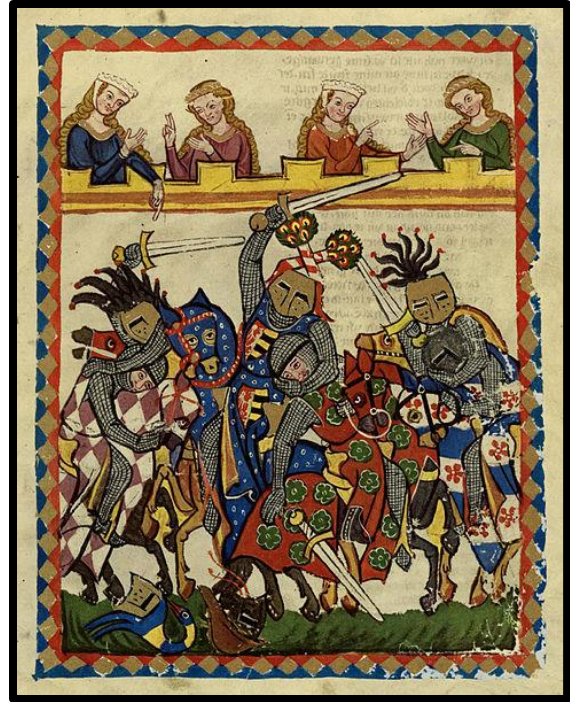


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THIS PRESENT BOOK ENTITLED

THE BOOK OF THE ORDRE OF CHYVALRY

Ramon Llull (1232–1315)

Unto the praise and divine glory of God, who is Lord and Sovereign King above and over all things, both celestial and worldly, we begin this Book of the Order of Chivalry. We write it in order to show that, just as God the Prince Almighty rules above the seven planets comprising the heavenly concourse—which, in turn, have control over earthly bodies—so in similar fashion ought kings, princes and great lords to have power and authority over knights, and knights, by analogy, ought to have power over the common people.



CHAPTER I: THE KNIGHT HERMIT AND THE SQUIRE

There was a country in which it happened that there lived a wise knight who had long maintained the Order of Chivalry and who, by the strength and nobility of his great courage and wisdom, had ventured his body in various wars, jousts, and tournaments. Because he thought in his heart that he would not live much longer...he chose a hermitage for himself for age had weakened the natural strength within him so much that he no longer had any power nor strength to wield arms as he was accustomed to do. Therefore, he left all his inheritance and riches to his children and made his dwelling place in a great forest abundantly provided with water, large trees and fruit-bearing bushes of various kinds.

He fled the world because of the weakness of his body...and so that he would not dishonor the calling to which he had long paid tribute with his meritorious deeds and adventures....

In one part of the same forest was a fair meadow where there stood a tree laden with seasonable fruit. By eating this fruit the knight managed to survive. And beneath this same tree was a fair, clear fountain that watered the entire meadow.

To that place the knight was accustomed to come each day in order to pray and adore Almighty God, whom he thanked for all the honors He had shown him throughout his life. In that time it happened at the beginning of a harsh winter that a very wise and virtuous king sent for many nobles in order to hold his great court. Because of the widespread fame of this court, a squire decided to go there in order to be made a knight. Thus, as he went riding all alone on his horse...he fell asleep on his horse. Meanwhile, as he rode on asleep, his horse strayed from the proper path and entered the forest where the knight-hermit lived. And he went on so far that he

arrived at the fountain at the same time that the knight who lived in the forest had come there to do his penance—to pray to God and to practice rejection of this world's vanities—just as he was in the habit of doing every day.

When [the hermit-knight] saw the squire coming, he left his prayers and sat down in the meadow in the shadow of a tree and began to read a little book that he held in his lap. When the [squire's] horse had come to the fountain, [the horse] began to drink and the squire—who had been sleeping—immediately sensed that the horse was no longer moving and quickly awoke. The knight, who was quite old and had a long beard and a gown that was threadbare from overuse, then came to him. [The knight] was lean and his skin considerably discolored on account of the penance that he did daily. His eyes showed all the appearances of a holy life and seemed sunken from the many tears that he had wept. Each of them marveled at having encountered the other. For the knight, who had been long in his hermitage, had seen no other man since he had left the public world, and the squire, for his part, was quite astonished as to how he had gotten to that place. Then the squire descended from his horse and greeted the knight, and the knight received him very wisely.

Afterwards they sat upon the grass close by each other, and, before either of them spoke...gazed on the other's face. The knight, who knew that the squire would not speak first because he wished to show reverence, spoke up and said, "Fair friend, what is your intention? And where are you going? Why have you come here?"

"Sir," said he, "the news has spread into far countries that a very wise and noble king has called for a general court. He intends to have himself made a knight and afterwards he will dub other new knights. Therefore, I am going to this court to be dubbed a knight. But, while I was asleep...my horse departed from the right path and he has brought me into this place."

When the knight heard chivalry and knighthood mentioned and remembered the Order of Chivalry and that which properly belonged to the duty of a knight, he let out a great sigh and pondered a while, recalling the honor in which chivalry had long been upheld.

