**The Training of a Knight**

In medieval England if a boy wanted to be a knight – and what a boy didn’t – he had to begin at about the age of seven. Usually he was taken from his home and sent to school at the castle of one of the great barons. At first he was given over to the women who taught him table manners and how to behave in the house.

These young boys were called pages and as they grew older they had an increasing list of duties to perform. They waited on the ladies. They began to learn the endless list of terms applied to hunting, to falconry, to serving a table.

They might be taught to read and write by a priest, who also taught them religion. And always, they had the idea drilled into them that some day they would be knights.

When the pages reached the age of fourteen, they could hope to pass over to this high position themselves. From the time a boy graduated from pagehood until he won his golden spurs, he was an esquire and spent most of his time practicing with weapons. He was assigned to the personal service of his lord, or of some other knight. He carried the knight’s heavy shield for him on journeys.

He attended to the knight and armed him for a tournament or battle. He kept his weapons in good condition, and got him out of danger if he were wounded. And all the time, of course, he was supposed to be learning the principles of chivalry from his master – courage, honor, faith, devotion to duty – and the use of arms.