The Holy Grail.

A DISCRIMINATION OF THE NATIVE AND FOREIGN ELEMENTS OF THE LEGEND.

Part I.—Early History.

The story of the Grail has two parts, one called *Joseph of Arimathea*, or *Li romanz de l'estoire dou Graal*, or generally, "The Early History"; the other, which is by some considered the earlier of the two in respect of origin, *The Quest of the Grail*. The earliest extant version of the Quest, called *Li Contes del Graal*, is dated variously between 1175 and 1182, and of the Early History, *Li romanz de l'estoire dou Graal* by De Borron, the earliest known text is assigned to the end of the century. Without debating the question of priority, we will begin our enquiry in the natural order, that is with the Early History; first making a few necessary observations on the name by which the whole story is generally known.

What ought to be understood by "Grail" is as difficult to determine as is the origin of the story which tells of it. According to most, grail is a dish or vessel of the type of basin, but one learned commentator maintained that it was a book, *gradale*=gradual, a service book. Robert De Borron, who wrote his *Romanz* about the year 1200, says the Grail was the vessel in which Joseph of Arimathea gathered up the blood Christ shed upon the Cross, and that Christ had

used the same vessel at the house of Simon for the institution of the Sacrament. When Jesus was taken the house was looted—

> "Leenz eut un veissel mout gent,
> Où Criz feisoit son sacrement;
> Un Juis le veissel trouva
> Chiés Symon," etc.,
>
> vv. 394-7.

and the Genoese, who supposed they had acquired this precious memorial of the Supper, called it *sacro catino*, to which name the word "grail" fairly corresponds in some MSS. and in Du Cange. The latter has "*Gradale*, Catino species, pro *grasale*. Inter vasa mensaria seu utensilia coquinae annumeratur in charta ann. 1263," and "*Grasala, grasale*, vasis genus, ex ligno, terrâ, metalove, non unius notionis; occurrit enim pro vase rotundo largiore ac minus profundo." The diminutive *gradaletto* remained in use in Italy as a general name for table-ware till the fourteenth century, for it is so used in the Italian version of the story:[1] "Tutte le scodelle e gli gradaletti de Dinadan erano nuove e belle." Another form of the name is *Sang Real*, which, if a corruption, shows at least what was at one time the belief concerning this relic. The MS. edited by Furnivall for the Roxburghe Club is entitled *Seynt Graal or the Sank Ryal*; it is a version of the Early History. Helinandus, writing in 1220 *circa*, while recognising the domestic uses of the vessel called grail, endeavours to give a spiritual sense to the word. He says "*Gradalis* aut *gradale* gallice dictur scutella lata et aliquantulum profonda in quae preciosae dapes divitibus solent apponi *gradatim* unus morsellus post alium in diversis ordinibus; . . . . Dicitur et

[1] *La Tavola Ritonda*, vol. i, p. 273, MS. of the fourteenth century, printed at Bologna, 1865.

vulgari nomine *greal*, quia grata et acceptabilis est in ea comedenti"; and this was a favourite explanation. The *Grand St. Graal*, written about the time when Helinandus made that note, says of Nasciens that, "being shown the vessel wherein was Christ's blood, he thought that never was anything to be compared with it for excellence; for whereas nothing he had seen before but somewhat displeased him (li degraast) this pleased him entirely (li grée)."[1]

This will be enough to show how uncertain was the opinion about this "vessel" at the time when the stories are said to have been made. No one at the time seemed to know whether the Grail, about which he wrote, was dish or cup, whether it was a vessel only, or a vessel containing the Precious Blood shed on Calvary. There is agreement, however, in ranking it above all memorials of the Passion, which the Church was reputed to possess; and surely, the Cup which Christ's own hands had held at the Institution, or the Dish in which He had dipped at the Supper, could not have been exceeded in sanctity by any other relics of His life on earth, and, if any portion of the Divine blood had been preserved with either, the tremendous importance of the possession would have been unspeakable.

When we think of this it will appear more strange that any uncertainty should have existed as to the precise nature of the relic; we shall have to reconsider the circumstances, to see that the obscurity surrounding it is natural. It lies in the detachment of the first Christians from all material things. Living in constant expectation of the second coming of their Lord, all phenomena of His earthly life and of their own were disregarded, so that it

[1] Alfred Nutt, *Studies in the Holy Grail*, analysis of the *Grand St. Graal*.

was not until this first state of expectancy had given way that the Church began to regard its own history more closely, and to preserve its monuments.