While the knight thus pondered, the squire asked of him the reason why he was so pensive. And the knight replied, "Fair son, my thought is of the Order of knighthood or Chivalry and of the greatness with which a knight is regarded who defends the honor of chivalry."

Then the squire begged the knight that he would tell him of the Order and manner by which men ought to honor and keep chivalry in high esteem, as it ought to be according to God's ordinance.

"What, son," said the knight, "do you not know about the rule and Order of knighthood? I marvel that you dare demand to be knighted before you know the rules. For no knight may love the Order nor that which pertains to the Order unless he knows the faults he commits against the law of chivalry. Nor should any knight dub other knights unless he himself knows the Order. For he who dubs another, yet cannot teach him the Order and customs of chivalry, is disorderly."

When the knight had said these words to the squire who had asked for chivalry without knowing what it was, the squire answered and said to the knight, "Sire, if it be your pleasure, I beseech you that you tell me of the Order of Chivalry. For it seems very necessary and fitting to

me that I should learn about it on account of the great desire that I have to follow that course of life. And I shall follow it to the limits of my power if it please you to show and teach me it."

"Friend," said the knight, "the rule and Order of Chivalry is written in this little book that I hold in my hands here. I read and meditate sometimes on it in order to recall and savor the grace and favor that God has given me in this world as a reward for my having honored and defended with all my strength the Order of Chivalry. For just as chivalry lends to a knight his entire identity, so ought he to give all of his strength for the honor of chivalry."

Then the knight handed over to the squire the little book. And when he had read therein, the squire understood that a knight is chosen from among a thousand persons as being worthier than all the rest. He also understood from the little book the rule and Order of Chivalry.

A little afterwards [the squire] remembered and said, "Ah, sire, blessed may you be for bringing me at the proper place and time to have a true knowledge of chivalry, which I have long desired without fully realizing the nobility of the Order nor the honor in which our Lord God has given to those who are members of the Order of Chivalry."

To this the knight said, "Fair son, I am an old and feeble man and cannot live much longer; therefore, you shall carry with you this little book written to describe the loyalty, devotion and proper behavior of a knight. Take it to the court where you are going to show to all of those who are about to be dubbed knights. And when you have been freshly dubbed yourself and set out to return to your own country, come again to this place and bring me news regarding those who have been newly made knights and who intend to obey the teachings of chivalry."

Then the knight gave the squire his blessing and took his leave of him. The squire took the book very devoutly and mounted his horse and went forth hastily to the court. When he arrived, he presented the book with great dignity to the noble king. Furthermore, he offered to provide every noble man who wished to join the Order of Chivalry with a copy of the aforementioned book so that each one might see and learn about true knighthood.

CHAPTER II: THE ORIGINS OF CHIVALRY

When charity, loyalty, integrity, justice and truth grew weak in the world, then there began cruelty, injury, disloyalty and falseness. Thus error and trouble came into the very world where God had planned for man to know, love, serve, fear and honor Him. Fortunately, however, no sooner had laxness in enforcing the law first arisen than fear in turn caused justice to be restored to the honor in which she was formerly held. Therefore, all the people were divided by thousands. Out of each thousand, there was chosen a man more notable than all the rest for his loyalty, his strength, his noble courage, his breeding and his manners. Afterwards they sought out the beast that was most suitable—strongest to sustain labor, heartiest, and best able to serve the man. It was found that the horse was the most fitting creature; because they chose the horse from among all the beasts and gave him to this same man who had been picked from among a thousand, and because the horse is called in French *cheval*, therefore the man who rides him is called a *chevalier*, which in English is a knight. Thus to the most noble man was given the most noble beast....

Love and reverence are always opposed to hate and injustice; consequently it is necessary that the knight—on account of his high courage, good demeanor, generosity and honor—be loved and feared by the people. Likewise it is required that—by love—he restore charity and instruction to the world and—by fear—that he recover justice and truth. Just as a man has more wit and understanding and is stronger by nature than a woman, so much may he surpass a woman in honor. For if he were not more powerful and fearless, so as to stand out beyond a woman, it would mean that abundance of natural strength would be in conflict with abundance of natural courage and good works. Nevertheless, although a man is then equipped by his nature for noble courage and superiority to a woman, in the same way he is much more likely to be vicious than is a woman. If it were not thus, he would not deserve the greater position than a woman's that he gains by being good.

You squires, who wish to enter the Order of Chivalry, beware what you do. For if you are a knight, you are receiving the honor and service due to true friends of chivalry. Just as you have more noteworthy roots and greater honor than others, by that same token you are more bound to be good and pleasing to God and also to the people. And if you act wickedly, you make yourself into an enemy of chivalry and behave contrary to its laws and rites....

Neither horse, nor armor, nor even being chosen by others is sufficient to show forth the high honor that pertains to a knight. Instead he must be given a squire and a servant to look after his horse. Likewise, the common people must be required to work the lands to bring forth the fruits and goods by which the knight and his beasts may live. This arrangement is necessary to permit the knight to rest and reside according to the customary requirements of his station, as well as to allow him opportunities for hunting and other sports upon his horse and, in general, to provide him with ease and pleasure in matters which shall cost his men some pain and labor....

