Boy and the Mantle

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IN the third day of may,
To Carleile did come
A kind curteous child,
That cold much of wisdome.

A kirtle and a mantle
This child had uppon,
With brouches and ringes
Full richelye bedone.

He had a sute of silke
About his middle drawne
Without he cold of curtesye
He thought itt much shame.

God speed thee, king Arthur,
Sitting at thy meate
And the goodly queene Guenever,
I cannott her forgett.

I tell you, lords, in this hall;
I hett you all to heede;
Except you be the more surer
Is you for to dread.

He plucked out of his poterner,
And longer wold not dwell,
He pulled forth a pretty mantle,
Betweene two nut-shells.

Have thou here, king Arthur;
Have thou heere of mee:
Give itt to thy comely queene
Shapen as itt is alreadye.

Itt shall never become that wiffe,
That hath once done amisse.
Then every knight in the kings court
Began to care for his.

Forth came dame Guenever;
To the mantle shee her hied;

The ladye shee was newfangle,
But yett shee was affrayd.

When shee had taken the mantle;
She stoode as shee had beene madd:
It was from the top to the toe
As sheeres had itt shread.

One while was itt gule;
Another while was itt greene;
Another while was itt wadded:
Ill itt did her beseeme

Another while was it blacke
And bore the worst hue:
By my troth, quoth king Arthur,
I thinke thou be not true

Shee threw downe the mantle,
That bright was of blee;
Fast with a rudd redd,
To her chamber can shee flee.

She curst the weaver, and the walker
That clothe that had wrought;
And bade a vengeance on his crowne,
That hither hath itt brought

I had rather be in a wood,
Under a greene tree;
Then in king Arthurs court
Shamed for to bee.

Kay called forth his ladye,
And bade her come neere;
Saies, Madam, and thou be guiltye,
I pray thee hold thee there

Forth came his ladye
Shortlye and anon;
Boldlye to the mantle
Then is shee gone

When she had tane the mantle,
And cast it her about;
Then was shee bare
Before all the rout.

Then every knight,

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That was in the kings court,
Talked, laughed, and showted
Full oft att that sport

Shee threw downe the mantle,
That bright was of blee;
Fast, with a red rudd,
To her chamber can shee flee.

Forth came an old knight
Pattering ore a creede,
And he proferred to this litle boy
Twenty markes to his meede;

And all the time of the Christmasse
Willinglye to feede;
For why this mantle might
Doe his wiffe some need.

When she had tane the mantle,
Of cloth that was made,
Shee had no more left on her,
But a tassell and a threed:
Then every knight in the kings court
Bade evill might shee speed.

Shee threw downe the mantle,
That bright was of blee;
And fast, with a redd rudd,
To her chamber can shee flee.

Craddocke called forth his ladye,
And bade her come in;
Saith, Winne this mantle, ladye,
With a litle dinne.

Winne this mantle, ladye,
And it shal be thine,
If thou never did amisse
Since thou wast mine.

Forth came Craddockes ladye
Shortlye and anon;
But boldlye to the mantle
Then is shee gone.

When shee had tane the mantle
And cast itt her about,
Upp att her great toe

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It began to crinkle and crowt
Shee said, bowe downe, mantle,
And shame me not for nought.

Once I did amisse,
I tell you certainlye,
When I kist Craddockes mouth
Under a greene tree;
When I kist Craddockes mouth
Before he marryed mee.

When shee had her shreeven,
And her sines shee had tolde;
The mantle stoode about her
Right as shee wold:

Seemelye of coulour
Glittering like gold:
Then every knight in Arthurs court
Did her behold.

Then spake dame Guenever
To Arthur our king;
She hath tane yonder mantle
Not with right, but with wronge.

See you not yonder woman,
That maketh her self soe cleane?
I have seene tane out of her bedd
Of men fifteene.

Priests, clarkes, and wedded men
From her bedeene:
Yett shee taketh the mantle,
And maketh her self cleane.

Then spake the litle boy,
That kept the mantle in hold;
Sayes, king, chasten thy wiffe,
Of her words shee is to bold:

Shee is a bitch and a witch,
And a whore bold:
King, in thine owne hall
Thou art a cuckold.

The litle boy stoode
Looking out a dore;
[And there as he was lookinge

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He was ware of a wyld bore.]

He was ware of a wyld bore,
Wold have werryed a man:
He pulld forth a wood kniffe,
Fast thither that he ran:

He brought in the bores head,
And quitted him like a man.
He brought in the bores head,
And was wonderous bold:
He said there was never a cuckolds kniffe
Carve itt that cold.

Some rubbed their knives
Uppon a whetstone:
Some threw them under the table,
Some said they had none

King Arthur, and the child
Stood looking upon them;
All their knives edges
Turned backe againe.

Craddocke had a litle knive
Of iron and of steele;
He britled the bores head
Wonderous weele;
That every knight in the kings court
Had a morssell.

The litle boy had a home,
Of red gold that ronge:
He said, there was noe cuckolde
Shall drinke of my home;
But he shold it sheede
Either behind or beforne.

Some shedd on their shoulder,
And some on their knee;
He that cold not hitt his mouthe,
Put it in his eye:
And he that was a cuckold
Every man might him see.

Craddocke wan the horne,
And the bores head:
His ladie wan the mantle
Unto her meede

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Everye such a lovely ladye
God send her well to speede

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