

The  
Renowned History  
of  
Sir Bedis of Hampton.

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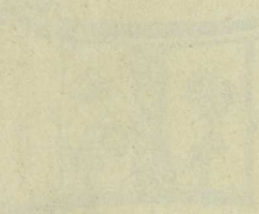


Samuel Taylor's Great Hall

THE  
CONVENT HISTORY OF BEVES  
OF SOUTHAMPTON.

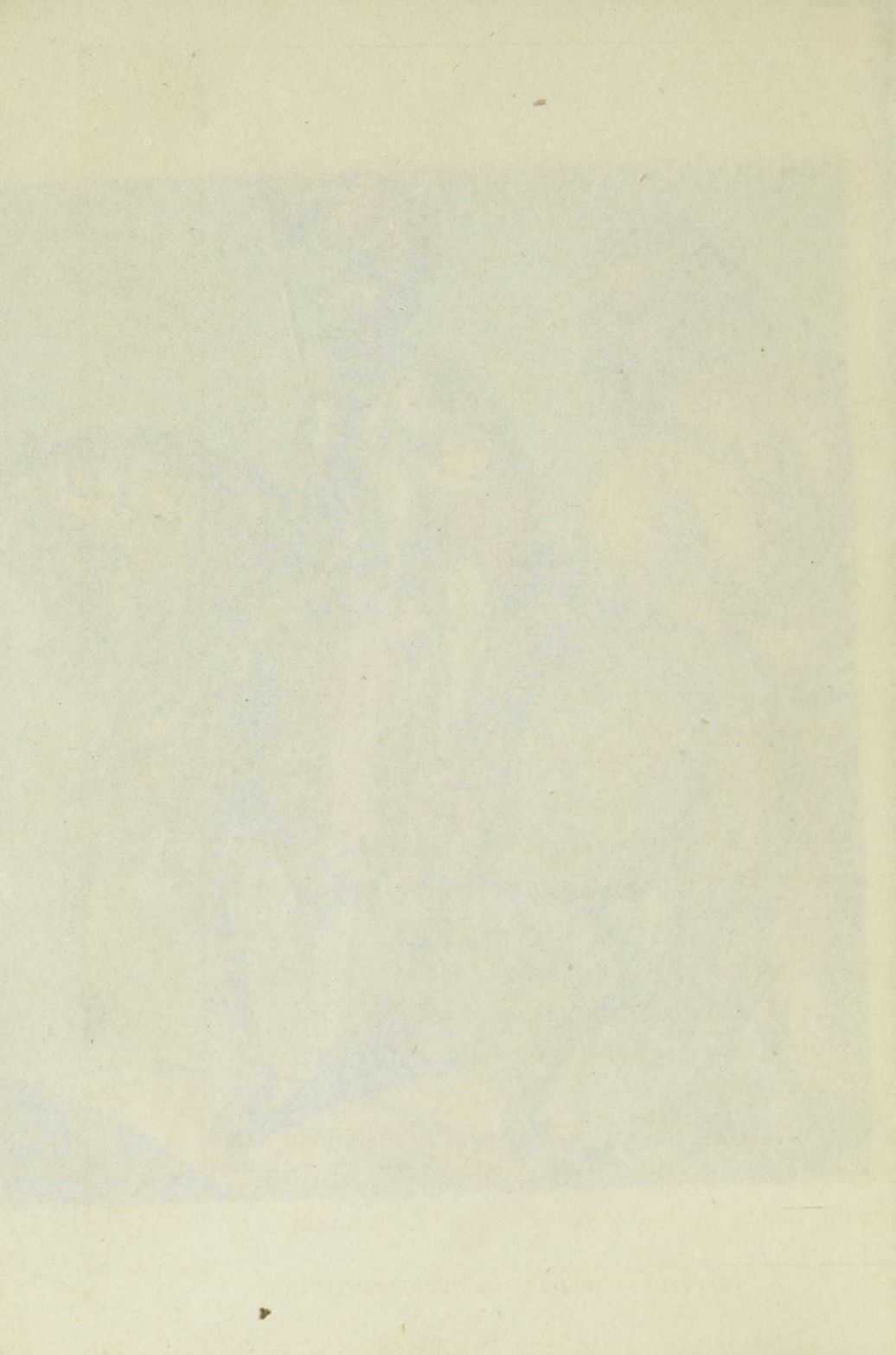
CHAPTER I.