The science and the school of the Order of Chivalry is that the knight should make his son, while he is young, learn to ride. For if he does not learn in his youth, he will never learn in his old age. And it is essential that the son of a knight, while he is a squire, learn how to care for horses. It is likewise necessary for him that he learn how to serve and that he should first be a subordinate before he becomes a lord. Otherwise he would not appreciate the excellence of lordship whenever he should become a knight. Therefore, every man who wishes to progress to knighthood is required to learn in his youth how to carve at the table, to serve, to dress and array a knight in his arms. For just as a man who would be a tailor must learn to sew and one who would be a carpenter must learn to cut—and both require a master who already knows how to sew or cut—it likewise behoves a nobleman, who loves the Order of Chivalry and wishes to become a knight, first to have a master who is a knight. It would indeed be a strange thing that a man who wished to learn sewing should learn it from a carpenter. Similarly, it would be most odd for a squire to learn the rites and excellence of chivalry from any man other than a knight....

So exalted and honored is the Order of Chivalry that it is not sufficient for a squire merely to take care of a horse and learn to serve a knight and go with him to tournaments and battles; it is also necessary that he enroll in a school of the Order of knighthood and that the science of the Order be written down in books so that the art can be demonstrated and read about in the same way as other disciplines are studied. Thus the sons of knights should first

learn the principles of the Order of Chivalry and later, after they have become squires, they should travel through various realms with their knights.

If scholars and knights maintain themselves free of error, then there will be no error among the common people. For the scholars will have provided them with devotion and love for God, and on account of the knights they should fear to do wrong, or betray and berate one another. Then since scholars have masters and a curriculum which they must go to school to learn—and there are so many different academic disciplines that they are written out and developed into fixed bodies of knowledge—it is a great harm to the Order of knighthood that this discipline is not also written and read about in schools like other specialties. And, therefore, he that wrote this Book implores the noble King, and all the excellent company of fine knights that are assembled in this Court, to pay homage to chivalry that this wrong that has been done to knighthood may soon be amended.

CHAPTER III: THE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT PERTAIN TO A KNIGHT

The duty of a knight is to support and defend the Holy Catholic Faith, according to which God the Father sent his Son into the world to take on human flesh in the Glorious Virgin, our Lady Saint Mary. To honor and spread the Faith in this world, our Lord suffered many tribulations, wrongs and a painful death.

Then, just as our Lord has chosen scholars and priests to support the Holy Catholic Faith with scripture and reason against heretics and infidels, similarly God in His glory has chosen knights so that by force of arms they may conquer the heretics who daily labor to destroy the Holy Church.....

The knight who has no faith and practices no faith and opposes them who defend it is like a man to whom God has given reason but who pursues foolishness. On the other hand, the knight who has faith, but who still acts against its requirements while, nevertheless, expecting to be saved, is acting against himself. For his will tends to heresy, which is contrary to faith and to salvation. On account of such heresy or false belief, a man is condemned to infinite and everlasting torments.

There are many who occupy positions of responsibility in this world which God has given them so that He can be served and honored by them, but the highest and most excellent positions are those of the clerks (scholars and/ or priests) and knights. Therefore, the greatest friendship possible ought to exist between knights and clerks. And just as clerks are not ordained in their clerical orders for the purpose of opposing the Order of Chivalry, knights also should not use the office of chivalry to support those who oppose these same clerks who are bound to maintain and love the Order of Chivalry. An order or status is not given to a man for the purpose of urging him to love his own order exclusively, but so that he might love all the orders. For to love one status and hate another is not to love order itself at all. God has created no order that is in conflict with any other. Just as we would not say that a religious person truly loved his clerical order if this love led him to be an enemy to other clerical orders—nor would we say that he was properly following the rules of his own order—so likewise with a knight: a knight does not genuinely love the status of knighthood if he is so fond of his own Order and praises it so much that he ends up hating other orders and slandering them. For if a knight

loved the Order of Chivalry and yet destroyed some other social order, it would appear that order itself was contrary to God, which is impossible since He Himself established order....

The duty of a knight is to support and defend his earthly lord, for neither a king nor any high baron has the power to uphold righteousness among his people without aid and help. Then, if anyone should act against the commandments of his king or prince, it is essential that the knights aid their lord, who is, after all, only a man like other men. Hence the evil knight that would rather help another man who wishes to depose his lord from his rightful authority is not following the duty to which he was called as a knight. Justice ought to be upheld and supported by all knights, for just as judges have the duty to judge so knights have the responsibility to protect judges from violence while they carry out the deeds of justice....

Knights ought to take horses to jousts and attend tournaments; they ought to hold great feasts open to all; they should hunt harts (male deer), boars and other wild beasts, for in doing these things knights exercise themselves in their profession of arms in order to maintain the readiness of the Order of knighthood....

The duty of a knight is to support and defend women, widows and orphans, and sick or enfeebled men. For just as it is both reasonable and customary that the greatest and mightiest should help the lesser and the feeble, and that the latter should feel free to seek redress from the great, so the Order of Chivalry—which is great, honorable and powerful—should succor and help those that are in lower orders, who are less powerful and honored. Hence, to do wrong and violate the rights of women, of widows who need help, or of orphans who need custody—or to rob and destroy weak men who lack strength, and to take away that which belongs to them—these things may not possibly accord with the laws of chivalry. This is mere wickedness, cruelty and tyranny. The knight who, instead of these vices, is full of virtues is worthy to hold the proper office of chivalry....