Whether, then, the Dish and the Cup of the Last Supper were ever used again by the first disciples in their solemn commemorations, or whether they were thought too sacred for use, we shall never know; but we may presume the Church had not yet begun to venerate any such memorials. We hear nothing of the relics of Stephen, nor of the place where the body was laid. A century later Justin Martyr also suffered and was buried, and the place of his sepulture is equally unknown. What we call relics are evidences of later date, and of a more systematic persecution. When suffering became the badge of a christian, the Church consoled herself by making trophies of the bodies of her martyrs. The *cultus* thus began. Garments torn by wild beasts, sponges dipped in blood, were exhibited at the tombs when the anniversaries came round, and were affectionately and reverently kissed by the crowds passing through the cemeteries. At first, probably, such relics were the property of relatives only, and not until private interests diminished did the Church acquire her full right; but with the success of Constantine came also the triumphs of the martyrs. The magnificent basilicas erected over their tombs brought crowds of pilgrims, and the memorial churches grew in wealth and beauty by their offerings. The possession of relics became a source of prosperity to City as well as Church; all relics were eagerly demanded, but especially those of the first days, and, of these whatever might recall the Life or the Passion of our Lord. The Holy Places of Palestine began to be visited; the mother of the Emperor was one of the first pilgrims, and to her was vouchsafed the discovery of the Cross, and of other relics of the Passion. Further discoveries were constantly

expected.[1] Portraits of Christ were demanded, and though the more prudent doctors declared that none existed, or ought to exist, it was not long before the curiosity of the ladies of the Court was satisfied. At first was produced the portrait made by Christ himself on the napkin of Veronica, then under its supreme sanction others, reported to have been painted by St. Luke. Nothing, finally, belonging to Christ's ministry on earth, but found its illustration—from the cradle of Bethlehem to the prints of the feet on the Mount of Olives. This being so, it is not to be supposed that the greatest, the most precious relic of all, would be wanting. If the blood of the meanest of God's servants had been treasured, was it credible that the piety of the "beloved disciple" or of Joseph, who took upon himself the last duties of the dead, had failed to preserve for the Church that most precious blood of the Divine Master? The imagination of those days would not have tolerated so great a neglect. In the fifth century Germanus visited the tomb of St. Alban and took away some of the earth supposed to be stained with the blood of the Martyr.[2] In the sixth century, Gregory of Tours tells how a certain Gallic matron returned from Judea *in the first century* with a shell full of the blood of John the Baptist, then recently murdered by Herod.[3] In the seventh century the earth soaked with the blood of Oswald, who fell at Maserfield, A.D. 642,[4] was religiously preserved.

[1] The Bordeaux Pilgrim, who arrived at Jerusalem about seven years later than the Empress, found already certain sites established, which had not been recognised in her time, viz., the House of Caiaphas, "where is the pillar of Christ's scourging"; the House of Peter, the Little Hill of Golgotha, "the Crypt where our Lord's body was laid."—Beazley, *Modern Geography*, vol. i.

[2] Constantius, *De Vita Germani*, cap. vi.

[3] *De Gloria Martyrum*, cap. 12.

[4] Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*

Such like instances are unmistakable. They show what would have been the feeling against Joseph if it could have been believed that this Holy relic had been lost to the Church by his fault. True, the blood was not openly shown, but that would not have hindered the belief in its existence somewhere; it might have been supposed hidden during time of persecution, to be one day revealed. Such like beliefs were common. The *Book of the Penitence of Adam* tells of "the Cave of Treasures", where were preserved the gold of Paradise, the myrrh and the incense, which *Adam had taken away with him*, to be offered one day to the infant Saviour by the Magi.[1]

Renan, commenting on this, remarks that the belief in the existence of this cavern was widespread in the East.[2] It is more difficult, in the presence of these beliefs, to suppose that a tradition of the existence of the Precious Blood did *not* exist than that it did, but it is true that an opinion contrary to this was also held, and that there were pious and learned persons to whom the idea was distasteful. Theodosius, writing also in the sixth century, says:— "There are indeed some persons who affirm that every part of the true cross which touched the naked body of the Lord and was stained with His blood, was caught up to heaven straightway from all human touch and sight, and that it will at last appear in the Day of Judgment."[3] It was argued also that, since Christ had ascended into Heaven, every part of His human body must have been taken thither, and that nothing pertaining to it remained. To many people the popular belief would appear the more reasonable; but that was peculiarly an age of marvels, and

[1] Migne, vol. xxiii, col. 290.