*The History of the Convent of Beves of Southampton, from its Foundation to the Present Time.*



In the reign of King Henry the First, there was a great number of monks, which, about the East of Southampton, who had erected some of their houses, and who, being very poor, travelled in the worst manner of life, and were despised by the people, and were at length expelled out of the country, and were banished.

At length, King Edgar sent a messenger to the Pope, to desire that he would send some monks to be settled in the country, who should be well regulated. Whom the Pope

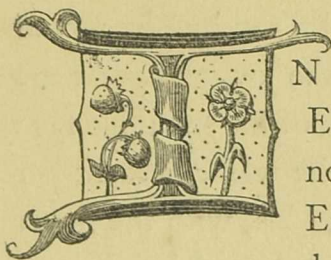


# Sammer Gurton's Story Books.

## THE GALLANT HISTORY OF BEVIS OF SOUTHAMPTON.

### CHAPTER I.

*Of the Birth of Bevis; and of the Death of his  
Father.*



IN the reign of Edgar, King of England, there was a most renowned knight, named Sir Guy, Earl of Southampton; whose deeds exceeded those of all the valiant knights in this kingdom; and who, thirsting after fame, travelled in his youth in search of adventures, and conquered all his opposers with his unmastered strength, and victorious hand.

On his return, King Edgar sent a messenger to invite him to the court, to do him honour, for the valiant deeds he had performed. Whereupon, Sir





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Guy, with all speed, rode to the King, by whom he was royally entertained ; and after great feasting, the King, according to Sir Guy's great desert, made him High Steward of England.

Sir Guy now determined to take to himself a wife, and the King of Scotland having a fair daughter, Sir Guy made suit unto her ; but the Emperor of Almain's brother was a suitor unto her likewise, and she loved Sir Murdure better than she loved Sir Guy : and though her father gave her in marriage to Sir Guy, she still affected Sir Murdure best.

Sir Guy, not knowing her hatred of him, returned with great pomp into England with this deceitful lady ; and, after some time, had a son by her, whom they named Bevis. Great was the joy, and great the triumph of Sir Guy, at the birth of his son ; his love for his lady waxed greater, for he was confident her heart was more strongly linked to his, with the never breaking bands of love. But the good knight was much deceived : she continued to love Sir Murdure, and sent a servant, whom she well might trust, to him in Almaine, bidding him come to England, with a great company of knights, to slay Sir Guy ; which done, she would marry him : and the time he should meet Sir Guy was the First of May. The message being delivered, Sir Murdure was resolved to perform





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what she had commanded, and arrived in England by the time appointed.

On the First of May, the lady feigned herself sick, and longed to eat of the flesh of a wild boar from the forest. Sir Guy, not dreaming of her treachery, took a steed, girt a sword about him, and with a spear in his hand, rode to the forest. Here he was soon encompassed by Sir Murdure and his companions; and after unhorsing Sir Murdure, and slaying one hundred of his assailants, he was at last overpowered by numbers. When he was slain, Sir Murdure cut off his head, and sent it to his lady, who received it joyfully, and gave the messenger a great reward. This treachery being thus accomplished, Sir Murdure made haste unto the castle of Sir Guy, and there was royally received of Sir Guy's wife.

CHAP. II.—*How Bevis kept sheep; and how he went to his Father's House and slew the Porter of the gate.*

**B**EVIS, hearing how basely his father was killed, ran to his mother, and vowed if ever he came to age, that he would be revenged on her, and on the



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base traitor, Sir Murdure: whereupon his mother gave him a box of the ear, which felled him to the ground. Sir Saber, the brother of Sir Guy, being very sorrowful for the death of his brother, and seeing his nephew so misused, caught him up in his arms, and carried him away; and when his mother privately besought him to murder Bevis, feigned consent. Instead of doing so, he clothed him in mean attire, and sent him to keep his sheep. So Bevis went to the top of a hill, near his father's castle, where his uncle's sheep were.