The duty of a knight is to have a castle and horse, to guard the highways and to protect those who work the land. Moreover, he ought to establish towns and cities in order to guarantee justice to the people and to assemble in a single place men of the various crafts that are necessary to the proper functioning of life in this world. knights, therefore, are praised and rewarded so highly for their calling that they are made lords of castles, towns, cities and great populations; but if they then act as though they believed that destroying castles, cities and towns, burning houses and hewing down trees, slaying beasts and robbing folk along the highways were their proper calling, it would be a direct affront to true chivalry. For if it were thus, chivalry would not have been well planned, and good order and its opposite would be one and the same—which is impossible.

The duty of a knight is also to search for thieves, robbers and other wicked folk in order to punish them. For just as the axe is designed for the job of cutting down and destroying worthless trees, so the office of a knight is established to punish evildoers and delinquents.

And because God and chivalry go together, it is necessary that there be no false oaths or swearing among those who uphold the Order of Chivalry....

The knight ought to pursue his calling in many different ways, but because we have to speak of a wide variety of concerns, we are passing over these matters as quickly as possible. At the request of that very courteous, loyal and well-instructed squire, who has long desired to

know about the rule and Order of Chivalry, we have begun this book. We intend to speak briefly in this book because he shall soon be dubbed a new knight.

CHAPTER IV: EXAMINATION OF THE SQUIRE

It is quite fitting that a squire who wishes to enter the Order of knighthood should be examined. His examiner ought to be a knight who loves God first and knighthood above all else. For there are some who better love to be a part of a great number of knights—even if they are evil or wicked—than to be part of a small company of good men. Chivalry itself, however, has no regard for the multitude but loves only those who are filled with the excellence of courage and good behavior....

First it behooves an examiner to ask of the squire who wishes to be a knight whether he loves and fears God. No man is worthy to enter the Order of Chivalry without these attributes. His fear of God will also cause him to avoid the mistakes by which discredit is brought on his knighthood....Therefore a squire who is irreverent toward God is not worthy to be a knight and take upon himself the duty of destroying and punishing wicked men....

Do not look for excellence of bravery in the mouth, for not every mouth speaks the truth. Nor look for it in impressive clothing, for under many a fair garment one can find cowardice full of bullying behavior and wickedness. Nor should you look for excellence of courage in the horse, for he cannot speak a word. Nor should you seek it in the armor, for within beautiful armor is often a wicked and fearful heart. Therefore, if you want to find true bravery, look for it where you see faith, hope, charity, justice, strength, loyalty and other noble virtues. By these qualities the heart of a noble knight is guarded from wickedness, treachery and from the enemies of chivalry.

A new knight must be of a suitable age, for if the squire seeking to become a knight is overly young he is not worthy. He may not yet be wise enough to have learned the things that are proper for a squire before he moves on to being a knight. And if he becomes a knight in his youth, he may not well remember the promises that he has made to the Order of Chivalry when it becomes necessary to recall them to mind.

If a squire who seeks to become a knight has been cowardly beforehand, he inflicts villainy and injury on the Order in attempting to enter it, because it is upheld by strong men and fighters and is debased by the presence of the timid, the faint of heart, the weak and those who flee....

If being fashionably beautiful, having a well-built and turned-out body, fair hair, or being able to admire oneself in a mirror qualified a squire to be dubbed a knight, then you could make knights out of people of the lowest and vilest birth. And if you did so, you would be dishonoring and mistaking your lineage....

High birth and chivalry belong together, for high birth is nothing else but honor anciently awarded, while chivalry is a way of life that has endured from the time of its founding long ago until the present. And since nobility of family and knighthood belong together, if you make a knight out of someone not of high parentage, you set chivalry at odds with lineage....

To examine a squire who wishes to become a knight requires that one ask about his customs and manners, for providing evil examples is the cause for which wicked knights are

expelled from the Order....For chivalry casts out of its fellowship all enemies of honor and receives instead those who show valor and uphold decency....Therefore, you knight, who are charged with the duty of examining a squire, are bound more strongly to seek out high qualities and valor in a squire than in any other person. Also, you who have the job of inspecting the squire who aims to enter the Order, you ought to find out whether he wishes merely an opportunity to travel and receive honors without doing honor to chivalry and to those who honor it. And if it appears to you that he seeks to become a knight for that reason, you should realize that he is not worthy to be made a knight nor to have the Order....

A squire who desires chivalry should be well informed about the great responsibility and the dangers that go with those who would obtain chivalry and uphold it. A knight ought more to fear the rebuke of the people and his own dishonor than the perils of death itself. He ought to devote more of his thoughts to maintaining his courage than to the pains that hunger and thirst, heat and cold may inflict on his body. And therefore all of the dangers ought to be explained and manifested to the squire before he is dubbed or made into a knight.

