just how.  
You were a wealthy queen and now  
are just another man we've known.  
To whom did you leave your realm and throne?"
- 989           The knights and I all laughed a bit  
as always at such clever wit.  
Then those who'd ridden out to me  
came thronging in the hostelry.  
They wished to see who'd been so bold.  
Then many a tale and joke was told  
to me. We passed the evening thus;  
a lot of drinks were brought to us.

- 990            Since I had something to confide  
                I led the governor aside  
                and told him what I planned to do.  
                I said, "I'd be obliged to you  
                if you would help me and consent  
                to wear throughout the tournament  
                my coat of arms. I'll not forget  
                and shall be always in your debt."
- 991            Then spoke the high-born nobleman,  
                "I'll help you any way I can,  
                for you need never be afraid  
                that I'll refuse to you my aid.  
                I'll gladly give it to you now  
                and wear your coat of arms, I vow,  
                throughout the tourney on my steed."  
                I thanked him and was pleased indeed.
- 992            When he had given me his word  
                and when the other knights had heard  
                that he'd agreed to my request  
                I had no trouble with the rest  
                and just asked those of highest ranks.  
                They all assented and with thanks:  
                the barons, counts, and vassals then  
                until I had my fifty men.
- 994            We stayed in Vienna four more days  
                and passed the time in pleasant ways.  
                We saw some women there in truth  
                the sight of whom restores one's youth.  
                Whoever is a gallant knight  
                will feel, I know, his heart beat light  
                to see a lady and to find  
                that she's both beautiful and kind.
- 995            On Sunday all were up at dawn  
                and in a hurry to be gone.  
                Inside the city all about  
                were sounds of riders moving out.  
                We rode away as if to war  
                toward Korneuburg. With us we bore  
                a costly banner which was made,  
                I'll tell you how, for this parade.

- 996           The standard had been made with care.  
          White taffeta it was, a pair  
          of bars were sewn thereon (a span  
          in breadth they were and black) which ran  
          obliquely from the right and down.  
          My buglers, when we left the town,  
          were blowing as we rode along  
          some marching music, high and strong.
- 997           Behind the banner there was borne  
          the helmet which I'd always worn  
          but now it shone just like a sword,  
          I do not lie, and with a cord  
          of finest silk a fan was bound  
          to it. Thus was the helmet crowned  
          and very prettily, it seemed.  
          The fan was gold and brightly gleamed.
- 998           It all was fashioned with great pains.  
          To every tip were bound the vanes  
          of peacock feathers, skilfully  
          and as I wanted them to be.  
          The fan was wrought with many a fold,  
          to each were fastened leaves of gold  
          so that the whole was covered o'er  
          with shining leaflets by the score.
- 999           Beside the helmet was my shield.  
          The whitest ermine made the field  
          and over this was sewn in place  
          two sable bars from chief to base.  
          Upon these bars which ran across  
          the field was fixed a costly boss.  
          To hold the shield were heavy bands  
          made up of many silken strands.
- 1007          I rode to Korneuburg that day  
          decked in the best of knights' array.  
          Before the town the Kühnringe brothers  
          awaited me with many others.  
          It was a very friendly meeting  
          and very courteous was their greeting.  
          The nobles with them were polite  
          and received me as beseems a knight.

- 1009           Thereon into the town we rode  
                  each noble went to his abode,  
                  inviting another whom he knew  
                  but who had made arrangements too.  
                  I rode into my hostel then;  
                  to hostels went the other men  
                  where they consumed good food and wine.  
                  Soon many a knight was feeling fine.
- 1010           No food was left, no wine was spurned  
                  by them, and wax was freely burned,  
                  one saw a lot of flaming lights.  
                  As often is with merry knights,  
                  they wandered here and wandered there  
                  around the city everywhere.  
                  Who had no torch, the truth to tell,  
                  could see by other torches well.
- 1011           That evening many nobles came  
                  to visit me. I did the same  
                  and gladly went to hostelries  
                  to see such merry men as these.  
                  Thus half the night was squandered though  
                  I would not change a thing, I know,  
                  for there were lots of friendships made  
                  which never after were betrayed.
- 1012           The other half was spent in bed,  
                  but when the eastern sky was red  
                  to church we hastened right away.  
                  Many a knight had come to pray  
                  that God would help him to succeed.  
                  One ought to ask God's help indeed;  
                  except for God and for his grace  
                  none would be happy any place.
- 1013           When mass was over word was sent  
                  to choose sides for the tournament.  
                  This soon was done as it should be,  
                  and all divided equally.  
                  Two-hundred-fifty knights had come  
                  because their hearts were venturesome  
                  and since it was their ladies' will.  
                  They wished to demonstrate their skill.

- 1015           Without delay they all began  
                  to arm themselves, each gallant man.  
                  It did not take me long to don  
                  my shoulder armor and put on  
                  that for my legs. How bright they were!  
                  'T was then I saw my messenger.  
                  This pleased me in my inmost heart  
                  but he soon caused me many a smart.
- 1016           When I beheld him waiting thus  
                  I bade my squires depart from us  
                  and, free of other ears and eyes,  
                  addressed the courier in this wise,  
                  “My messenger, to me so dear,  
                  I offer you a welcome here.  
                  What is the story that you bring  
                  and did she send me anything?”
- 1017           He sighed with sorrow then and said  
                  no word but stood with lowered head.  
                  I spoke to him, “How’s this? What meant  
                  the sigh? What has the lady sent  
                  to me? Why are you acting so?  
                  You’ve never looked so filled with woe.  
                  My joys are gone and I’m accursed;  
                  your silence makes me fear the worst.”
- 1018           He spoke, “I’ll tell you with regret,  
                  my lord, what I would fain forget;  
                  ’t would make me happy, it is true.  
                  The message I’m to bring to you  
                  is so distressing, I am sure,  
                  that if your lifetime should endure  
                  a thousand years you’d still bewail  
                  what you’ll discover in my tale.
- 1019           “Your lady wishes me to state,  
                  for you she feels nought else but hate  
                  and will not see you any more.  
                  She says, you well deserve this for  
                  disloyalty of every kind,  
                  and that she very soon will find  
                  a way to punish what you’ve done.  
                  She told me this, the virtuous one.

- 1021            “She told me why her wrath is such  
                  and how you angered her so much.  
                  She said, the news was given her  
                  as really true that you prefer  
                  to serve another lady now,  
                  and this was stated as a vow;  
                  she knows your lack of constancy.  
                  Thus spoke your lady fair to me.”
- 1023            I cried, “Alas, the dreadful pain  
                  which I shall always bear in vain  
                  within my heart until I die:  
                  to choose a lady fair whom I  
                  desire and love with faithfulness  
                  and have her cause me such distress.  
                  I’ve only grief, my joy has fled;  
                  I wish to God that I were dead!
- 1024            “Or that I never had been born!  
                  How did I earn her wrath and scorn  
                  and, being constant, lose her favor,  
                  with loyalty that would not waver?  
                  How could my fortune be so bad!  
                  God knows indeed I never had  
                  disloyal thoughts and was not peeved  
                  whatever treatment I received.”
- 1027            I wept there as a child who fears  
                  and I was nearly blind with tears;  
                  I wrung my hands the while I wept.  
                  My aching heart could not accept  
                  this sorrow and with pain was racked.  
                  In every joint my members cracked  
                  as one breaks sticks to feed a flame.  
                  My grief was not a childish game.
- 1028            While I was weeping, filled with gloom,  
                  the governor came in the room  
                  and spoke, “What can this be? What’s this?”  
                  He turned around then to dismiss  
                  the page. “Go out,” he said quite grim  
                  and closed the door right after him.  
                  “Now,” spoke the knight so brave and strong,  
                  “just tell me who has done you wrong.”

- 1030           That he should speak so kindly then  
                  made all my grief come back again  
                  so that my tears flowed as before.  
                  I cried, "Alas, forevermore.  
                  I sorrow that I cannot say  
                  to any why I grieve this way.  
                  The cause of all the pain I feel  
                  is something I may not reveal."
- 1031           But when the faithful man had seen  
                  and heard my grief and knew how keen  
                  the torment was, he sorrowed too  
                  and, by my truth, I say to you,  
                  soon joined in my lament and cried  
                  as if his father dear had died  
                  though why he wept he did not know;  
                  a strange occurrence but it's so.
- 1032           And, as I saw him weeping there,  
                  within my breast the pain and care  
                  once more became so great I bowed  
                  my head with woe and cried aloud,  
                  "Alas that I have life and breath,  
                  may God in mercy give me death!  
                  From this sad world would I depart."  
                  I longed for death with all my heart.
- 1033           While we displayed such anguish here  
                  who but Sir Heinrich should appear.  
                  Von Wasserberg, as he was named,  
                  for chivalry was widely famed  
                  and was my sister's husband. He  
                  exclaimed, "See here, what might this be?  
                  And who has ventured to provoke  
                  such woe in you?" With wrath he spoke.
- 1034           "In truth I'd like to hear your tale.  
                  This is a most unknighly wail,  
                  for you lament as loud and wild  
                  as any orphaned beggar child  
                  or any woman who's afraid.  
                  Is this the way a knight is made?  
                  No. Whatever is amiss  
                  you ought to be ashamed of this."