In the meantime, Sir Saber killed a pig, and dipped the garments of the child in the blood thereof. Poor Bevis, all this while, sate weeping upon the hill. At length, hearing trumpets sounding at his father's castle, for joy that his mother had obtained her desire, he cast off all care of his sheep, and ran with his shepherd's crook on his shoulder, to the castle. He knocked at the gate, and the porter denying him entrance, Bevis with his crook gave him a blow which felled him to the earth. Then into the hall he went, where Sir Murdure sate at table with his mother, and many knights and ladies; and though all in rags, he showed what blood ran in his veins, for, with a violent blow, he struck Sir Murdure under the table, and vowed, but that it was





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against nature, he would send his mother after his own father. With that all the knights sought to lay hands on Bevis; but, he forced his way through the midst of them, and got clear off.

When Bevis returned to his Uncle Saber, and related to him what he had done, Saber was greatly grieved, and said, "Alas, thou hast betrayed us both. Yet, once more will I save thee." He had scarcely said so, when the mother of Bevis (like a woman distracted of her wits) came in great haste to Saber, and reproached him with having disobeyed her orders, to put Bevis to death. "Madam," said Saber, "he is dead." She replied, "It is false; and if you do not speedily slay him, it shall cost you your life, as well as his." Bevis hearing this, stept out from the closet, in which Saber had concealed him, and was ready to tear her in pieces; but she escaped, by the assistance of Sir Saber, and another knight, whom she straightway ordered to cast Bevis into the sea and drown him: and, to pacify her anger, they promised to do so.





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CHAP. III.—*How Bevis was sold to the Saracens, and being carried into their country, was presented unto King Ermyn.*

ON their arrival at the sea shore, Sir Saber and the knight sold Bevis to some Saracen merchants, whom they there met with. The merchants on their arrival in their own country, presented Bevis to their King Ermyn, who swore by Mahound! he had never seen such a sweet-faced boy in all his life.

Then the King asked him, where he was born? "In England," replied Bevis. "Whose son wast thou there?" said the King. And when he told him, "I am the son of Sir Guy, of Southampton," Ermyn said, "I have heard much talk of thy father. He was, by report, as valiant a knight as ever yet drew sword. I have but one fair daughter," continued Ermyn, "and if thou wilt renounce Christianity, and worship Apoline, thou shalt have my daughter to wife, and enjoy my kingdom after me." Bevis rejected this offer: whereupon Ermyn said:





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*“Whiles that thou art but a swain,  
Thou shalt be my chamberlain;  
But when thou art dubbed a knight,  
My banner thou shalt bear in fight.”*

Bevis gratefully accepted this offer, and continued during seven years to make a progress in the affections of the Saracen monarch, as well as in those of his daughter, the beautiful Josyan.


At the end of that time, it chanced that on Christmas Day, Bevis rode into the fields to recreate himself, and meeting three score Saracen knights, one of them asked him, if he was aware what day it was? On his replying, that he did not know, the Saracen told him, that it was the Festival of the Nativity; and that they were all scandalized at the manner in which he was dishonouring it.

“Were I as well armed as my father,” said Bevis, “you should know that I honour this day more than ever you honoured your idol Apoline.”

The Saracen knights, incensed at this speech, determined to punish Bevis; and being all armed with swords, wounded him very severely, before he had the means of making any defence. But at length, Bevis having wrested a sword from the hands







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of one of the Saracens, slew the whole of them, and sent their steeds home without the riders.

Ermyn, on hearing how disdainfully Bevis had spoken against Apoline, and how he had slain three score of his knights, ordered his immediate execution; but being prevailed upon, by Josyan, to hear what Bevis had to say in his defence, was so moved by the effect of his eloquence, or rather of his pallid countenance, and numberless wounds, that he burst into tears, and not only forgave Bevis, but commanded Josyan to exert all her leechcraft in his behalf. This she did so effectually, that he was soon

*As fierce and ready for to fight  
As is the falcon to the flight.*

CHAP. IV.—*How Bevis, after slaying a mighty wild Boar, is made a Knight, and Captain of Twenty Thousand Men to go against Bradmond.*

SHORTLY after this, Bevis succeeded in destroying a mighty wild boar, which had long ravaged the country, destroying man, woman, and child. And about this time, Bradmond, King of Damascus,



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sent ambassadors to Ermyn, demanding to have fair Josyan to his wife; and threatening, in the event of his being refused, that he would waste with fire and sword, the whole territory of Ermyn.