Chivalry may not be upheld without the armor suitable to a knight nor without the accompanying honorable expenditures. A squire who has neither armor nor money for his expenses—if he should be dubbed a knight—may, on account of his need, be driven to become a traitor, robber, thief, liar, or beggar or indulge some other vices that are incompatible with chivalry.

A lame man, or one who is overweight or who has some other physical handicap that prevents him from carrying out the duties of chivalry, is not adequate to be a knight. For it would not be fitting for the Order of Chivalry to receive a man who is stained with corruption or weakness....

It also ought to be inquired of a squire seeking entry into chivalry whether he ever performed any falseness or treachery against the principles of the Order....In sum, any squire who is proud, badly instructed, full of villainous words and little courage, greedy, deceitful, lazy, gluttonous, perjured or who is infected by any other similar vices has nothing to offer chivalry.

CHAPTER V: A SQUIRE RECEIVES CHIVALRY

Before a squire enters the Order of Chivalry, it behooves him to confess himself of all the sins he has committed against God....Then after he has been absolved of all sin, he should receive communion. For the dubbing of a knight belongs properly to one of the great feast days, such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost or some other solemn day. The reason for this practice is that the honor of the feast causes large crowds of people to assemble in the place where the squire is to be knighted....On the vigil of the feast day, when he is to be dubbed, the squire ought to fast in honor of the saint whose feast is celebrated that day. Also he ought to go to church in order to seek God's aid and ought to keep a vigil all night long in his prayers. Likewise, he should heed the word of God concerning chivalry, for if, instead, he spends his vigil listening to ribald storytellers, he will have already begun dishonoring chivalry.

On the morning after the feast at which he has been dubbed a knight, it behooves the new knight to sponsor a solemn mass. Then he ought to come before the altar and offer honor to

the priest—who holds the place of our Lord—obliging and submitting himself to keep the reverence of chivalry safe with all his power. On the same day, there should be a sermon in which should be recounted and declared the twelve articles on which the Holy Catholic Faith is founded, the Ten Commandments and the seven sacraments of Holy Church, and other things that belong to the Faith. The squire ought diligently take heed of these things and retain them in his memory so that he may keep in mind the duty of chivalry with reference to the things of faith.

The twelve articles include believing that there is one God only, and that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God in three Persons, without beginning or end. These are the first four articles. The fifth is to believe that God is the creator and maker of all things. The sixth is to believe that God is the redeemer—that is to say, that He has redeemed or bought back the human race from the pains of Hell to which it had been condemned by the sin of Adam and Eve, our first father and mother. The seventh is to believe that God has given glory to those who have gone on to Heaven. These seven articles concern God; the rest pertain to the humanity that the Son of God took on Himself in Our Lady Saint Mary. The first of these is to believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit when Saint Gabriel the Archangel saluted Our Lady. The second and third involve believing that He was crucified and died to save us. The fourth is to believe that His soul descended into Hell in order to deliver His friends—that is, Adam, Abraham and other prophets who believed in His Holy Coming. The fifth is to believe that He was raised from death to life. The sixth is to believe that, on Ascension Day, He rose up into Heaven. The seventh is to believe that Jesus Christ shall come at the Day of Judgment when all shall arise and shall judge the good and evil and render to all the pain or glory that they have deserved in this transitory world. It behooves all Christian men to believe these articles, which truly witness to God and His works. For without a belief in these articles, no man can be saved....

The priest who delivers the dubbing sermon ought to make mention of these duties in the presence of the squire....The prince or baron who intends to conduct the dubbing likewise ought to possess in himself the virtue and Order of Chivalry, for if the knight who makes knights is not virtuous, how may he give to others what he does not have himself?...

The squire then ought to kneel before the altar and lift up his bodily and spiritual eyes and his hands to Heaven, and the presiding knight should gird him with his sword, in the sign of chastity, justice and charity. The knight ought to kiss the squire and lay his palm on him so that the squire may remember what he has received and promised and the great obligation to which he is bound by the honor of the Order of Chivalry. Afterwards, when the spiritual knight—that is, the priest—and the earthly knight have done their duties with regards to the dubbing of a new knight, the new knight ought to ride through the town and show himself to the people so that all will know and see his new circumstances. When all have seen that he is obliged to uphold and defend the high honor of chivalry, he will have an even greater reason for shunning evil, for he will be ashamed for the people to know that he has broken such vows.

On the same day, it behooves the new knight to hold a great feast and to give fair gifts and to joust and sport and do other things that pertain to the Order of Chivalry. Also, he should endow heralds and kings of arms with gifts, as has long been customary. Similarly, the lord

who has sponsored him ought to present him with a gift, which should be reciprocated by the new knight....

CHAPTER VI: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARMS OF A KNIGHT

Unto a knight is given a sword, which resembles a cross in order to signify that Our Lord conquered on the Cross the death to which humanity was condemned for the sin of our first father, Adam. Similarly, a knight ought to destroy and utterly vanquish the enemies of the Cross by the sword, for chivalry exists to maintain justice. For that reason, the sword is made with two cutting edges, to signify that the knight ought to use it to uphold chivalry and justice.