- 1035           “Sir Heinrich,” said the governor,  
          “Sir Ulrich’s suffering is more  
          than I have ever seen or heard  
          but I don’t know what has occurred.  
          It’s something he will not relate  
          although his trouble is so great  
          it pains me too. I cannot guess  
          what is the cause of such distress.”
- 1036           Sir Heinrich was a forthright man.  
          “Sir Governor,” he thus began,  
          you ought to leave us two alone  
          and what it is that makes him groan  
          and weep he’ll surely have to share  
          for I shall ever help him bear  
          his sad misfortune faithfully.  
          To aid my friend is joy to me.”
- 1037           The governor soon went away.  
          Sir Heinrich then without delay  
          made sure the door was firmly tied  
          and angrily began to chide,  
          “This isn’t how you ought to act.  
          We should be happy, that’s a fact,  
          because of all the praise you’ve won  
          with knightly deeds that you have done.”
- 1039           I spoke and answered thus the knight,  
          “My heart will never more be light,  
          in this you can believe your ears.  
          Were I to live a thousand years  
          I would not cease to sorrow still.  
          Though you may think it good or ill  
          I’ll grieve because of what befell  
          but what it was I cannot tell.”
- 1041           He said as soon as I was through,  
          “I know what has befallen you.  
          Listen, I’ll tell you what is wrong:  
          the lady you have served so long  
          and faithfully, my worthy lord,  
          to gain a lover’s fair reward,  
          who has your service and your vow  
          and promised much to you till now

- 1042 her favor has denied at last.  
This must be why you're so downcast  
and why one hears these cries of woe.  
You must admit that this is so."  
At once when he said this the blood  
came from my mouth, in truth a flood  
out of my nose began to race  
till it had reddened all my face.
- 1043 As soon as he beheld me bleed  
the courtly man cried out indeed,  
"Dear God, I offer thanks to Thee  
that Thou permittest me to see  
before my death a gallant man  
of whom in very truth I can  
maintain, he loved without deceit  
or wavering his lady sweet."
- 1044 He knelt before me as I bled  
and raised his hands above his head  
and thankfully these words confessed,  
"In seeing it my soul is blessed!  
I'm grateful just to know of this,  
it fills my heart with sweetest bliss  
to make me happy all my days.  
I'll always think of this with praise."
- 1052 Again my sobbing made me weak.  
I started wretchedly to speak,  
"I must give up the tournament.  
One can not tourney and lament;  
in knightly games one can't be sad,  
what one does then will turn out bad.  
To serve a lady well a knight  
must joust but do so with delight."
- 1054 The honor-loving honest man  
laughed at my statement and began,  
"All this has been decided on,  
your armor you will have to don.  
Though it be joy or more distress  
you'll get into your battle dress."  
He put it on me hastily  
but got no word of thanks from me.

- 1055           He placed my helmet on me last,  
                  then with his hands he tied it fast  
                  and led me out of there with force  
                  to where I found, all decked, my horse.  
                  I mounted with my grief unhealed,  
                  at once he gave to me my shield  
                  and so with sorrow and belated  
                  I rode to where the others waited.
- 1056           They waited right before the inn,  
                  with shining trappings, to begin.  
                  Their battle dress too gleamed and glowed  
                  as to the jousting field we rode.  
                  I saw Sir Hadmar von Kühnringe then  
                  surrounded by a troop of men  
                  and also saw Sir Heinrich, his brother,  
                  who was the center of another.
- 1057           While helmets onto heads were tied  
                  we formed the groups with which we'd ride.  
                  I took a sturdy spear in hand  
                  and rode away then from our band.  
                  I came forth all alone indeed  
                  and then began to spur my steed  
                  to race as fast as he could go.  
                  I charged Sir Hadmar's forces so.
- 1058           And when I reached the troop I broke  
                  my spear off with a skilful stroke;  
                  it shattered well though it was large.  
                  I did not slow my rapid charge  
                  but rode their spears and shields in two.  
                  Sir Hadmar's men did not pursue,  
                  for courteously he cried, "Don't stay  
                  him now, just let him ride away."
- 1062           I rode as fast as I could spur  
                  back to where my comrades were  
                  and spoke, "Let's start the tournament;  
                  I got away by their consent.  
                  Were I to splinter thirty spears  
                  against them, they, so it appears,  
                  would let me keep escaping thus.  
                  I think, because they're courteous."

- 1063           At once I took another lance.  
                  We saw Sir Hadmar's troop advance  
                  toward us and at a rapid pace.  
                  I turned my men about to face  
                  the strong attack the noble led;  
                  he was both skilled and spirited.  
                  We charged the foe just as one should,  
                  riding as closely as we could.
- 1064           And when the other troop was nigh  
                  I spurred my charger so that I  
                  was moving very swiftly when  
                  I struck the first of Hadmar's men.  
                  On him I broke my spear in two,  
                  plunged in the troop and then crashed through.  
                  My knights all followed after me  
                  and struck them hard and skilfully.
- 1065           When we broke through his squadron so  
                  Hadmar von Kühnringe wasn't slow  
                  to get his troop in shape once more.  
                  He caught three of my men before  
                  they ever got their horses turned;  
                  he was a master, as they learned.  
                  He knew a lot and was precise  
                  and often gave some good advice.
- 1066           But we surrounded him and might  
                  have captured Hadmar when a knight  
                  (his brother Heinrich) led a raid  
                  against us, coming to his aid.  
                  Sir Heinrich's troop rode well and fast  
                  and rammed our horses as they passed.  
                  One heard their lances loudly crack  
                  and saw them slowly force us back.
- 1067           As we by foes were ringed about  
                  a squadron came to help us out:  
                  it was Sir Wolfger with his band.  
                  He galloped up with spear in hand.  
                  The valiant knight had taken care  
                  to catch the foe quite unaware;  
                  the charge was carried out with skill,  
                  for Hadmar this meant only ill.

- 1068           There were no others who could ride  
to help; two troops on either side,  
no more, were in the tournament.  
The honor-loving nobles spent  
their strength and lances so that they  
won glory and renown that day.  
But it was clearly true that none  
gained easily the fame he won.
- 1070           Many a man in these affrays  
through gallant exploits won high praise.  
Low-minded nobles were not there  
to strive; it's like that everywhere.  
The true knight seeks an honored name  
to others it is all the same  
if they have ease and property.  
The difference isn't hard to see.
- 1071           "Crash! Bang!" until the day was o'er  
rode Lengenbach, the governor.  
Sir Wolfger von Gors was tireless here  
and on the foe broke many a spear,  
he never stopped throughout the fight.  
Sir Dietmar von Liechtenstein, a knight  
who's always striving to excel,  
was one who tourneyed very well.
- 1072           Sir Heinrich von Wasserberg had done  
that day as much as anyone;  
von Kiowe, who was very stout,  
was praised by everyone about;  
Sir Ulrich von Steutz displayed such skill  
that people talk about it still;  
and what the knight, von Ottenstein,  
did to the enemy was fine.
- 1073           Sir Engelschalk used many a lance  
and risked his honor on pure chance;  
this Lord of Königsbrunnen threw  
it often on the scales, it's true,  
one owes him praise for recklessness.  
Von Rebstock strove and with success  
for fame and his desire was such,  
he thought no labor was too much.

- 1074           Were I to name you all the men  
                  whose exploits were outstanding then,  
                  who strove and honor there would find,  
                  and name all those of gallant mind,  
                  and tell how one crashed through the foe,  
                  how that man's lance was splintered so,  
                  how he was bold, and he was strong,  
                  you'd think my story much too long.
- 1075           You've heard a lot of tourneying  
                  so I'll not add a single thing  
                  to what I've told except to say  
                  that I used up nine spears that day.  
                  In brief, it's this I want to tell,  
                  that all the sturdy knights did well  
                  and each man strove with every limb;  
                  these sought to gain renown for him.
- 1076           The darkness stopped the tournament  
                  and from the field at last we went  
                  back to the inns with manly pride.  
                  I rode to mine and found inside  
                  the knights I'd taken prisoner.  
                  I let them go just as they were,  
                  without a loss, through courtesy.  
                  They all expressed their thanks to me.
- 1077           In Korneuburg we spent the night,  
                  and with the early morning light  
                  all travelled home with spirits high.  
                  I rode from there with many a sigh.  
                  When he beheld my lowered head  
                  the loyal messenger then said,  
                  "It causes me much pain and woe  
                  when I must see you sorrow so."
- 1078           I spoke to him, "Dear friend, now say,  
                  how could my heart again be gay,  
                  how could I hope for happiness?  
                  My lady grants me no success,  
                  which means that I shall never more  
                  be happy-hearted as before.  
                  My joyful spirit now is gone  
                  and I can only sorrow on."