Upon this, Ermyn assembled all his lords and barons together, to take counsel what to do. Some said it was better he should let Josyan go, than hazard the loss of his crown and kingdom. But Josyan said to her father, "If thou wilt make Bevis general over a host of men, he will conquer your foes." This advice pleased Ermyn, and sending for Bevis, he dubbed him a knight, and placed twenty thousand men under his command.

Then Josyan fitted on his armour, gave him a trusty sword called Morglay, and a steed called Arundel; and Bevis being mounted, Josyan viewed him well, and smiled at him, and Bevis smiled at her again; and then saluting her, away he rode with all his host, against Bradmond and all his host.

Bevis, having obtained a glorious victory over Bradmond, destroyed his army, and taken the King himself, and two of his knights, prisoners, returned to Ermyn, by whom he was royally entertained.

Ermyn, to show his gratitude, commanded his fair daughter, Josyan, to disarm Sir Bevis, to clothe him





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in a magnificent robe, and to serve him at table. The Princess, who was enamoured of Sir Bevis, not only readily obeyed her father's injunctions, but took the opportunity of avowing her affection to him; and on his declaring that he would never wed an idolater, expressed her willingness to forsake her gods and become a Christian for his sake.

At these words Sir Bevis' heart began to melt, and taking her to his arms, he kissed her, and acknowledged how long he had admired her; an acknowledgment which he had determined never to make while she remained a worshipper of Apoline.

In the meanwhile, the two knights, whom Bevis had taken prisoners, hearing what had passed between Bevis and Josyan, discovered all to the King; who, being enraged, wrote a letter to Bradmond, enjoining him to put the bearer of it to death; and this letter he charged Bevis to convey to that King.





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CHAP. V.—*What befel Bevis on his Journey, and how Josyan enquired of her Father what had become of Sir Bevis.*

**W**HEN Bevis arrived at the capital of King Bradmond, his anger being aroused at seeing the inhabitants sacrificing to Mahound, he pulled down the idol, and trampled it in the dust. The Saracens, enraged at this conduct, attacked Bevis, who, although he had not his own sword, Morglay, slew two hundred of them in that bout. Then riding forward to the palace of King Bradmond, he delivered the letter to him; which he had no sooner read, than he commanded Bevis to be cast into a dungeon, to be devoured by two fierce dragons. By good fortune, his hands had been left untied; and having found in the dungeon the truncheon of a spear, he soon destroyed the dragons, and so he was at rest for a time.

In the meanwhile, Josyan enquiring of her father what had become of Sir Bevis, he told her that he had returned to his own country; and King Inor coming to woo and wed Josyan, Ermyn gave him





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Morglay and Arundel, which added to the great grief of Josyan.

All this time Bevis lay in prison; and at the end of seven years, during which he had been fed upon nothing but bran and water, his keepers thinking he must be wondrous feeble, entered his dungeon to slay him, but he was so strong that he killed them both; and, it being night time, he escaped out of the dungeon, and mounting a steed rode away.

Being pursued by vast bodies of the Saracens, and amongst others by a formidable knight, Sir Graundere, mounted on a valuable horse, named Trenchefys, Bevis, when overtaken by him, being compelled to defend himself, turned upon his adversary, pierced him through the heart, took possession of Trenchefys, and continued his flight. On arriving at a river, hotly pursued by his enemies, he plunged in, and reached in safety the opposite shore. When he came to land, being ready to faint with hunger, he rode up to a castle inhabited by a Giant, who was brother to Sir Gaundere. The Giant, recognizing the horse, demanded of Bevis how he became possessed of it. "By serving thy brother as I intend to serve thee," was his reply. Upon this the Giant struck at him with a mighty bar of iron; the blow





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missed Bevis, but beat out the brains of Trenchefys ; while Bevis, leaping out of the saddle, made a full blow at the Giant, which parted his head from his body.