A knight is also given a spear, which represents truth. For truth is something straight and even and ought to take precedence over falseness. The iron head of the spear signifies strength, which truth ought to have far more than falseness. And the banner of the spear indicates that truth is faithful to all and has no fear of falseness or treachery. The spear likewise symbolizes that truth sustains hope.

The helmet of steel or iron is given to a knight to signify fear of shame, for a knight who lacks this fear may not properly obey the Order of Chivalry. Just as a sense of guilt causes a man to be ashamed and to cast his eyes down toward the earth, so the helmet of iron prevents a man from exalting his head upwards. rather, it causes him to look toward the ground and is thus a mediator between things above and those below. For it covers a man's head, which is the highest and foremost member of his body. Similarly, a sense of shame protects the knight, who has the highest and most noble duties, except for those of the clerk or priest, so that he will not bow his head to villainous and horrible deeds nor abandon the excellence of his courage to bribery and other wickedness.

The hauberk (a long tunic made of chain mail) symbolizes a castle and fortress against vices and weaknesses. For just as a castle or fort is all walled in, so a hauberk is firm and closed on all sides to remind a noble knight that he should not enter with his courage into treason nor any other vice.

Leg harnesses of iron are provided for a knight to protect his legs and feet from peril and to signify spiritually that a knight ought to hold to the high ways with iron, that is with sword, spear and mace, in order to arrest malefactors and punish them.

Spurs are given to a knight to signify diligence and swiftness since a knight must have these two qualities in order to maintain his Order in the high honor that it deserves. For just as he pricks his horse with spurs in order to cause it to run, so diligence pricks the knight himself and hastens him to procure the gear and necessities that a knight requires if he is to avoid being taken by surprise.

The gorget (a piece of armor protecting the throat) is given to a knight to symbolize obedience. For every knight that is not obedient to his lord nor to the Order of Chivalry dishonors his lord and abandons his Order. So just as the gorget surrounds the neck of the knight to protect it from deadly blows and wounds, in similar fashion obedience causes a knight to remain within the commandments of his sovereign and within the Order of Chivalry so that treason, pride and other vices cannot corrupt the oaths that the knight has taken.

The mace is given to the knight to signify strength of courage. For just as a mace or poleaxe is strong against all arms and strikes at all angles, so the force of courage defends a knight from all vices and upholds the virtues and good customs by which knights protect chivalry and ensure that it receives the esteem due to it.

The misericord (a narrow dagger used to deliver the death stroke to a seriously wounded knight) is given to the knight so that, if his other armor should fail him, he may have recourse to this last weapon. Or so that, if he is so close to his enemy that he may not strike or injure him with spear or sword, he may still overcome him by strength of his dagger. And this weapon, called the misericord, shows a knight that he ought not to place too much trust in his weapons or his strength, but rather ought to trust God and join himself to God by good works and sincere hope, so that, with God's help, he may vanquish his enemies and all those who oppose the Order of Chivalry.

The shield is given to the knight to represent the duty of a knight. For just as the knight puts his shield between himself and his enemy, so the knight is the intermediary between the prince and the people. And just as the stroke falls upon the shield and saves the knight, in the same way the knight ought to array himself and present his body before his lord when that lord is in peril, hurt or captured.

Gauntlets are given to a knight so that he may put his hands in them and thus protect them from strokes if the rest of his armor should fail him. The knight wearing his gauntlets handles his spear or sword more securely than he could otherwise. Just as he lifts them up when he raises his hand in victory, so ought he to raise them up in thanking God for that same victory. The gauntlets also should remind him that he should never raise up his hand in swearing a false oath, nor should he handle any evil, foul or dishonest thing with his hands.

The saddle in which the knight sits when he rides signifies security of courage, the obligation and great burden of chivalry. For just as the saddle enables the knight to be secure on his horse, so security of courage makes a knight seek out the front line of battle. By means of this security, adventure, the friend of chivalry, aids him. By this security are captured many cowards and vain boasters who merely seem hardy and strong of courage. The saddle also signifies the responsibilities of knighthood, for, as we have said, the saddle holds the knight firmly and surely upon his horse so that he may not fall nor slip. And therefore the saddle, which is so heavy, symbolizes the weight of chivalry, and that the knight ought by no means to move on account of slight matters. And if it is necessary for him to move, he ought to show great courage against his enemy in order to uphold chivalry.

A horse is given to a knight to signify the nobility of courage. He is to be well-horsed in order that he may be seen from afar. This signifies that he ought to be readier than other men to do what is required by chivalry. To the horse is given a bridle, and the reins of the bridle are placed in the hands of the knight so that the knight may make his horse obey his will and restrain him. This suggests that a knight ought also to restrain his tongue and watch himself so that he speak neither foul words nor false ones. It also signifies that he ought to restrain his hands and not give so much to others that he becomes needy himself. Nor should he be so aggressive that his courage lacks all measure and reason. Likewise the reins signify that the knight ought to allow himself to be led wherever chivalry needs for him to go. And when the time for generosity arrives, his hands must give and spend according to the honor of his station.

And if a knight acts contrary to these rules, his horse keeps the law of chivalry better than he does. The horse is provided with a testiere (armor for the forehead of a horse) on his head to symbolize that the knight ought never to fight without reason. For just as the head of his horse goes before the knight, so ought reason to precede all that a knight does. For anything done unreasonably is considered a vice in him. Thus, just as the testiere protects the head of the horse, so reason guards and keeps a knight from blame and from shame.