[2] *Journal Asiatique*, 5th series, vol. ii, p. 427.

[3] *De Terra Sancta*, Trans. by Dr. Bernard for the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1891.

no *natural* difficulty would have been considered on one side or the other; we may conclude that the prevailing belief would have been that which corresponded best with popular sentiment, and what evidence there is goes to support that. In 1204 Dandolo sent to Venice, after the taking of Constantinople, a portion of earth stained with blood, said to have been taken from the place where the Cross had stood, but whether preserved by the care of Joseph of Arimathea, or discovered later, is not said, nor is it known how long the relic had been in possession of the Emperors. In 1150, a few drops of the Precious Blood were presented by Count Theodore of Flanders to the town of Bruges, and the "Chapel of the Holy Blood" was built for the care and exposition of the relic. Other portions also were brought from the East by Crusaders, and are still in certain Treasuries on the Continent. Richard, Earl of Cornwall, presented part of the same holy relic to the church of Hailes, in Gloucestershire, and to the Abbey of Ashridge, in Hertfordshire. Of the existence of these before the twelfth century nothing perhaps is known; pilgrims do not mention the Holy Blood, but they did not visit Constantinople, and what remained of this was, possibly, in the custody of the Emperors only, with whom also the other great memorials of the Passion were deposited: the Crown of Thorns, the sponge, one of the nails (the others formed part of the Crown of Lombardy, and the sword of Charlemagne). The spear remained at Jerusalem, and is mentioned by Pilgrims. Theodosius describes it as still to be seen in the Church of Golgotha, where it "shone by night as the sun by day". Antonius, a pilgrim, saw there also the cup (of onyx) which the Lord blessed at the Supper; this was about 570 A.D. The invasion of Chosroës in 614 would have led to the hiding of all relics, and some may have

may have been the "upper-room" at Jerusalem, where companies of more than nine sometimes supped together, and where also less state was used, a thick bolster (*torus, pulvinus*) took the place of the three couches. This was laid on the ground, or on a low platform, and almost encircled the *mensa*. Because of its shape when so laid, C (that of the Greek S), it was called *sigma*. The feasters lay outside the *sigma* on the ground, or on a carpet, and supported the body on the cushion and the left elbow; each guest was thus able to reach the dish with his right hand. This circular grouping must have been the arrangement of the twelve who ate the Last Supper with their Lord. There can be no doubt of this whatever. It is equally certain that in this way, and no other, Arthur must have messed in camp with the British chiefs; but some proofs of this may be asked, seeing that, in the romances, the round-table is sometimes spoken of as a very substantial piece of furniture at which the knights sat. In the twelfth century the change from the recumbent position to the upright had been made, and a misunderstanding of what had been formerly the custom, was very natural. Tables, in the modern sense, were by that time in use in all civilized countries, and the difficulty of attaching any but the common meaning to the word would have been very great; it was increased, moreover, by the acceptation of *mensa* as the equivalent Latin.

The Roman fashion of reclining at meat had certainly not been abolished in the fifth century, when the last legion left Britain. Illustrations of the sixth century show us that both in court and camp the old custom was maintained. In the Ambrosian Library is a pictured MS. of the *Iliad*, of the sixth century; the Greek chieftains are represented feeding on the plain, or eating their evening meal; they recline on the *sigma* in groups of three or four.

The Abimelech and Pharaoh scenes of the Vienna "Genesis" of about the same date, show that the fashion of reclining at meals was still observed at Court; but here the *mensa* has become a semi-circular table and the *pulvinus* a couch fitted closely to the rounded part. In the church of S. Apollinare in Classe at Ravenna, is a mosaic of the Last Supper, where the disciples recline at a table very like those in the Vienna MS.; the mosaic is of the sixth century. In the same century, Antoninus of Placentia was shown at Cana "the very couch" on which Jesus reclined at the wedding feast; not a picture this, but the substantial "bed", and proof, therefore, that the custom of reclining still held not only in Syria but in Italy, for Antoninus does not speak of it as strange or antiquated.

Now, these illustrations cover the time when the living Arthur had his "table" in Britain. He succeeded to a Roman post, he was possibly of Roman origin, and his customs were doubtless those of a Roman general. We may take those pictures in the Ambrosian *Iliad*, of the Greeks under the walls of Troy, as very fair evidence of what might have been seen in a British camp in the fifth century. The Vienna MS. shows us the utmost state the Dux Britanniæ might have exhibited in his feasts at York. If, however, examples of the Celtic custom of the time be preferred, we must turn to Ireland, where Roman influence was least felt. There we find remains of what are called *Fullocht Fionns*, or Fenian hearths; they were sometimes paved for supporting a fire, sometimes dug out and lined with stout planks, which are embedded in close marl or clay, presumably for boiling water by means of hot stones. Where a fire was made, the flesh might be broiled, or fried, or a caldron would be used for seething.