- 1079           The youth replied, "Lord, I believe  
                  that it will do no good to grieve;  
                  do not despair of pleasure now.  
                  Of course, I cannot tell you how  
                  your lady actually may feel;  
                  it's possible her wrath is real  
                  but maybe it's a test for you.  
                  These are things that women do.
- 1080           "I'd like to recommend a plan  
                  with which I'll help you all I can:  
                  why don't I see if I can find  
                  if she's unfavorably inclined  
                  or whether this is just a test.  
                  Before I'll see you so distressed  
                  I'll try it once again indeed.  
                  God grant my efforts may succeed."
- 1081           "Page, you've never failed me yet  
                  and I'll be always in your debt.  
                  I say, the plan you recommend  
                  is one which pleases me no end.  
                  It's really more than I dared ask  
                  but you yourself assume the task  
                  of helping me. May God confer  
                  rich blessings on you, messenger."
- 1088           The messenger departed then  
                  and I rode onward, sad again,  
                  until at last I came to where  
                  I found a lot of loving care,  
                  to my sweet wife. She couldn't be  
                  in any way more dear to me  
                  although I'm in the service of  
                  another, who's my lady love.
- 1090           But hear what happened to the squire:  
                  he needs what help he can acquire  
                  from luck and from a gracious fate.  
                  When he arrived at her estate  
                  she laughed because he looked so grim  
                  but welcomed and then questioned him,  
                  "Now tell me what your lord has done.  
                  Say, am I still his chosen one?"

- 1091            “Yes, lady, though you be unkind  
to him he has so fixed his mind  
that no one else can be so dear,  
not even life itself, I fear.  
He loves you more than any thing  
and serves you with no wavering.  
I’ll take an oath and swear to this  
by all my hope of heaven’s bliss.”
- 1097            She spoke, “I grant him my esteem  
and tell you truly, though I seem  
to show disfavor, it’s not so;  
but this is what you need to know:  
that which he wishes in return  
for service he can never earn.  
He should not think this hate or spite,  
the same is true of any knight.
- 1102            “Ride to your master now and say  
what I told you. If there’s a way  
I’d like to meet him secretly,  
could it be managed so that he  
might take such care and not expose  
us when he comes and when he goes  
that none will know the guest I’ve had.  
If this can be then I’ll be glad.
- 1103            “My counsel, since he’s venturesome,  
is this: as lepers you must come  
on Sunday morning (don’t be late)  
and join the lepers by the gate.  
You’ll knock as soon as you arrive  
and very shortly I’ll contrive  
to send a maid; what she directs,  
so do it that no one suspects.
- 1104            “You must tell him another thing:  
he should not come here wondering  
if I shall let him in my bed;  
he must not be so far misled.  
That I’ll be glad to see him here  
does not mean (you must make this clear)  
that he will gain the love he’s sought.  
This prospect isn’t worth a thought.



- 1105            "I only let him come to me  
because you've often said that he  
has served me well his lifetime through.  
Now mark what I shall say to you.  
I want him as a secret guest  
so I can make this one request:  
that he will let this service end.  
I ask this truly as a friend."
- 1106            "I'll tell him, lady, your desire  
and know he'll do as you require.  
He'll come as quickly as he can:  
this news will make a happy man.  
My lord will surely not decline  
but come at once, as you design,  
in clothing like the lepers wear—  
just as you wish him, he'll be there."
- 1107            The messenger departed then  
and rode to where I just had been;  
since I'd already left the place  
he followed at a hurried pace.  
He galloped onward night and day  
and seldom rested on the way;  
he proved himself a friend of mine.  
He found me there at Liechtenstein.
- 1109            The moment that I saw him ride  
so hastily toward me I cried  
with joy, "Here comes the page at last;  
now I'll no longer be downcast.  
Perhaps he has good news to tell  
(no other does it near so well)  
and it may be that he'll impart  
that which will ease my aching heart."
- 1110            I rode to him—I couldn't wait  
but had to hear what he'd relate—  
and said, "You're welcome, messenger,  
and more so than you ever were.  
I must admit in very truth,  
I'm really glad to see you, youth.  
I hope to God that you'll report  
good tidings from the lady's court."

- 1114            "The lady wishes me to say,  
                 she'd like to see you right away  
                 but you must meet her secretly.  
                 On Sunday it's supposed to be  
                 and early, ere the sun is high.  
                 Before the gate some ruins lie  
                 and you're to come there in disguise—  
                 thus says your lady sweet and wise.
- 1115            "You must appear in ragged dress  
                 such as a leper might possess  
                 and what her courier may direct,  
                 that carry out; be circumspect  
                 so no one guesses you're a knight.  
                 Thus speaks the lady fair and bright:  
                 if you are smart there'll be no shame  
                 for you, and she will get no blame.
- 1116            "And you should know what else she said:  
                 you must not come if you're misled;  
                 no matter how you beg or sigh  
                 she's never going to let you lie  
                 with her. That simply may not be  
                 but just the same she'd like to see  
                 you. She'd enjoy a friendly chat.  
                 The charming lady told me that."
- 1120            "I must get ready for the ride  
                 and hope that God is on my side.  
                 I'll see if I can make it there;  
                 the days are long, the weather's fair,  
                 one travels far from sun to sun.  
                 I think perhaps it can be done  
                 and I can get there when she wanted.  
                 At least my spirit is undaunted.
- 1121            "We'll take with us a single groom,  
                 a man who's capable, on whom  
                 I can depend, who'll not discuss  
                 the trip. There'll be just three of us.  
                 Six horses, known for strength and speed,  
                 shall go along. If there is need  
                 I'll race them till they all are dead,  
                 to be there Sunday, as she said."

The Adventure of How Sir Ulrich Came as a Leper to His Lady and of  
How He Saw Her

- 1124           'T was Friday night so we stayed on  
but Saturday morning, just at dawn,  
we three set out to make the trip.  
I took great care that none let slip  
where we were travelling or why  
and was resolved to show that I  
could manage so that not a soul  
might ever guess the journey's goal.
- 1125           On my knightly word I vow  
I rode that Saturday somehow  
one-hundred-sixty miles and more.  
When that day's trip at last was o'er  
I was so tired. Along the way  
I lost two horses, dead they lay  
beside the road. I dared not wait  
and did not think their loss too great.
- 1126           'T was in the town where we arrived  
so late that night that I contrived  
to get some clothing, poor and torn,  
and beggar's bowls. On Sunday morn  
we donned the rags with many a curse,  
they couldn't possibly be worse.  
Instead of swords we took some knives,  
which we might need to save our lives.
- 1127           On Sunday morning early we  
rode eight miles further. Carefully  
I hid the groom and horses, then  
the page and I went on again  
for seven miles until we stood  
before a castle. There the good  
and gracious lady chiefly dwelt.  
I cannot tell you how I felt.

- 1128           We walked up closer till we found  
                  some wretched people all around  
                  who showed their poverty and need.  
                  There were a lot, I think, indeed  
                  full thirty lepers. Most of these  
                  had suffered much from their disease  
                  and some of those I saw with dread  
                  were very sick and nearly dead.
- 1129           I had to go to them and sit  
                  (I didn't care for this a bit  
                  and did it at my friend's command)  
                  as if I were too weak to stand.  
                  They greeted us, the sickly group,  
                  with many a gasping cough and whoop,  
                  and so diseased I could not bear  
                  to look, but still I joined them there.
- 1130           While we were seated they began  
                  to ask us questions, every man  
                  desired to know from whence we'd come.  
                  I found this query troublesome.  
                  I spoke, "We come from no place near,  
                  we both are total strangers here  
                  and want has brought us to this spot  
                  to see if they are kind or not."
- 1131           One said to us, "You couldn't pick  
                  a better time; the lady's sick  
                  who is the mistress of the place,  
                  and so they purchase heaven's grace  
                  by bringing us the food we crave.  
                  Before you came a maiden gave  
                  us bread and even wine. For this  
                  I pray she gains eternal bliss."
- 1133           Then, going from the lepers, we  
                  approached a little balcony,  
                  before which hung a heavy shade;  
                  of costly fabric this was made.  
                  They often hang such curtains to  
                  keep light and wind from coming through.  
                  This one was sturdy and was fast;  
                  through it no breezes ever passed.

- 1134 I took my bowl out (in the light  
it looked a bit too clean and bright)  
and knocked with it so loud that all  
could hear who then were in the hall.  
As soon as I had knocked I stood  
and begged as loudly as I could  
that I might get a piece of bread,  
for many days I'd not been fed.
- 1135 A maiden, when she heard my plea,  
looked down at once from the balcony  
to find out who had made the fuss  
and saw there were just two of us.  
She quickly closed the shade and went  
to tell her lady of my lament  
and that below were two strange men.  
The lady sent her to us then.
- 1138 She came up close and spoke quite low  
to us, "You two must let me know  
just who and what you are; now say!  
I must find out and right away  
for I'm supposed to only pause  
a moment. Did you come because  
my noble lady sent for you?  
Make sure that what you tell is true."
- 1139 I spoke thus to the pretty maid,  
"My lady, you shall be obeyed.  
For I am here at her command;  
know this, that I am he whose hand  
has always been at her employ,  
and I am he whose only joy  
may come from her. She can depend  
on me to serve her till the end."
- 1141 "The lady waits for my return.  
I'll go to her and she shall learn  
that you are here because she sent  
for you. With that she'll be content.  
I'll quickly come back here again  
and give instructions to you then  
of what she wants of you today."  
With that the maiden went away

- 1142 to find at once the lady fair  
and let her know that I was there.  
She told her all and did not hide  
a thing. The lady thus replied,  
"I'm very pleased indeed to hear  
of his arrival. Go, my dear,  
and tell him what I said, in sum,  
that I am glad that he has come.
- 1144 "He must return this evening. I  
shall send a message telling why  
I bade him come, and he shall find  
just what it is I have in mind.  
He'll then know everything he should.  
But you must take him something good  
to eat: some chicken, bread, and wine;  
give him God's greeting too, and mine."
- 1145 The maiden, when she knew her will,  
returned and found me waiting still.  
She and another girl now bore  
what she'd been told to bring and more.  
When I saw she had company,  
I set my bowl some yards from me  
and spoke, "My lady, fill it quick  
and go for I am very sick."
- 1146 At that the second maid stopped dead  
but she I knew came near and said,  
"I'll take whatever fate decrees  
and not be scared by your disease.  
My worthy lady sends to you  
a welcome and God's greeting too.  
She says, she'll gladly see the one  
who serves her, when this can be done.
- 1148 "Go now, and when the sun has set  
come back up here and I shall let  
you hear whatever she may tell  
to me. I know she likes you well.  
Of this at least you can be sure,  
that of a truth my lady pure  
such favor ne'er before has shown."  
And then she left me there alone.