The horse's body armor is given to defend the horse from injury, and these items signify that a knight ought to protect his wealth and goods since they are what allow him to pursue the duties of chivalry. For just as the horse is protected from blows or injuries by his body armor and without it is in peril of death, so a knight without wealth may not uphold the honor of chivalry nor defend himself against dangers. For poverty causes a man to think of bribery and treason and therefore the Scriptures say, "On account of need, many have been lost." For the sake of poverty, many have manufactured falsehoods.

A coat is given to a knight to symbolize the great ordeals that he must suffer in order to honor chivalry. For just as the coat is worn above the other garments of iron, and faces the rain, and receives blows before they reach the hauberk or other armor, so a knight is chosen to sustain larger burdens than another man. And all the men who serve under him and are in his care ought, whenever necessary, to seek him out for help; and the knight should defend them to the extent of his power. Knights ought to be captured themselves, or wounded or killed, rather than allow the men who are in their care to suffer these fates. Similarly, princes and barons ought to exert themselves, at the higher levels of chivalry, in order to protect their lands and their people.

A heraldic emblem is given to the knight on his shield and his coat so that he may be known in battle and so that, if he is brave and does fair deeds of arms, he may be praised by name. If he is a faulty and recreant coward, the same token allows him to be properly blamed and reproved. The heraldic emblem is also given to the knight so that he may be identified as a friend or enemy of chivalry. Hence every knight ought to honor his token and see to it that it is never associated with blame.

The banner is given to a king, a prince, a baron and to a knight-bannerer (one who has under him many knights). It signifies that a knight ought to maintain the honor of his lord and of his land. For a knight is loved, honored and praised by the respectable folk of his kingdom. And if they dishonor their native land, or lord, such knights are far more to blame than other men.

CHAPTER VII: THE VIRTUES AND GOOD HABITS OF A KNIGHT

The exceptional nature of his courage has caused a knight to be picked out from among all other men, who are beneath him in service. Therefore, exceptional habits and upbringing are also appropriate to a knight. For extraordinary bravery may not achieve the high honor of chivalry without selection also based on virtues and good habits. Thus it behooves a knight to be well-stocked with good habits and manners. Every knight ought to know the seven virtues which are the source and root of all good habits and are the path to everlasting heavenly glory. Of these seven virtues, three are called "theological" or "divine"

while the remaining four are "cardinal." The "theological" ones are faith, hope and charity. The "cardinal" ones are justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude.

A knight without faith may not possess good habits of life, for by faith a man sees God and His works spiritually and believes in the invisible things. By faith, a man is enabled to have hope, charity and loyalty and becomes a servant of honesty and truth....Knights whose habits are shaped by faith often go into the land beyond the sea on pilgrimage and there prove their strength and chivalry against the enemies of the Cross and become martyrs if they die. For they fight to uphold the Holy Catholic Faith. Also, on account of faith, clerics of the church are defended by knights from wicked men who, through fraud, rob and disinherit them insofar as possible.

Hope is a virtue that plays a very important part in the job of a knight. By the hope that he places in God, he believes that he will emerge victorious in combat. By reason of the faith that he has in God, a faith greater than trust in his body or armor, he overcomes his enemies. The courage of a knight is given its power by hope, and through that same virtue conquers laziness and cowardice. Hope urges knights on to endure tribulations and to risk themselves in perilous undertakings in which they often place themselves. Also, hope makes them willing to suffer hunger and thirst while guarding castles, cities and fortresses. If no hope were left, a knight would be powerless to do his job. Hope is the principal instrument of a knight's occupation in the same way that the hand of a carpenter is the chief tool of carpentry.

A knight without charity will inevitably be afflicted with cruelty and an evil will. Cruelty and an evil will necessarily conflict with the essence of chivalry. If a knight fails to have charity toward God and his neighbor, in what way can he love God? And if he fails to have pity for poor men, the weak and the diseased, how can he possibly show mercy to men who have been vanquished and captured who plead for mercy precisely because they are unable to escape and lack the monetary resources to offer ransom for themselves? If a knight were not charitable, how could he be in the Order of Chivalry? Charity is a virtue above all others, for she conquers every vice. Charity is a kind of love that every knight must have in order to fulfill his duty. Charity makes a man bear lightly the heavy burdens of chivalry, for just as a horse without feet may not carry a knight, so a knight without charity may not sustain the great responsibility and burden of his office. By charity, chivalry is both honored and enhanced....

The virtue of prudence is that by which a man has knowledge of good and evil and by which he receives the grace to be a friend to the good and an enemy to the evil. For prudence is a type of science by which a man has knowledge of the things that are to happen in the future—by comparing them with the things of the present. By prudence, a man is enabled to foresee and avoid physical and spiritual harms. And since knights were first ordained in order to arrest and destroy evil—for no men place their bodies in so many perils as they—what could possibly be more essential to a knight than the virtue of prudence?