Very fine caldrons have been found in Ireland, and the tales of the country record some famous ones. Arthur

made an expedition to Anwfn to obtain for himself a celebrated caldron. The caldron of the Dagda we shall speak of later. These "hearths", where the meat was cooked, were apparently feasting places also; we presume this because of the mound of earth surrounding each one, horseshoe like—the universal *torus* or *sigma*.[1]

Turning from camp to palace, we have the description of the "mead hall" of Conchobar at Emain, which was ordered, as we are told, upon the pattern of the great palace of Tara. It had nine "beds", *i.e.*, *triclinia*. The "bed" of the king was in the "forefront" of the hall, it had a ceiling of silver with pillars of bronze.[2] Under this canopy (daïs) he feasted with his twelve "chariot chiefs". There is obviously no essential difference between the Roman fashions and these; either the ring round the *mensa* or the more stylish "bed" was the rule.

It is believed that the custom of sitting at meat, whether on bench or chair, though not without its examples in the ancient world, was in its domestic and everyday obser-

[1] See W. G. Wood-Martin, *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland*, 1902, vol. i, pp. 121 *et seq.* As part of this subject, the *Brudins* or wayside hostels of ancient Erin ought to be mentioned; they were free to all, and food and shelter were given. The *Brudin Da Derga* was the most famous, its caldron was always simmering. From the fact that these Brudins never failed to entertain the wayfarer may have arisen the fable of the inexhaustible or magic caldrons. It is perhaps to the closing of these hostels that the prologue of the *Conte* refers, where it laments for the good old time, when "the rich land of Logres was full of springs which harboured damsels who fed the wayfarer with meat and pasties and bread." It should have been said that the *Fullocht Fionns* and the Brudins are always found near water courses—"wherever a well or spring develops into a good sized rivulet."

[2] This suggests a four-poster, but it was not exactly that; the translator calls it a "compartment", but admits that bed is the literal word, perhaps *exedra* would be a fair rendering. See the *Cuchullin Saga*, Grimm Library, Nutt, 1898, p. 57.

vance, Teutonic. If so, it would not have got into vogue in countries where Roman fashions were practised until respect for the Roman name had been lost. The Franks may have begun the revolution in Gaul and the Normans completed it. They at least brought it to Wales. In the twelfth century, still, the Welsh ate sitting on the ground on bundles of hay or sedges, over which a cover of some sort was spread. The story of Owen shows Arthur seated on such a cushion in his own hall, and in the lives of the Welsh Saints are frequent evidences that the ancient custom still prevailed in Wales in their time:—"Qui nichil aut modicum habet in penum quod opponat *discumbentibus*", and "circa modium cervisiæ ordinatim *in modum circuli* illud circumdando *discubuerunt*."[1] These will suffice to prove that the modern "table" was unknown in Wales at the time of our Story. Giraldus says, moreover, the Welsh "had no tables" even in his time, 1188, the date of the *peregrinatio*. It is certain, then, that by "round table" must be understood *the circle of the guests*, not any piece of furniture whatever. San Marte suggests this in his preface to the *Seynt Graal*, without, however, offering proofs; he was acute enough to perceive some *équivoque* in the name.

Now, there was only one moment when the name "round table" could have come into use, and this was just as the new fashion of sitting to meat at a "board" (Scandinavian *bord*=plank, *tabula*) was getting itself established. The "board" was usually long, extending down the hall on either side, with seats against the walls; or it was set athwart at the upper end for the master of the feast, the king or lord. The "high-seat", with canopy or *daïs*, was first placed at the end of the hall, in Norway, in

[1] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Descriptio Kamb.*, Bk. i, ch. 10. *Mabinogion*, Story of "Owain, or the Lady of the Fountain." Rees, *Cambro-British Saints*, Life of St. Brynach, p. 12; Life of St. Cadoc, p. 45.

the time of Olaf the Quiet, 1066-93,[1] in France perhaps earlier.