- 1149 I carried off, when she had gone,  
the food and drink to pass it on  
to lepers who were waiting there.  
I spoke, "I've got enough to share  
with you. May God this lady bless  
with many years of happiness.  
She's given more than I shall need;  
I'll gladly share with you indeed."
- 1151 We all sat down to form a ring  
and placed inside it everything  
that had been given by the maid.  
The hands I saw were so decayed  
they looked—I dare not tell you how;  
it's more than manners will allow.  
Upon my honor, I contend,  
my hair in horror stood on end.
- 1152 A foul disease was there disclosed.  
Some fingers were as decomposed,  
the flesh and bones as foul and rotten  
as those of bodies long forgotten  
and buried for a hundred days.  
It's true, and not an idle phrase:  
no dog could have such evil breath;  
already they belonged to death.
- 1153 And with these sick I had to eat.  
How much I wanted to retreat  
and never share with them a meal  
but I was forced to stay, conceal  
my dread, and carefully preserve  
the name of her I wished to serve,  
for if I had refused to stay  
they would have wondered right away.
- 1160 To pass the time I walked to town  
and begged until the sun went down  
and lit the mountain with its glow.  
'T was nearly evening, time to go  
back to the castle gate once more.  
I took my place there as before  
among the others. Cordially  
the many lepers greeted me.

- 1162           When I'd been sitting there a while  
                  the maiden came and led a file  
                  of servants bearing food and wine.  
                  There was enough for all to dine.  
                  She spoke to me, "You must arise  
                  and go. Now do as I advise.  
                  Be back again with morning light  
                  and take especial care tonight."
- 1163           I spoke, "Why did my lady dear  
                  command my strange existence here  
                  if I am not to talk with her?"  
                  The maiden spoke, "This can't occur  
                  before tomorrow night. Her plan  
                  is this: to see you when she can  
                  and certainly before you're gone.  
                  Just see that no one catches on."
- 1166           I hurried from the castle ground  
                  into a distant field. I found  
                  some grain there, growing thick and high,  
                  in which we hid from every eye  
                  (the messenger was there as well).  
                  The field of grain was our hotel  
                  and, I assure you, it was bad.  
                  That was a dreary night we had.
- 1167           For just as soon as day was done  
                  and when the night had scarce begun  
                  a stormy wind swept o'er the grain  
                  and brought with it a driving rain.  
                  'T was most unpleasant in the field,  
                  against the rain my only shield  
                  a shabby robe and scanty cloak:  
                  as shelter both were just a joke.
- 1168           From wet and cold I almost died,  
                  but I had other ills beside.  
                  Although I should leave something out  
                  I really ought not talk about—  
                  the unnamed insects caused me grief  
                  the whole night long without relief,  
                  they didn't give me any rest.  
                  That night I boarded many a guest.



- 1170           A night like this I'd never spent  
                  and, had I not such fond intent  
                  that night to help me to endure  
                  all this, I would have died, I'm sure.  
                  Good thoughts we can't have too much of  
                  and better yet are thoughts of love.  
                  Who has these with him in distress  
                  will get much help from happiness.
- 1171           The morning sun came up at last.  
                  Then through the fields I quickly passed  
                  and stood before the castle gate.  
                  I knocked thereon and asked with great  
                  concern if I perhaps could get  
                  some clothes, since all I had were wet  
                  and I was cold. I begged for aid;  
                  once more I saw the pretty maid.
- 1172           A lot of food and drink she brought.  
                  “My lady wishes,” so I thought,  
                  “that I get sick and perish here.”  
                  At once the maiden hurried near  
                  and said, “Last night I wondered whether  
                  you'd found a shelter from the weather.  
                  You look as though you'd had no bed,  
                  nor even roof above your head.”
- 1173           I said, “I've suffered misery.  
                  The cold was most the death of me,  
                  and other things tormented us  
                  that I should really not discuss.  
                  But this and even more I'll bear  
                  and I'll be paid for it when'er  
                  the lady takes me as her knight.  
                  I live in hope of such delight.”
- 1174           She spoke, “Sit down and eat your fill,  
                  then leave the castle and the hill,  
                  return this evening when you're due.  
                  Upon my word I promise you  
                  my worthy lady will not let  
                  you wait much longer, cold and wet,  
                  for you are soon to come to her.  
                  Tonight this meeting shall occur.”

- 1175           When she said this to me we parted,  
her words had made me happy-hearted.  
I hurried to the lepers then,  
I had to eat with them again  
but this I did with great distaste,  
and afterwards I went in haste  
down to a forest where I heard  
the songs of many a little bird.
- 1179           I sat in the forest down below  
till evening and 't was time to go.  
I then got up and almost ran  
in happy temper like a man  
whose heart with love is all afire  
and thinks she'll grant him his desire;  
of course his spirits would be high.  
In such a fancy there went I.
- 1187           I left the forest to ascend  
the hill when day was at an end,  
driven away by dismal night  
with all its dark, mysterious might.  
I climbed down in the moat a ways  
and hid myself from people's gaze  
with many stones. As I recall,  
it really took no time at all.
- 1188           So too the page had hidden him;  
we didn't dare to move a limb.  
While we lay covered on the ground  
the warden made his nightly round.  
He searched the castle in and out  
to see no strangers were about  
and that no one was hiding there.  
He carefully looked everywhere.
- 1189           While he displayed such energy,  
just hear what happend next to me.  
That rascal bade his comrades stay  
and walked right straight to where I lay;  
he came as close as he could get  
and pissed till I was soaking wet.  
I couldn't move or do a thing—  
a quite uncommon happening.

- 1190           With this he went in through the gate  
                  while there I lay in this sad state  
                  and suffered both distress and shame.  
                  Out from the balcony there came  
                  a light. I climbed up from the moat  
                  and quickly doffed the beggar's coat  
                  which I had worn as a disguise  
                  and hid it from the watchman's eyes.
- 1191           I stole to the balcony and found  
                  a loop of bedding, tightly bound.  
                  At once I stepped into the band,  
                  my comrade lent a helping hand  
                  as from below he gave a shove;  
                  my spirit hastened to my love  
                  while tender hands drew up the sheet,  
                  and so I rose—for several feet.
- 1192           It happened thus: as soon as I  
                  was lifted from the ground so high  
                  that my companion could bestow  
                  no more assistance from below,  
                  the ladies found they couldn't haul  
                  me up. I dangled by the wall,  
                  annoyed that they should pull in vain.  
                  This also caused the ladies pain.
- 1193           They let me down to rest and then  
                  they quickly pulled me up again,  
                  right to the place I was before.  
                  They couldn't move me anymore,  
                  not upward, by a single hair.  
                  By all my courtliness I swear  
                  both they and I were in distress.  
                  Three times they tried without success
- 1194           The third time down I knew indeed  
                  this method never would succeed.  
                  I left the bedding in a rage  
                  and hurriedly addressed the page.  
                  I spoke, "Good friend, I'm sure you are  
                  less heavy than I am by far.  
                  Step in, we'll find out if they can  
                  lift up a smaller, lighter man."

- 1195           As soon as he was seated there  
I lifted him into the air,  
the ladies pulled him up with ease,  
and I was happy as you please.  
He came into their room like this  
and then was greeted with a kiss.  
My aunt mistook the page for me;  
she was embarrassed as could be.
- 1196           He saw that he'd been kissed instead  
of me and did not lose his head,  
but quickly let the bedding fall;  
't was this I wanted most of all.  
It surely wasn't long until  
I sat therein with all good will.  
My spirit stoutly pulled with those  
above as steadily I rose.
- 1197           This time I reached with no more slips  
the balcony. My aunt's red lips  
were pressed with tenderness on mine.  
The charming lady made a sign  
for me to follow, and we went  
into a room and there she lent  
to me a robe of baldaquin  
that I could see my lady in.
- 1198           Therewith I entered thus belated  
the room in which my lady waited;  
she sat upon a rich divan.  
The sweet and lovely one began  
with greatest courtesy to greet  
me while I yet approached her seat.  
She bade me welcome to the place.  
I answered, "Lady, grant me grace."
- 1199           Let me describe how she was clad.  
A snow-white blouse the lady had  
put on—'t was delicate and neat—  
and over this my lovely sweet  
displayed a scarlet garment such  
that one could never praise too much:  
all trimmed in ermine; till that night  
I never saw a fur so white.