It is necessary to the occupation of a knight that he arm himself and fight. But these things are not so essential to the office of a knight as the use of reason and understanding and a well-regulated will. For many battles are won more by intellectual mastery—wit and industry—than by the size of one's cavalry units or the quality of their armor....

Therefore, if you, knight, wish to habituate your son to the duties of a knight in order to uphold the noble Order, first accustom him to the use of reason and understanding. Also, make

him exert all his power to become a friend to goodness and an enemy to evil. For by such habits, prudence and chivalry gather themselves together to honor the Order.

Fortitude is a virtue that dwells in a noble heart and resists the seven deadly sins by which men go to Hell to suffer endless torments. These seven sins include gluttony, lechery, avarice, pride, sloth, envy and wrath. A knight who follows any of these paths cannot enter the house of nobleness of heart nor make his abiding place there....

Heretofore we have described how a knight's fortitude ought to be used against the seven deadly sins, and now we shall discuss the virtue of temperance....A well-taught knight with good habits ought to be temperate in bravery, in eating, in drinking, in speech and expenditures, and in all other ways as well....


The habits and customs of a knight ought to include hearing mass and sermon, adoring and praying to God, and loving and fearing Him....But any knight who follows the contrary course and believes in divination and in soothsaying based on the flights of birds is acting against God. Such a one has greater faith and hope in the vain winds of his own flighty mind, and in the deeds of birds and diviners, than in God and His works....

A knight must be a lover of the common good, for by the whole of society was chivalry founded and established. And the common good is greater and more essential than the good of any particular group.

It belongs to a knight to speak nobly and courteously, to have fair armor and be well clad, and to maintain a good and honest household. All of these things are necessary to the honor of chivalry.

Courtesy and chivalry belong together, for villainous and foul words are against the rule of the Order. Loyalty, truth, hardiness, generosity, decency, humility, mercy and other similar virtues are also essential to chivalry.

CHAPTER VIII: THE HONOR THAT OUGHT BE GIVEN A KNIGHT

od has honored the knight, and all the people honor him, as is recounted in this book. And chivalry is an honorable office above all offices, orders and estates of the world—except for the order of priesthood, which pertains to the holy sacrifice of the altar. The Order of Chivalry is quite necessary with regards to the government of the world, just as we have discussed before. And therefore on this account, as well as for many other reasons, chivalry ought to be honored by the people. If a king or a prince did not incorporate chivalry into his person...he would not be worthy to be a king, nor a prince, nor a lord of countries. For in such persons chivalry should be honored. The knights ought then to be honored by the kings and great barons....

To seduce the wife of a knight, or to lead her to wickedness, is not a way of honoring knighthood. And the wife of a knight, who has bastard children whose fathers are lower class, is not honoring knighthood but destroying it and bringing it to nothing as well as subverting her husband's lineage. Likewise, a knight who has children with a lower-class woman is not honoring chivalry or nobility.

If men who are not knights are obliged to honor knighthood, much more is a knight bound to honor his own person by being well clad and well mounted, by having fair armor and

being served and honored by good people. He dishonors himself when he allows wickedness or treason or evil thoughts to take control of him. The knight who dishonors himself or his brother knight is not worthy to receive honor from others.

In this book here we have spoken briefly of the Order of Chivalry. Therefore we now make an end here—to the honor and praise of God our Glorious Lord and Our Lady Saint Mary, world without end. Amen.

CAXTON'S EPILOGUE

Here ends the Book of the Order of Chivalry, which has been translated out of French into English at the request of a gentle and noble squire by me, William Caxton, dwelling at Westminster near London. This book is not necessary for every common man to have but properly belongs to noble gentlemen who intend to enter the Order of Chivalry. That Order previously was practiced according to the instructions contained in this book, but more recently has fallen into neglect and is not exercised as in ancient times when the noble acts of English knights were renowned throughout the whole world....[B]ehold that noble King of Britain named Arthur with all the noble knights of the Round Table, whose excellent acts and chivalry occupy so many large volumes. O ye knights of England, where is now the practice of noble chivalry that was used in those days? What do you do now but go to the public baths and play at dice? Leave all of this and instead read the noble volumes of Sir Lancelot and the Holy Grail, of Sir Galahad, of Tristan, of Perceval, of Gawain and many others. There will you see manhood, courtesy and nobility....

Alas! What do you do, by contrast, but sleep and take your ease and stray from true chivalry. I would ask a question if it would not displease you: "How many knights are there now in England that actually practice knighthood; that is, that know their horses and are ready to perform deeds of valor?"....

Then let every man of noble blood who intends to enter that noble Order of Chivalry read this little book and follow its instructions, keeping the commandments comprised therein. If he does, I do not fear but that he shall attain to the Order of Chivalry.

And thus I present this little book to my most feared and dread natural sovereign lord, King Richard, King of England and of France, so that he may command this Book be owned and read by all the young gentlemen and knights within this realm. The noble Order of Chivalry will then be better practiced and honored than it has been in recent times. By doing this, he will be doing a noble and virtuous deed. I shall pray almighty God for his long life and prosperity and that he may have victory over all of his enemies and that after this short and transitory life he will obtain everlasting life in heaven, where there is joy and bliss, world without end. Amen.