In the *Bernward Gospels*, of the eleventh century, the Last Supper is represented as being eaten at a long table; sometime in that century then, and perhaps as early as the tenth, the antique *mensa* had become a table; and the name "round table" would have been given as well to the half round table (at first with a semi-circular bed for reclining, afterwards with seats), as to the more ancient *torus*, wherever the more ancient use of sitting or lying on the ground was maintained. During the time of transition only could the "table" of Arthur have been called "round table", for before the change began *tabula* had no meaning as applied to the apparatus for feasting, and later, in the twelfth century say, when the vestiges of ancient custom had been lost, Arthur's "table" could only have been imagined as like the usual high-table of the day; just as the Last Supper was supposed by mediæval painters to have been eaten at the same high-table. The name *Round Table* then is a sign of a certain antiquity, of a time of transition, when the ancient use of Rome and the civilised world was giving way to the fashions introduced by Franks and Northmen.

Arthur's *mensa*, or *mwys*, or *callawr* or whatever may have been the word which had to be exchanged for *table* when tables became fashionable, had probably never ceased to be a subject of boasting and regret to his compatriots. Their last great leader was best remembered by his campaigns, and not least, we may imagine, by the songs and shouts of his champions as they feasted with him after a battle. In after days of disunion and disaster, Arthur's

[1] *Heimskringla*, X, ii, and cf. the *Eyrbyggya Saya*, Morris and Magnusson, 1892, p. 269.

camp fire would become a memory and also a symbol of victory, and when, under pressure of the Saxons; the wretched Cymry found themselves crowded into a poor mountainous country, Arthur's caldron would become, in their stories, an inexhaustible vessel, magical, like the mythic caldron of Gwyddno. What memory of Arthur popular rhymes have preserved is precisely of his table:

"When good King Arthur ruled this land," &c.

But Arthur was also Grail King; he would therefore have another table, also round, but of more ceremonious decking. We may see this table to-day as it may have been imagined, before the eleventh century, in MSS. where the Last Supper is depicted. Christ sits at a half round table, not as at first *in cornu sinistro* (to the left of one looking at the straight side of it), but *in the middle of the round*, the Apostles on either hand, "en virunt et en coste", as says the poem of "The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne"; just as the Bishop sat in church with his clergy.[1]

Such, shortly, is the history of the transformations which changed the almost universal *mensa* and *triclinia*, or the *stibadium* with its *torus*, into the long table with seats. Some steps have been omitted so as not to burden this paper with details, but, broadly, the course was as indicated: first, the adoption of the sitting posture, either on cushions on the ground or on *subsellia*; then, when the tables became long, chairs, faldstools, or benches. During the same time the "table" was being modified as follows:

[1] The position of the bishop's seat in the middle of the curve of the apse, of very ancient adoption, no doubt led to the variation in the placing of Christ and his Apostles in pictures of the Last Supper, which began in the sixth century. Cf. Fleury, *La Messe*. The *Rossano* MS. of the same century places them as does the mosaic of Ravenna.

the *mensa* was increased in size and height and was made half round to correspond with the closely-fitting "bed", then seats were adapted to the *mensa*; this became the table of the master of the feast and his principal guests, and in church, the altar, round which sat the clergy with their bishop; in the lower part of the hall other guests and the "family" of the Lord had small tables at which they sat in groups, often in twos; or they sat on the ground round a great platter, lifted, perhaps, above the floor by short legs, as the Japanese *zen*. The small tables were readily placed and carried away; they were probably set on trestles. Then came the long tables, at first removable also, and finally "dormant". There was little difference at first between the ordering of a feast in hall and the disposition of the messes in camp. King Mangons and a hundred companions camp near a spring—

> "Et quant bien l'orent conréé (corné?)
> Les tables misent, si s'assist
> Li rois si com lui plot, et sist
> A son dois, et tout environ
> S'assisent li. C. compagnon."
>
> *Conte*, vv. 38588-92.

At a meeting of the Round Table the knights are described in the same *Conte*—

> "Assis partout, si com il durent
> Au dois et as tables *par tière*";
>
> v. 1588.

and in another place

> "S'assist li rois
> Lassus *amont* al mestre dois."
>
> v. 21912.

where it is plain that "tables" is used for the more ancient *mensae, mwysau, missoria*, set on the ground, unless we assume that tables and trestles were carried for a hundred people, and faldstools also; but the expression *par tière* scarcely allows of any other interpretation than that of

sitting on the ground. The half-round table, *dois*, for the King, is abundantly represented in MSS.[1]