- 1204           The lady sat in front of me  
                  and I am sure I'll never see  
                  a lovelier beneath the sun.  
                  I knelt before the charming one  
                  and spoke, "My lady, by your truth,  
                  by your celebrated youth,  
                  by your pure and noble mind,  
                  I pray, be good to me and kind.
- 1205           "Lady, you're my chief delight,  
                  may I be favored in your sight,  
                  may your compassion take my part.  
                  Consider the longing of my heart  
                  which constant love for you inspired.  
                  Consider that I have not desired  
                  a thing more beautiful than you,  
                  a lovelier I never knew.
- 1206           "You're dearer far than all that I  
                  have ever seen. If I could lie  
                  with you tonight then I'd possess  
                  all that I've dreamed of happiness.  
                  My life will gain by your assent  
                  a lofty spirit and content  
                  more and more until it ends.  
                  It's you on whom my joy depends."
- 1207           Then spoke the lady sweet and kind,  
                  "It never should have crossed your mind  
                  that I would let you lie with me.  
                  You should not come with such a plea,  
                  nor let a prayer like this be heard,  
                  for I shall tell you on my word  
                  and truly that you will not sway  
                  me—now—no matter what you say.
- 1209           "Your many valiant deeds have brought  
                  to you such fame a woman ought  
                  to grant you gladly this request;  
                  and, could I do as you suggest,  
                  I would. But still you should be proud  
                  and honored that I have allowed  
                  you in my room. This is a lot  
                  and more than any other got.

- 1210            “You see, my husband and my lord  
                  would never want me to reward  
                  another so or give my love.  
                  Were I not checked by God above  
                  or by my honor, he would guard  
                  me closely though this would be hard.  
                  Indeed a watch would be in vain  
                  had I not honor to maintain.
- 1211            “My pure intent does him more good  
                  than any watching ever would.  
                  That I should risk my honor still  
                  and also risk my lord’s good will  
                  is only done to honor you.  
                  And, if some people ever knew  
                  of this, my honor would disappear.  
                  You owe me thanks that you are here.”
- 1212            “I thank you. I am in your debt  
                  and, lady, I shall ne’er forget  
                  what you have done and do for me.  
                  For I’ve no doubt your sympathy  
                  will cause you, blessed lady fair,  
                  to drive away my pain and care  
                  by granting me tonight love’s bliss,  
                  right here and now. I’m sure of this.”
- 1213            She spoke to me, “If what you prize  
                  is my esteem, it’s most unwise  
                  to ask for what could harm my name  
                  although I tell you, what you claim  
                  can simply not be granted now.  
                  If you persist you’ll lose, I vow,  
                  what favor you have won. It’s so.”  
                  I got up startled by this blow
- 1214            and quickly went to where I’d seen  
                  my aunt and asked, “What can this mean?  
                  If I have come up here in vain  
                  I haven’t won a thing but pain.  
                  I can’t believe her so unkind;  
                  it must not be what she designed  
                  for she’s not acting as she ought.  
                  The lady has to give this thought.”

- 1216 My aunt spoke up, "It's what she meant;  
I know for sure, her sole intent  
was what she said and nothing more,  
that's all you were invited for.  
There's something else which I should say:  
she had so many of us stay  
in case you thought of using force,  
to which men sometimes have recourse.
- 1217 "I know it's true and must declare,  
if you so much as touch a hair  
against her will she'll not receive  
you ever after (this believe),  
and even should you not succeed.  
One thing I've heard her say indeed:  
if in her service you'll not waver  
she yet may grant to you this favor."
- 1218 "I'll not contend with her a bit  
against her will but, I admit,  
it's just because I know those here  
would very quickly interfere.  
If there weren't such a lot of you  
I'd wrestle her. When we were through  
she'd grant the prize of victory.  
I'll tell you, this is what would be."
- 1219 "Nephew, hear me and obey.  
I know she likes you anyway;  
just do now as she wants, and I  
am rather sure that you will lie  
with her quite soon. For you will find  
the lady really is so kind  
and is so very feminine  
that pretty soon you're bound to win."
- 1221 I went back to the lady sweet  
and said, "Dear lady, I entreat  
you by the grace and loveliness  
which through God's mercy you possess,  
do not permit that we should part  
like this. They praise your tender heart:  
reveal it here to me, and so  
that I may be happy ere I go.

- 1224           “Mistress, greatest joy I know,  
                  mistress, you my pleasure’s glow,  
                  mistress of my heart and soul,  
                  mistress of my every goal.  
                  mistress over every stone  
                  I have and all I’ll ever own,  
                  mistress, only you can give  
                  content, for you alone I live.
- 1225           “You it is who must preserve  
                  my happiness. It’s you I’ll serve  
                  with faithfulness until the last.  
                  And should a thousand years go past  
                  my service always would endure,  
                  my loyalty would be as sure.  
                  That’s why you ought to grant me bliss  
                  in tenderness. I ask for this.”
- 1228           Then spoke the lady pure and fair,  
                  “I cannot listen to your prayer.  
                  If I had planned to make love now  
                  I’m smart enough to find somehow  
                  a way to meet you privately.  
                  Now listen to this word from me:  
                  if you continue thus to prate  
                  you’re really going to win my hate.
- 1237           “I’ve told you twice; you can depend  
                  on this, that I do not intend  
                  to give you love, not right away.  
                  Were you as smart as people say,  
                  and if you valued my good will,  
                  you’d surely keep such wishes still  
                  through which from me you’ll never gain  
                  a thing, and which can bring you pain.”
- 1239           Unhappily I stood up then;  
                  I went to see my aunt again  
                  and, when I found her, spoke dismayed,  
                  “Aunt, once more I need your aid  
                  and honest counsel for,” I said,  
                  “you know, I’d rather far be dead  
                  than have her favor thus denied  
                  and go away unsatisfied.



- 1243            “I’m very sure that if I choose  
to stay till morning I shall lose  
at once and certainly my life,  
but yet with me the worthy wife  
will have her good repute to mourn—  
I would have better not been born.  
She needs to give the matter thought  
for I shall never leave for nought.”
- 1244            Then said my aunt, “I’d better go  
at once and let the lady know  
that you have said you’re going to wait  
right here, regardless of your fate,  
and don’t expect to change your mind,  
and that, if she is not resigned  
to losing honor, she must fear,  
for you intend to perish here.”
- 1245            My aunt then left me standing there  
and went to find my lady fair.  
She spoke, “See, lady, what you get,  
my nephew Ulrich’s so upset  
that he won’t leave the place, it’s true,  
till he gets what he wants from you.  
Now see, my lady, that you act  
so that your honor stays intact.”
- 1246            The lady fair and virtuous  
then said, “It’s bad for both of us;  
you’re right, for me as well as him.  
Though he not fear for life and limb  
he should be careful just the same  
and not endanger my good name.  
This certainly he should defend  
and leave here quickly as a friend.
- 1247            “You must go back to him and say,  
he doesn’t need to act this way,  
that he may well be light at heart.  
If he’ll obey me and depart  
he has my word that I’ll fulfill  
his hopes and later do his will.  
If he’ll act now as I suggest  
I’ll gladly grant him his request.

- 1248           “Now tell him, had he acted right  
and had he done my will tonight  
there'd be no reason to complain,  
he'd not have had his trip in vain  
for I'd have quickly given in.  
But, if he thinks that he can win  
my love like this and can compel  
assent, then he's not thinking well.”
- 1250           My aunt then left her and returned  
to where I waited, still concerned.  
She said, “At last you can be merry  
and all your sorrows you can bury.  
Your worries are quite needless for  
no lady ever offered more  
than she will give if you'll agree  
to follow her guidance willingly.
- 1253           “Dear nephew, you must be content  
and not get in an argument  
for, if you don't do what she said,  
then truly all your hopes are dead  
and you'll have nothing but regret.  
Woo her gently and you'll yet  
enjoy her love before you go.  
The gracious lady told me so.”
- 1254           While she was talking with me thus  
my charming lady came to us  
and spoke to me just like a queen,  
“God knows that I have never seen  
a man who has so little sense.  
You'll sooner drive my favor hence  
than be successful in your suit  
by this quarrelsome dispute.
- 1260           “If, when you came, I'd greeted you,”  
the lady said, “as lovers do  
then I would never let you go  
away from here while feeling so.  
Obey me now, it's for the best,  
and do for once as I request.  
Get back again into the sheet,  
I'll let you down for several feet

- 1261           “then pull you up without delay  
and greet you in another way.  
When I’ve received you, not until,  
then I’ll be subject to your will,  
whatever you may want with me.  
I’ve chosen you, as you will see,  
of all the knights both far and near,”  
thus spoke the lady fair and dear.
- 1262           “Were I but sure of that, I would  
do quickly what you say I should  
but my offense makes me afraid.  
I fear that it may be repaid  
in that you’ll let me down and then  
will never pull me up again.  
My spirit would be so forlorn  
that I were better never born.”
- 1263           The lady spoke, “If you demand  
security just hold my hand,  
I’ll let you do it if I must.  
Perhaps you’re not a man to trust  
since you don’t trust me from your sight  
although I chose you as my knight  
above all others whom I knew.  
As I’m a woman, this is true.”
- 1264           “I shall, my lovely lady fair,  
put soul and body in your care  
and at your mercy, as is fit.  
Though good or ill may come of it  
I’ll do whatever you propose.  
Because you told me that you chose  
me as your lover I shall bless  
and gladly trust your tenderness.”
- 1265           She said then, “This will serve you well.  
If you will do now as I tell  
you to I’ll give my promise here:  
You needn’t have the slightest fear;  
I’ll do your will, whate’er it be,  
and you at last may lie with me.  
Your wants shall all be satisfied.”  
Thus spoke the lady by my side.