After refreshing himself at the castle, and taking a steed from the stable, Sir Bevis rode away from thence, to find out fair Josyan, whom he dearly loved. On his way he met a palmer, and enquiring of him who dwelt in yonder castle. "Marry," quoth the palmer, "there dwelleth King Inor, who married the Lady Josyan." Upon hearing this, Bevis exchanged his horse for the palmer's suit, and took his way to the castle, where he found abundance of joys more than he looked for.

At first, Josyan did not know him, but, when having given him leave to see Arundel, and Arundel broke seven chains on hearing him speak, she recognised him, she took him aside into her garden, where, after awhile, they determined to escape together.

This they soon did ; and as they rode onward on their journey, there met them Ascapart, an ugly giant, who was thirty foot in length, and bristled like a swine. Ascapart commanded Bevis and Josyan to follow him. "Not so," said Bevis ; so Josyan held Arundel whilst he fought with Ascapart.





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The fight continued a long time; till, at length, the Giant falling, Bevis would have struck off his head, but Josyan being pitiful, said, "Do not so; let him go with us." "Lady," said Bevis, "he may betray us." "By Mahound," said Ascapart, "if thou wilt save my life, I will be true to thee." "Then rise, and live," said Bevis. So Bevis and Josyan mounted Arundel, and away they rode, with Ascapart in chains by their side, till they came to the sea, where they found many Saracens, and a ship bound for Christendom.

Now the Saracens would not ferry them to the ship, so Bevis and Ascapart, whom he then loosed from his chains, attacked and made great slaughter among them. Then, said Ascapart, "Let me alone; I will carry you to the ship, horse and all." So he took the horse under his arm, with Bevis and Josyan, and waded with them to the ship.

They were welcomed on board; and so sailed to Cologne, where dwelled a Bishop who was kinsman to Bevis, and enquiring of him "What country lady is this?" Bevis answered, "King Ermyn's daughter, who would become a Christian for my sake." "And what ill favoured lubber is this?" said the Bishop. "He is my page," quoth Bevis; "and Josyan and he would fain be christened."





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“The lubber is too big to be carried to the font,” said the Bishop. “That is true,” said Sir Bevis. But in the end, Josyan was christened by the Bishop, and Ascapart had a font made on purpose to be christened in; but when the ceremony was being performed, he cried out, “Thou wilt drown me; I am too big to be christened by thee;” and leapt over the font and went away.

### CHAP. VI.—*How Bevis raised an Army against Murdure, vanquished him, and married Josyan.*

**N**OW Bevis being anxious to recover his inheritance, got a hundred valiant soldiers from his uncle, and sailed for England, and landed near Southampton; and calling himself Sir Gerard, proffered his services to Sir Murdure, to assist him against Sir Saber, on condition of his supplying them with horse and arms. “Ay! and of the best too,” said Sir Murdure; “for every man shall choose his own steed and arms.” Accordingly, Sir Bevis and his men were furnished with all things fitting for service; and then, ships being prepared for the purpose, they sailed for the Isle of Wight, where Sir Saber dwelt.

On his arrival in that island, Bevis sent to Sir



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Murdure, to thank him for his arms, and bid him prepare for battle.

So Sir Murdure and his host came to the Isle of Wight, and gave battle to Sir Saber, Bevis, and Ascapart; who, however, made such havoc among them, that they slew all that came near them.

Ascapart took Sir Murdure, and, carrying him to a strong hold, cast him into a cauldron of boiling pitch and brimstone; and his wife, hearing of this, threw herself from the walls of her castle, and broke her neck.