We now understand how it happened, that while the Trouvères were repeating stories of the Grail, in which the feasters are described as sitting *par tière*, they also imagined a round table big enough to seat five hundred knights. The beginnings of the story were inherited, and they were repeated with reasonable accuracy by the French writers, but as the tale grew in their hands they had to work it out as they might. The number of the "companions" of the table increased from twelve to twelve score, and then they were reckoned by hundreds, and for all these the supposed table had to be enlarged. The Trouvères were thus brought to imagine a monstrosity, but they had for it a certain authority in the *Estoire*; the table which Joseph dressed for believers in the Grail was a circle on the grass, which, according to the number of communicants, would be greater or less; it would be easily adjusted, but always the table was full—

> "Dou peuple assist une partie
> Li autre ne s'assistront mie
> La taule (table) *toute pleinne estoit*
> Fors le liu qui pleins ne pooit
> Estre;"
>
> *De Borron*, vv. 2559-63.

If all had sat it would have been only full, just the same, the one place excepted.

And now we come to speak of this one place, *le liu vuit*, which is so important a feature in the Table of the Grail and the Round Table equally; which is indeed the same place, the two tables being one.

The "high-seat" in the hall was that of the King or

[1] *Miniature sacre e profane dell'anno* 1023. Monte Cassino. Westwood, *Palaeographia Sacra Pictoria.*

Master, it was left empty in his absence and at his death, and could only be filled again after death by his son, or by his elected successor. The seat would remain vacant in case a young son inherited, until his coming of age, and anyone daring in the meantime to occupy it, would have looked to be rudely expelled. Leading up to, and placing in the high-seat was formal investiture. The practice in the case of bishops and their seat in church was the same: between the death of one bishop and the institution of another the "see" was vacant. The Table of the Grail was established "in semblance and remembrance of the first", viz., of that at which Christ had eaten with His Apostles. At this table the place of Christ could only be filled by His legitimate representative. De Borron did not understand that, he thought the vacant place was that of Judas.

"Qui par folie
De nostre compeignie eissi."
v. 2529.

He was confused, perhaps, by the presence of Joseph, who may have seemed to him the proper president, and he rightly was, so soon as this part of Joseph's history had been invented; but the Grail is older than the story of Joseph of Arimathea, and when that was taken in hand to give a logical foundation to the belief in the existence of the Precious Blood, the Table of the Grail with its one vacant seat was already in existence. De Borron was right in making Joseph the visible president during his life, and in assuming therefore that an empty seat would be that of an Apostle, but he might have suspected some confusion if he had regarded more closely the story he tells, for it makes Moses ambitious of the office of Leader. This is part of another story, where Peter, the vicegerent of Christ, is assailed by Moses, who thinks himself entitled to the place. De Borron did not like to exclude this inci-

dent, but Joseph was the necessary Leader, the first of the series of Grail-keepers and heroes to which Perceval and Galahad belong, and he could only make a vacant place by supposing that of Judas had not been filled.

The punishment of Moses was a frightful example; henceforth the *liu vuit* becomes the *siége perilleux* of the romances. It had been the seat of Christ reserved for His second coming, it was now the seat of the "Good Knight", who should preside in His name, and let all usurpers beware.

A contemporary illustration will show exactly what was understood of this *liu vuit*; it is from the poem of "The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne," written early in the second half of the eleventh century.[1] At that time, when pilgrimages were general, and a visit to the Holy Sepulchre the ambition of every brave and pious soul, it was not permissible that the great Emperor should have done less than the best, so a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was imagined for him also, and he is supposed to go thither with his peers. When he arrived he went straight to the "Temple", where, in the sanctuary, were the seats of Christ and his Apostles; that of Christ carefully "sealed", to guard it from profane intrusion. It was believed that here He had instituted His sacrament—

> "Dieu i chantait messe, si firent li apostle
> Et le xii chaires i sunt tutes encore
> La trezième est en mi ben sellée e close."

Charles took it without hesitation, and his twelve peers the seats of the Apostles—

> "Karles i entrat, ben ont al queor grant joie
> Le xii peers as altres en virunt et en coste
> Ainz n'i sist hume ne unkes prus encore."

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[1] Gaston Paris, *La vie poétique de Charlemagne*, and *Romania*, No. xxv, p. 481.

Nevertheless Charles had no fear, nor would a Briton have feared any more for Arthur placed in the same seat. Were they not both Champions of Christendom, carrying on in their day the work Christ had begun, killing His enemies, maintaining His Law? It was part of the proper mythical character of each that he should preside at the table Christ had established as a perpetual sign of His kingship.

(To be continued.)