- 1266           The fair one took my hand and we  
                  went over to the balcony  
                  and found the bedding on the floor.  
                  She told me to get in once more  
                  and said, "Don't have the slightest fear;  
                  I gladly give my promise here:  
                  you won't leave now, it's not the end.  
                  I've chosen you to be my friend."
- 1267           Though worried, I then took my seat  
                  inside the tightly knotted sheet.  
                  They let me down a little ways  
                  to where they were supposed to raise  
                  me up. My sweet continued slyly,  
                  "God knows, I never thought so highly  
                  of any noble in the land  
                  as of the knight who holds my hand.
- 1268           "My friend," she spoke, "be welcome so.  
                  We both are freed from care and woe  
                  and I can now invite you in."  
                  While speaking thus, she raised my chin  
                  and said, "Dear one, give me a kiss."  
                  I was so overjoyed with this  
                  I let her hand go free and I  
                  quite soon had cause to grieve thereby.
- 1269           I kissed her then as I was bid  
                  and let her hand loose as I did;  
                  so very swift was my descent  
                  that, had not God in mercy lent  
                  protection, there can be no doubt,  
                  I surely would have tumbled out,  
                  but I came down without a fall.  
                  They pulled the sheets back up the wall.
- 1270           I sat right down in great despair.  
                  The grief was more than I could bear  
                  and reason fled in my distress;  
                  I was so mad and comfortless  
                  I cried aloud in bitter pain,  
                  "Alas, alas, and all in vain!  
                  Alas, that I was ever born  
                  my hopes and honor thus to mourn!"

- 1271 I sprang up then so overwrought  
that I had neither sense nor thought  
and raced unthinking down a steep  
incline to water which was deep  
to drown myself in that dark lake,  
which would have been a bad mistake.  
My comrade followed hastily  
else it had been the end of me.
- 1272 They'd quickly lowered him down too.  
When he, so courteous and true,  
heard how I cried at being spurned  
my loyal friend was quite concerned.  
He stayed close by me through it all;  
when I was just about to fall  
into the water, deep and black,  
he grasped my arm and held me back.
- 1273 He cried out, "What do you intend  
to do, my master and my friend?  
It's terrible that you should try  
to jump into this lake and die.  
You'd lose both soul and body then  
and had much better never been.  
Why you're a man who's strong and brave;  
is this the way you should behave?"
- 1274 "It has to be this way," I said,  
"and truly I shall soon be dead  
for here shall I give up my life  
since I have lost the lovely wife  
and that because of my own fault.  
So it's myself I shall assault  
and seek this so ignoble death.  
In truth, I want no life or breath.
- 1277 "How sadly I have been deceived  
by this sweet lady, I believed!  
She said, I should have faith in her,  
that such a thing would not occur,  
and then she let me hold her pale  
and tender hand as precious bail.  
She got it back through plain deceit,  
't was not a very honest feat."

- 1278           My comrade's voice was full of cheer:  
          "My lord, this you'll be glad to hear  
          (I'll tell you truly, as is right)—  
          she wants you back tomorrow night.  
          The charming lady, you will find,  
          will then be loving and so kind  
          that you will get your will with ease  
          and do with her just as you please.
- 1279           "But here you can no longer stay,  
          we must be quickly on our way,  
          the dawn has come, it's getting late  
          and it is dangerous to wait.  
          We need to leave here while we can  
          and see if your young, foolish man  
          is with the horses, as expected,  
          or whether he has been detected.
- 1280           "I truly fear that we were wrong  
          in leaving him alone so long  
          for anyone who sees him there  
          will also soon be quite aware  
          those horses must belong to you,  
          and think what damage that can do.  
          Unless the horses stay concealed  
          the whole affair will be revealed."
- 1282           I spoke, "What you have said is wise  
          and I shall do as you advise,  
          this thought has also come to me;  
          we ought to go at once and see.  
          And, if we have the horses still,  
          then we can come again, and will,  
          to find out whether she will let  
          me back into her chambers yet."
- 1283           Without delay we hastened then  
          to where the horses once had been.  
          We found them there and with the boy  
          who greeted me with honest joy  
          and said, "My Lord, I cannot tell  
          how glad I am to see you well.  
          I've suffered so from fear and dread;  
          I was afraid that you were dead."

- 1285           Quickly spoke the courtly youth,  
               “Sir, you will have to know the truth.  
               I dare not hazard more delay  
               and need to tell you right away  
               what is the lady’s real intent.  
               But promise first that you repent  
               this morning’s madness, as you should;  
               the news is really pretty good.”
- 1287           I said, “My friend, you’d best relate  
               the truth to me and simply state  
               the message you were told to bring;  
               for God’s sake, don’t conceal a thing,  
               just tell me what it was you heard.  
               Don’t be afraid, I give my word  
               that I shall not fall prey once more  
               to madness, as I did before.”
- 1288           “‘This is the message she conveys  
               through me to you: in twenty days  
               from now she wants you to return.  
               Hear this, you need have no concern,  
               the lady will receive you so  
               that you’ll be happy when you go.  
               The beautiful and worthy wife  
               will make you happy then for life.
- 1289           “‘That which occurred to you just now  
               she had no choice but to allow—  
               I got this from your lady fair.  
               Among the women who were there  
               . . . . . [line missing] . . . . .  
               You must believe she had to let  
               this wretched incident occur;  
               ’t would not have happened but for her.
- 1290           “‘That woman soon will travel on  
               and they’ll be happy when she’s gone.  
               Then you’re supposed to come back here  
               (your lady made this very clear).  
               Ten days she wishes you to dwell  
               with her, and it’s the truth I tell.  
               This time she’ll really treat you right,  
               as a lady ought to treat her knight.”

- 1292           With this, I mounted up and rode  
to Liechtenstein, for there abode  
my retinue. They greeted me  
with joy. I thanked them readily.  
They said, "We're glad your trip is done  
and glad to see you, every one.  
Where you had gone, we could not learn  
and we are pleased at your return."
- 1293           I thanked them for the joy expressed  
and sought a room where I could rest.  
I stayed three days, then led my band  
toward Austria, and in this land.  
For at St. Pölten had been set  
a tournament. I wished to get  
there with my half-a-dozen men.  
The messenger rode with me then.
- 1294           And as I passed along the road  
my pain became a heavy load.  
I spoke thus to the messenger,  
"If you should want to prove you were  
my friend I'd like to have you ride  
no longer with us by my side  
but to my lady kind and true.  
I ask this favor now of you.
- 1295           "Find out for me just how she feels  
and everything her mind reveals:  
if she's an enemy or friend,  
if she has plans to recommend,  
how I'm to come there in disguise  
and hide myself from curious eyes.  
Find out these things and what's her mood.  
I'll owe you deepest gratitude."
- 1296           "I'll go again since it's your will;  
God grant that I not serve you ill  
and that I find her well-inclined.  
I'll gladly tell you what's her mind,  
if she has blame for you or praise;  
I should be back in several days.  
Be gallant in the tournament  
for she'll discover how it went."



- 1297           He quickly rode from me to where  
                  he found my lady sweet and fair.  
                  She saw him and addressed him thus,  
                  "I'm glad to have you here with us.  
                  Now tell me honestly, good youth,  
                  and see you don't conceal the truth,  
                  how is your master making out  
                  and what did you come to talk about?"
- 1298           "My lady," he replied, "I know,  
                  if you'd be kind enough to show  
                  him favor he'd not feel so badly.  
                  God knows, you treat him pretty sadly  
                  (since I'm to tell what's true and right),  
                  for I have never seen a knight  
                  who ever loved a woman more  
                  than he loves, though his heart is sore.
- 1299           "I'll tell what happened here to him  
                  and how from woe his mind grew dim.  
                  Right after he had left this hall,  
                  while I was lowered down the wall  
                  suddenly I heard him cry,  
                  'Alas! Alas!' As soon as I  
                  got down I ran to him; his pain  
                  had made the man go quite insane.
- 1300           "It was a most distressing thing  
                  for he was just about to spring  
                  into the water. Were my wit  
                  not sharp enough to hinder it,  
                  he would have drowned before my eyes;  
                  I stopped him with some hurried lies.  
                  I gave him cheerful news from you  
                  which brought him to himself anew.
- 1302           "I counselled him to go and see  
                  where groom and horses then might be;  
                  we found them all where they had been.  
                  As we came back to them again  
                  I told him more things you had said,  
                  whatever came into my head.  
                  I told him you had made it clear,  
                  in twenty days he must be here.