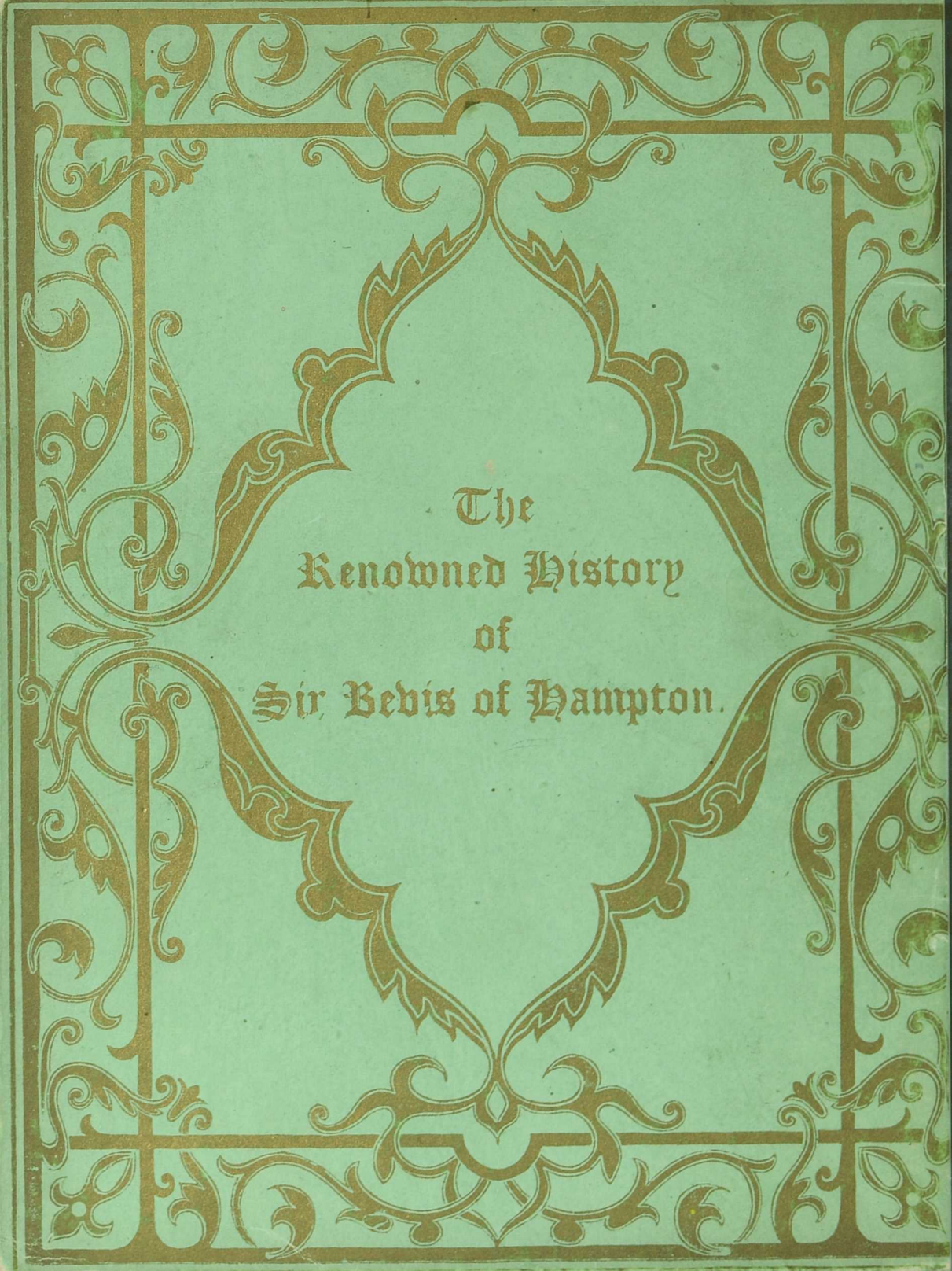
Then Sir Bevis dispatched a messenger to the Bishop of Cologne, who joyfully obeyed the summons,

*And wedded Bevis and Josyan,  
To the great joy of every man.  
Right great feasts there did they hold,  
Of dukes, earls, barons, and knights bold,  
Of ladies and maidens, understand  
The fairest that were in the land.  
Thus endeth Sir Bevis of Hampton,  
That was so bold and brave a baron.*









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