- 1303            “I also told him that you bade  
me let him know your heart was sad  
since you had made him go away.  
I said, you couldn’t let him stay  
for fear a lady here might tell—  
the one you didn’t know so well;  
because of her you must be on  
your guard, but she would soon be gone.
- 1304            “Thus did I lie to him of you,  
I didn’t know what else to do  
because I feared that in despair  
he might do something foolish there  
which he could never more recall.  
But I must tell you once for all:  
if you continue so unkind  
to him, he soon may change his mind.
- 1306            “I must return to him and say  
what you intend without delay.  
For at St. Pölten he will be,  
where he will serve you gallantly.  
They have arranged a tournament  
and, in your service, he too went  
to prove he can be knightly still  
and honor you with strength and skill.”
- 1307            The good one spoke, “He should not carry  
so sad a look for were he merry  
he’d have more luck. I may be dumb  
but still I know what’s wearisome.  
No knight who has a mournful face  
will ever win a lady’s grace.  
Whene’er a woman is sad at heart  
because of love, you’ve not been smart.
- 1308            “What happened here made quite a show  
when he forgot his manners so  
that he should piteously cry out  
‘Alas! Alas!’ and really shout  
till he was heard. The watchman went  
down quickly from the battlement  
and through the castle halls to tell  
that he had heard the devil yell.

- 1309           “They had to ask him when and where.  
He spoke, ‘See, by the wall down there  
I heard the devil loudly roar,  
“Alas! Alas! Forever more.”  
The way he bounded to the lake  
was quite enough to make me quake  
but then I almost died of fright  
when his companion came in sight.’
- 1310           “And everywhere the watchman said,  
‘You should have seen the way he fled.  
He almost tore the rocks along,  
I can’t imagine what was wrong.  
I prayed that God would guard me well  
and bade the devil go to hell.  
I ne’er before was so aghast  
and never ever prayed so fast.’
- 1311           “Would you have ever thought your brave  
and valiant knight would so behave?  
Who lets his knighthood count so small  
is really not a man at all.  
How could this worthy knight go wailing  
just like a woman who is ailing;  
and, if he had been recognized,  
from that time on he’d been despised.”
- 1312           The courier answered, “I admit,  
he had a painful time of it.  
So clouded was his reasoning  
that life itself meant not a thing.  
He’d be already in his grave  
had I not managed then to save  
him with reports that I contrived,  
without which he’d have not survived.
- 1313           “I’ve never seen a love so strong  
and never known a knight to long  
so urgently as he for you;  
you can be sure that this is true.  
I know that he’s of such a mind  
that, if you are not soon more kind,  
he well may sicken in his prime  
and pass away before his time.”

- 1314           “Messenger, when you return,  
pray tell your lord, if he would earn  
my love then he must take for me  
a journey far across the sea.  
If God will bring him back again  
I promise you that I will then  
reward this knight so lovingly  
he'll have great joy because of me.
- 1316           “I'll give myself as his reward;  
no woman ever gave her lord  
or knight in truth a better pay  
than he'll receive. Now you must say:  
when he returns from this crusade  
as wages he'll at once be paid  
with me, and nothing shall he lack—  
and, after all, he may come back.”
- 1317           “I'll let him know of your request  
and I am sure he'll not protest.  
He's told me often heretofore  
that he could ask for nothing more  
than that you'd give him deeds to dare;  
of this I'm sure you were aware.  
He'll serve you now as in the past  
and faithfully while life shall last.”
- 1318           The page then left and went straight on  
to Wasserberg where I had gone  
after the tournament was through.  
A lot of spears were broke in two  
in honor of many a lady fair  
by the noble knights who gathered there.  
And quite a few of those who came  
won by their valor lasting fame.
- 1319           The messenger found me where I sat  
with other men. To have a chat  
we went where no one else was near.  
I spoke, “Now you must let me hear  
all that my lady fair commands  
and what to hope for at her hands.  
If she will grant me what is right  
my heart will once again be light.”

- 1320 He spoke, "I'll tell you what I heard.  
The noble lady sends you word  
that you have never earned the prize  
of love with deeds of any size.  
She wants that you go journeying  
to honor her. If God should bring  
you safely through the pilgrimage  
you'll get whate'er you want as wage.
- 1321 "The lady wishes you to fare  
across the sea. In truth, I swear,  
if you will do her will, she said,  
the trip will stand you in good stead.  
Indeed she promises to give  
herself as long as she may live,  
and what belongs to her alone  
you can dispose of as your own."
- 1322 I said, "Her wish shall be fulfilled  
and all besides she may have willed.  
There is no obstacle which I  
can't overcome and I shall die  
or earn myself a lover's pay,  
and this in such a knightly way  
that she at last in charity  
will grant a woman's love to me.
- 1323 "I'll do whatever she may ask,  
be it a great or little task.  
How glad I am that she's employed  
me as her knight! I'm overjoyed!  
There is no trip so long or hard  
I would not take for her regard  
and nothing else I wouldn't do.  
All that I've said, my friend, is true."
- 1324 He spoke, "I don't like this at all.  
You know, of course, there will befall  
you often pain and misery.  
If you should sail across the sea  
it well may be your death indeed  
and then might come the greatest need:  
that you'd lose out on paradise,  
which would be much too great a price.

- 1325            “No man should make a pilgrimage  
to win a lovely woman’s wage.  
We do this only for our Lord;  
He also gives us our reward.  
Who journeys for a woman’s pay  
and perishes along the way  
will surely find his soul is lost.  
You must consider, sir, the cost.”
- 1326            I answered him, “God is so good,  
with sympathetic fatherhood,  
and such a noble, lofty mind.  
Who serves with honor womankind  
need never fear that He’ll object.  
He wants that we should not neglect  
to serve them; that is His design.  
This is the truth, O friend of mind.
- 1328            “Forever more shall I be glad  
that my so lovely lady bade  
me take the trip in her employ  
for I have served her since a boy  
without her thanking me a bit.  
If I should hesitate with it—  
now that my lady’s given me  
a task—’t would seem quite cowardly.”
- 1329            “Since you’re to follow her request  
(although I do not think it best)  
send someone now and tell her so.  
She’ll be delighted, as I know.  
I’ll gladly be your messenger  
for I’ve been well received by her.  
The lady’s temperament is such,  
this news will please her very much.”
- 1332            I left him and it wasn’t long  
till I’d composed another song.  
I rhymed a little book beside  
and in its verses I replied  
that her command would be obeyed.  
More loving verse has ne’er been made  
than that I put into this book  
in which my lady was to look.

- 1333           With song and booklet he bestrode  
                  his horse and speedily he rode  
                  to bring them to my lady fair.  
                  He got a hearty welcome there.  
                  She spoke, "Good youth, tell me, I pray  
                  does he intend to earn his pay  
                  by going to that distant land  
                  and thus fulfilling my command?"
- 1334           "He sends me, lady, here to you.  
                  His heart's desire is just to do  
                  you service; nothing will he shun  
                  and everything be gladly done.  
                  He's ready for the pilgrimage—  
                  for this I'll pledge my soul as gage—  
                  and is quite happy. It is plain,  
                  no task he does for you is pain.
- 1335           "He sent to you, my lady dear,  
                  by me this little booklet here  
                  and sent a song, both new and gay.  
                  He asked me when I rode away  
                  to put them both into your hand.  
                  The booklet lets you understand,  
                  he'll make the journey 'cross the sea  
                  for you with constant loyalty."
- 1337           She took them and when she had read  
                  all that the little booklet said  
                  she found it pleased her very well.  
                  And this is why I now can tell  
                  you that my lady good and wise  
                  read with bright and shining eyes  
                  without delay and greatly cheered  
                  the page on which the song appeared.
- 1338           When she had read it to the end  
                  she went at once back to my friend  
                  and spoke, "I always shall accord  
                  my thanks, and rightly, to your lord  
                  because he thinks so well of me  
                  that he will do and eagerly  
                  whate'er I ask. That does him good  
                  and I'll reward him as I should.

- 1339           “Ask of him that he prepare  
to make the journey and with care  
so that when I shall let him know  
he will be ready and can go.  
I want to see your lord again  
and will arrange a time ere then.  
He needn't be concerned thereby;  
as I'm a woman, it's no lie.”
- 1341           He left the lady and returned,  
but I had travelled on, he learned.  
'T was in Vienna that he found  
me where I'd gone to look around.  
I saw there many a pretty maid  
and lovely lady, well arrayed,  
and thoroughly enjoyed the sight;  
it makes one's heart feel warm and light.
- 1342           When I beheld the messenger  
I welcomed him and asked of her.  
He let me know without delay  
all that she wanted him to say.  
I was prepared for nothing less  
and did not lack in faithfulness.  
It pleased me so that she'd consent  
to see me once before I went.
- 1345           In tournaments the summer through  
I jousted and it's surely true  
that I had tied my helmet on  
a lot of times ere it was gone.  
With tilts I served my lady fair  
most willingly and everywhere  
until the winter came once more  
and all the tourneying was o'er.
- 1346           “Good Lord, when will it be,” I thought,  
“till she for whom I've often fought  
sends me the message I await?  
How am I going to know the state  
after these months of her regard?  
To wait around is pretty hard;  
I'd like to hear from her somehow—  
would God, a messenger came now!”



1349 She had somebody go and find  
my messenger and was so kind  
to quickly send him on to me;  
he told me all and faithfully.  
The message that he brought was such  
that I'm afraid I'll say too much  
and so I'll stop ere something slips  
for chivalry must close my lips.

1350 But that which afterwards befell  
is something I'm allowed to tell.  
The lady said, I shouldn't take  
the distant journey for her sake;  
the virtuous and lovely dear  
wanted me to stay right here.  
My lover's sorrow now was gone—  
and then the summer too came on.

1351 My heart was happy and at ease;  
I sang two summer melodies,  
a march and then another song.  
I'd been an orphan for so long  
but joy can make the spirit whole—  
I felt it in me, and my soul  
could barely hold its secret bliss.  
Now hear! The verses go like this:

#### THE SIXTEENTH IS A MARCH

He who with honor would pass the time gaily,  
would know true delight and enjoy himself daily  
should faithfully serve a fair lady of station  
for love's compensation.  
Its sweetness and splendor  
will only surrender  
to those kind and tender.

Who courts as a knight and hopes for successes  
must give heart and hand and the goods he possesses,  
but love will reward him with wealth beyond measure,  
so great is her treasure.  
She honors, appeases  
her pupil and eases  
his care as she pleases.

Knighthood demands both good manners and daring,  
dishonor, deceit, and its fellows forswearing,  
for God can't endure in his service the babble  
of such wretched rabble.  
His men must endeavor  
to find honor ever  
and infamy never.

Malice and coarseness, ill nature and scheming  
to neither the shield nor the helmet is seeming,  
for knighthood's a roof that no evil can cover.  
Its glance shall discover  
the honorless, fearful,  
the frightened, half-tearful  
where brave men are cheerful.

High-minded ladies, remember with favor  
the faithful companion whose heart will not waver.  
Love him in your thoughts and with all your affection  
that thus your protection  
may keep with the power  
of love him each hour  
from griefs that devour.

Through no fault of mine is the lady offended,  
though I am her knight and for her have contended.  
And now for protection from anger and sorrow  
no shield can I borrow  
but one: I still love her  
and think kindly of her.  
None else is above her.

I'll battle with patience her warlike resistance,  
opposing her anger with guileless insistence.  
Protected because I am faithful and loyal,  
all falsehood I'll foil.  
My battle attire  
against her dread fire  
is constant desire.

1352            Singing this song with heart so light  
                  that summer many a gallant knight  
                  went jousting, that was their way of life;  
                  they served their ladies with this strife.  
                  Believe me when I say to you,  
                  there were tournaments the summer through  
                  in every country, here and there.  
                  I didn't miss a one, I swear.

1360            The summer was very summery  
                  and full of summer gaiety.  
                  It grew in summer's strength and power  
                  but still was squandered, hour by hour,  
                  for ladies with chivalric sport.  
                  The noble knights of every court  
                  used up their weapons tourneying  
                  as if the spears weren't worth a thing.

1361            That summer the lady did to me  
                  an awful thing. If it might be  
                  a knight could tell to you this tale  
                  the honest folks would help him wail  
                  that a lady could ever so offend  
                  and wound her faithful knight and friend.  
                  Her action was so mean and small  
                  I never could lament it all.

1362            When with hoarfrost, cold and keen,  
                  the fall destroyed the forest green  
                  and when the heath had lost its gay  
                  attire which it had donned in May  
                  of flowers—every hue and kind—  
                  and when the summer had declined  
                  and stealthily had fled away,  
                  I sang this melancholy lay:

## THE TWENTIETH DANCE TUNE

You noble ladies, so refined and lovely, take my part;  
before you all do I accuse the mistress of my heart  
for she has robbed me so of joy and left me only pain  
that because of her I must evermore complain.

I grieve that she'll not recognize my service, as is right,  
although I've served her long and truly like a faithful knight.  
That she is praised so highly everywhere by many a tongue  
is because I've spread her fame with the songs I've sung.

I charge my lady with committing theft and robbery,  
for it is robbery and theft (what other could it be?)  
that she should seize my happiness without declaring war  
and deprive my heart of joys, all for evermore.

I say she is a robber and is guilty of a theft  
so great I'll ne'er replace the things of which I am bereft.  
If she should give me back enjoyment, which she can and may,  
yet imagine what I've lost: many a lovely day.

Because of her I suffer more than I can tell or share  
from agonizing, yearning pangs which secretly I bear.  
Alas! Alas, that she was born to cause me such distress,  
she whose love I most of all wanted to possess.

Were I not silenced by good manners and by hopes of love,  
Then you'd believe, because of all the things she robbed me of  
(should I reveal my longing heart and give each crime a name),  
that the color of her face would turn red with shame.

If anyone can reconcile us this would please me so  
I'd not be angry anymore nor burdened down with woe,  
no one would hear me say of her a word of censure then  
and, what'er she later does, this, at least, has been.

- 1363           When my lady heard this song  
                  she wouldn't try to right the wrong  
                  but did a thing which hurt a lot  
                  though I shall never tell you what.  
                  Even today and more and more  
                  with suffering my heart is sore;  
                  I won't reveal the reason why  
                  but keep her secret till I die.
- 1364           Alas, that she would do this thing!  
                  Alas, that I should ever sing  
                  of her in anger as I've done,  
                  so that long after many a one  
                  condemned this book and also me  
                  who did not know the cruelty  
                  with which my honest love was spurned,  
                  nor with what deeds my wrath was earned.
- 1365           Since she continued these affronts  
                  I gave up serving her at once  
                  and turned away both mind and heart.  
                  Who from long service does not part  
                  when one gives no reward, nor can,  
                  is really quite a foolish man.  
                  My service went for nought or less—  
                  I sang this song in bitterness:

#### THE TWENTY-FIRST DANCE TUNE

O to lose and to regret  
that which I cannot forget  
evermore!  
Joy and all my better days—  
gone with melancholy lays.  
Wounded sore,  
I must bear  
life given o'er to grieving care:  
death is less  
than such distress.

There my service was to be  
with such constant loyalty  
through the years.  
Still no pay will she accord  
and no prospect of reward.  
O my tears!  
O! and O!  
Had I hopes, as long ago,  
I could then  
laugh again.

She once filled me with delight  
when she let me be her knight  
and for life.  
I did not complain a bit  
at that time, I must admit  
without strife.  
But so small  
is the thanks which she lets fall  
that we're poor —  
both — that's sure.

Many years, I see with pain,  
I have squandered all in vain  
for someone  
who can never fully pay  
me for just a single day  
that is done,  
since her mind  
is no more so good and kind  
as when she  
conquered me.

She was beautiful and true,  
she was lovely through and through  
when I chose  
her to be the lady fair  
whom I honored everywhere,  
as she knows.  
Then her name  
was exalted without shame;  
later on  
thanks was gone.

1366            Thus she discovered from this song  
                 that, though I'd served her well and long,  
                 I would not serve her anymore.  
                 Alas for this! Alas therefor,  
                 that she should deal to me the blow  
                 for which I'd have to leave her so  
                 and that it ever might occur  
                 to me to speak so ill of her.

1367            Now tell me if you think I had  
                 good reason to be very sad  
                 that I could not be reconciled  
                 to one I'd worshipped as a child.  
                 I had to tell her thanklessness  
                 though I'd have suffered less distress  
                 if I had perished, I believe.  
                 Such loss and pain was mine to grieve.

1368            No gracious ladies, I know well,  
                 will censure me because I tell  
                 how much my lady did me ill.  
                 If it depended on my will  
                 to keep it secret that I'd do.  
                 No one should claim that I'm untrue.  
                 She well deserves that I have turned  
                 from her; it's what her deeds have earned.

1376            I did not scold her anymore  
                 nor did I serve her as before,  
                 and after what she did to me  
                 I was a while quite lady-free  
                 down to the bottom of my heart.  
                 But I could not neglect my art  
                 nor leave off singing women's praise.  
                 I sang of love and happy days:

## THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DANCE TUNE

In the warm and fragrant Maytime  
when the woods are dressed in green  
through the happy hours of daytime  
all that loves in pairs is seen.  
Every heart is filled with bliss  
and the spring was made for this.

Loving pairs in pleasant hours  
soon are free from all distress;  
in the hearts of both there flowers  
all the season's happiness.  
Sorrow love cannot abide  
when two loves are side by side.

When two loving hearts are plighted  
faithfully without deceit,  
when the two are so united  
that their love must be complete,  
they are joined by God to capture  
all that life can hold of rapture.

Constant love is *minne*. Truly  
love and *minne* are the same.  
I cannot distinguish duly  
ought between them but the name  
nor can tell the two apart.  
Love is *minne* in my heart.

Find a heart that does not vary,  
constant love and constant mind,  
then with grief you can be merry.  
Constant love is good and kind  
and to constant hearts will give  
constant pleasure while they live.

If I ever found enduring  
love then I would surely be  
always loyal, with it curing  
all the cares that come to me.  
Faithless love will never do,  
I must find a love that's true.





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